

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

May 18, 1984

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Clerk: — I'd like to advise the Assembly today that Mr. Speaker will not be present today to open this sitting.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Folk: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure this morning to rise and introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, a group of visitors from Thunder Bay, Ontario. They are the band, the Westgate Collegiate Band from Thunder Bay, and they're visiting our province, not only to see all its beauty, but also to go to Moose Jaw and partake in the Moose Jaw Band Festival this weekend.

I know all members of the House would like to join with me in welcoming them, not only to our province, but wish them good luck in Moose Jaw this weekend in their band festival, and hope that they return to Thunder Bay with fond memories of our province. I will be pleased to meet with the group afterwards, and I would once again just ask all members to welcome our visitors from Thunder Bay.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to the House 30 students from Lac Megantic, Quebec. They're here with Open House Canada. They're situated, Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery. They are accompanied by Lorne Ehman, the principal of Holy Cross High School in my constituency, together with Ray Anderson. And, Mr. Speaker, due to my obvious problems with the French language, I will asking my colleague, the member from Kinistino, to say some words to these students in their native tongue.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boutin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Moi aussi je voudrais vous joindre, et vous rencontrer ici à cette maison, pour venir et voir comment la Maison marche. Du Lac Megantic, Quebec, il y a 31 élèves, ou 30 avec leur maître, Lorne Ehman. Ils sont arrivés à neuf heures et quarante-cinq, puis ils vont joindre avec leur MLA, je crois bien, en l'entour de onze heure, onze heure et quart. J'aimerais vous rendre le conte de la Maison ici aujourd'hui.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sveinson: — I think it would be amiss if the only Liberal in the House didn't welcome our friends from Quebec. I'd just like to say, have a good day in the Assembly, and say hello when you get home. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Terms of Settlement to Former President of SGI

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier in the convenient absence of the Minister of SGI. Mr. Premier, last week we were treated to the startling revelation that your minister admitted not only firing the former SGI general manager, Murray Wallace, without

cause, but, indeed, did so before his own examination of Mr. Wallace's competence was complete.

When asked what bill the taxpayer would have to foot for this flippant approach, Mr. Rousseau indicated that he was not able to reveal the information because Mr. Wallace had asked that it be kept secret in the agreement.

As I'm sure you will know, Mr. Premier, Mr. Wallace has waived any right to – any claim to keeping the information confidential – has consented to do so, in writing, and that has been reported on the media.

I ask you, Mr. Premier: will you now give this House the assurance that your minister will report back to the House, giving us the amount of the damages and legal costs involved in unsorting this mess?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will make sure that the minister reports back to the House. And the minister will decide what information he wants to give and provide. He said yesterday that he was prepared to provide a great deal of it, or the day before, but I'll leave it to him.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, I just want to be crystal clear, because we have had some difficulty in the past with getting information out of this minister. Do I understand that the minister is going to report at the earliest opportunity to the House on the amount of damages and the . . . I think in fairness to Mr. Wallace, as well, we should have, as well, the terms of settlement, and . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order, order! The member from Regina Centre is making a statement on a supplementary question. I would ask him to get to his question.

Mr. Shillington: — I respect the ruling of the Chair, but I did ask, "Would you undertake?" . . . It was in the form of a question.

Mr. Premier, will you confirm that your minister will give us, not only the amount of the damages, the amount of the legal fees involved, but the terms of the settlement, and the basis for calculating such amounts, and the other terms of settlement? I say, Mr. Premier, I think that's only fair to all concerned because we suspect the amount is rather large. And I think Mr. Wallace has a right to have explained why the amount is as large as I think it's going to be.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can assure the House that the hon. Member will report to the House. I can't say what the minister will say. I'm leaving it up to him to decide what he'll say because he knows a lot more about it than I do.

Mr. Shillington: — New question. Mr. Premier, that is no commitment at all. Mr. Minister, you have not given this House a commitment that we will know the amount of the damages that has been paid out, the figure which he said he would just love to reveal.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the minister says he loves to reveal it, I'm assuming that he will reveal what he loves to reveal. So I give my assurance to the member opposite that the minister will reveal to the House.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, a supplement, to the Premier. Last week, Mr. Premier, you gave a commitment. You gave a commitment that the same minister would show up in Crown corporations for SGI this week. The minister hasn't shown. Today he's apparently ducking on this issue. Can you give your commitment that next week he will be here and tell us and outline the settlement that was signed by your government?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said to the hon. Member, the minister will be reporting to the House, and he will be revealing the information that he sees fit, and I can't add any more than that.

Review of Management Classification Positions by PSC

Mr. Lingenfelter: — New question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister in charge of the Public Service Commission. I have here a memo dated February 1, from the Public Service Commission to all government departments, respecting something called a management classification plan. The memo describes that a review of the classification of out-of-scope management positions will take place. I wonder, Mr. Minister, can you inform us who the outside consultants are, and what kind of a contract they have signed; how much it will cost the taxpayers for this review that you have commissioned?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can inform the House that, yes, there is a review of management classification. As far as the pertinent details, and the details of what the member asked for, I will take notice, and I will undertake to report to the House.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if, while you're checking on it, whether you will see whether or not the outside firm is one Deloitte, Haskins & Sells; and also whether the project was tendered; who bid on the project; and whether or not the high or the low bidder was accepted for this project. The minister would know that in other areas we have had questioned highway auction equipment and that sort of thing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. The member from Shaunavon is making a statement after his question.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The question, Mr. Deputy Speaker — I was just getting to it — is: whether he will also bring back an explanation as to why the taxpayers of the province are being called on to review something that we are already paying within the Public Service Commission to a branch known as the classification system review office that you pay through your department. Why is it necessary to bring in another operation and pay out another batch of taxpayers' money at this time?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's fair to say I took notice of the question. I told the member that I would undertake to bring the details that he asked for to the House. The member, after I took notice, took it upon himself to get up and make his own statements regarding this. I have taken notice, I will continue to take notice, and I will get back to the House.

Alberta Health Care Study

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I direct a question to the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister, my question deals with the activities of your counterpart in Alberta, the Hon. Dave Russell, who has struck again.

This time he has commissioned a study by Price Waterhouse to determine the feasibility of turning over the administration of the health systems in Alberta to the private sector, and the study is supposedly looking at the costs and benefits of having Alberta hospitals and medicare administered by the private sector.

My question to you is this: is the government of Saskatchewan in any way involved in the Alberta study, this study of private profit health care? Have you agreed to fund the study, either directly or indirectly, and has the Alberta government agreed to share its findings with you?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — No; no; and no.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Minister, do you support the sort of studies that are being carried

on in Alberta, and do you propose to conduct any such studies in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — No; no.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — My supplementary is straightforward. Do you reject the whole idea of having the medicare and hospital systems of this province administered by the private sector?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the member opposite realizes that in the past two years there have been some very significant improvements in the health care system of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the member opposite knows, as do the people of Saskatchewan, that the Devine government will provide the best health services for this province. That is well understood, and I think our record shows that. Certainly we will continue with the same type of delivery that we are doing at this present time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This type of rhetoric of providing the best type of health care is the same that is given by the PC government in Alberta, the same that is given by the PC government in Ontario – both of whom have moved to private profit administration. My question to you is: are you going to follow the lead of the PC government in Ontario and in Alberta in switching the administration of health care to the private sector?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me make it very clear to you and everyone in this Assembly that this government . . . Look at the record of this government in many fields: in targeted tax breaks, many things that our Premier has talked about, and in health care. We will run the show in Saskatchewan, and we will run it on a Saskatchewan model to deliver the programs for the people of Saskatchewan in the best method possible. We don't need Alberta or B.C. or Ontario or . . . (inaudible) . . . or the opposition to tell us how to run health care in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Shortage of Doctors in Rural Hospitals

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, a question to the Minister of Health. He talks about the great health system that he's running. At the same time we see ambulance operators talking about the lack of funding. We have here a doctor shortage where a number of rural hospitals have, in fact, had to close their doors because of the lack of the doctors. I wonder whether or not, Mr. Minister, you can inform the Assembly and some of those rural hospitals like Shaunavon and Climax and Esterhazy, Nokomis, and other places where they are having to look at the possibility of closing the hospitals – some of them are – what are you doing to make sure that doctors are available in rural Saskatchewan at the present time?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to inform the Assembly that there are fewer hospitals closed at this point in time in Saskatchewan than in the past few years.

Secondly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he asked about doctors in rural Saskatchewan. I want to inform the people of Saskatchewan that there are 12 per cent more doctors in rural Saskatchewan now than there was previously.

Thirdly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to inform the member opposite that I have brought

together the SMA (Saskatchewan Medical Association), the College of Medicine, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons, are working together with my department on a whole study of supplying doctors to rural Saskatchewan – the training, the number of doctors in the field, what can we do to enhance the supply of doctors to rural Saskatchewan.

So I think, my answer to you: it's well under hand.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, a new question to the minister. I have here a quote from Sister Shirley Crozier, who is the administrator at Esterhazy, who says, "The lack of doctors is almost a crisis in rural Saskatchewan."

Mr. Minister, many people in the province would not believe your statement that things have improved in rural Saskatchewan. I don't. But what I would like to ask you, that in your review, whether or not you would take into consideration some of Sister Crozier's suggestions, such as the doctors would not be allowed to leave the country where they received their training for five years – a reasonable suggestion; and that doctors serve terms in rural rotation from the urban centres where there is a surplus of doctors.

I wonder if you can outline some of your suggestions as to solving the problem of the shortage of rural doctors in rural Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I don't think he was listening. First of all, I say there are less hospitals closed than there ever has been for the past eight or nine years. There's a 12 per cent increase in doctors in rural Saskatchewan.

There is a study set up of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the School of Medicine, and the SMA, to look at this situation. I am waiting till those people report back on their findings and their recommendations.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder whether or not the minister would admit that part of the problem is that doctors who come into Saskatchewan are not allowed to stay, and that you, Mr. Minister, have the power to allow doctors an extension on their four-month locum, which seems to be the problem, and you are refusing local hospitals to keep the doctors.

Under section 30 of The Medical Profession Act it states very clearly:

At the minister's request the council shall register and issue a special license to physicians.

This is what you're refusing to do. This is what the boards of the hospitals are asking you to do, and you're not doing it. And I wonder whether or not you will begin to use this section of the act to ensure that doctors are allowed to stay in rural Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think, to address this situation, it is only right that one works in consultation and in concert with the physicians of this province, with the SMA (Saskatchewan Medical Association), with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and with the School of Medicine. I've said – and I'll say it once more – that is what we're doing. They will come with certain recommendations. They are looking at this, and looking at it seriously. When those recommendations come in, I will act upon them. I am the type of minister who would like to work in consultation with these people, rather than coming down with some type of heavy hand, as was the experience of your government in the past.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether or not in your consideration you would take into consideration the local boards, like the boards at Shaunavon and Esterhazy and Nokomis, and whether you would take into consideration the people in those local areas who don't have a doctor, and why they can't keep their hospital open – when you are taking in the

review whether or not you will talk to some of the people who are directly affected by not having a doctor in their community.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, most certainly. I'm sure that this committee will be talking to various people about this situation, and rural hospital boards will be one of the areas.

Property Improvement Grant Forms

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a short question to the Minister of Urban Affairs, and it's a simple question seeking information. A number of my constituents are busy paying their taxes at the Regina City Hall and asking for the property improvement grant forms when they pay their taxes, and they are advised that there are no property improvement grant forms, and there won't be property improvement grant forms for another week or so. Would the minister indicate whether there are property improvement grant forms available and, if not, when they will be available?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have been printed, and they have been sent out.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, just a supplementary. Is the minister advising that the forms have been sent out to the urban municipalities? And if so, when, since they weren't at the Regina City Hall two days ago.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — The advise given to me on Monday of this week was that they had been printed, and they were being sent out — and I don't know where they are — I'll check with it and report back to you next week.

Loss of Wages to Employees of Fly-by-night Operation

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question is to the Minister of Labour. Mr. Minister, yesterday you took notice of a question which I asked you with respect to the failure of your department to respond in anything like a timely fashion to people who had been short-changed their wages.

My question, Mr. Minister, is: have you shown enough interest in your department to look into the matter, and can you now report back to this House?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've instructed my staff of the question that the member raised yesterday, and I'm waiting for their response from the department.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, your response is, indeed, a part of the problem. Mr. Minister, I would have expected you would have got — you would have called your deputy and got an oral report so that you could have responded to the House.

My question, Mr. Minister, is: how much longer are these poor, unfortunate people going to have to wait, while you wait for a written report from your department?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I advised the member that we have acted on his question. I wasn't aware of the question at all yesterday, or the situation, and I'm waiting for that report. I'll probably have it for you on Tuesday.

Mr. Shillington: — Question to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs any less lethargic? Are you able to move . . . Have you been able to inform yourself of the goings on in your department, and are you able to report back this House? Or are you also going to make the House wait, for an indefinite period of time, on some kind of a written report?

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — I think the member from Regina is quite facetious in his line of questioning. The Minister of Labour and I took notice of a question yesterday. Yes, I asked my officials to give me a full report. As of 10 o'clock this morning, I have not got it.

You must realize, Mr. Member from Regina Centre, that doing a search on licences is a great, great, time-consuming thing. We license approximately 30,000 to 40,000 direct sellers in the province in one given year. And I will be reporting back to the House when my officials give me the information. And we are not taking this issue lightly, but there is a certain amount of problems involved in this particular case.

Mr. Shillington: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, when I was minister of that department, you could get that kind of information in about 15 minutes. Madam Minister, the problem with your administration is that if you're going to be of any assistance to these people, you must respond in a timely fashion, Madam Minister. The gravamen of our complaint against your department is that you haven't responded in a timely fashion, and you apparently have no intention of. Can you tell us, Madam Minister, when you think you might be able to stir yourself sufficiently to get this information?

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — I will repeat, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the member from Regina Centre . . . It is obvious to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why the member from Regina Centre was removed from the cabinet of the NDP.

I can inform the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that my department does act on complaints if complaints are received. And to our knowledge, no inquiry was made of the department as to whether or not this particular firm or alleged firm was licensed to do business in the province. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is one of the problems that we do face, unless the consumer asks for a direct seller's licence number. They also have no way of knowing whether or not that particular firm is licensed to do business in the province.

We are attempting, through various media and campaigns, to inform consumers of their rights and their responsibilities. I have had talks with SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) on the need to co-operated between all three parties to make consumers and constituents aware of what they have to ask of these people, either when they get direct phone calls or solicitation at the doors — that what they should do to ensure that they have some protection.

Mr. Shillington: — Supplementary. Madam Minister, will you confirm that no consumer complaints have been received, or are you simply confirming what we suspect, and that is that you haven't yet got around to asking whether or not any consumer complaints have been received?

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — I took notice of a question yesterday. To the best of my knowledge our complaint inquiry centre did not get one telephone call as to whether or not this particular alleged firm was licensed to do business in Saskatchewan. I took notice yesterday, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I plan to report to the House when my officials get back to me with the report.

Mr. Koskie: — Yes, a supplement, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I just want to advise the minister . . . Madam Minister, I want to advise you that when I was minister of consumer and commercial affairs . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order! On a supplementary question, the member knows that there's no statement to be made previous to a supplementary question.

Mr. Koskie: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, as you know, I want to advise you that when I was minister of consumer and commercial affairs that the public was well

served. We were monitoring the situation. And what I'm really asking you: are you, and through your investigations, are you, in fact, saying that you have received neither telephone calls of complaint by the consumers that my colleague is talking, and that you have, in fact, investigated, and have no written complaints? Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — I don't know if I should feel flattered, or whatever, to have advice from the member opposite. What I said in response to the question from the member from Regina Centre: to my knowledge we did not get inquiries prior to the business leaving the province or whatever, wherever this fellow happened to go; that no one to my knowledge inquired to the department as to whether or not this particular alleged firm had a right to do business in the province of Saskatchewan. But I shall bring a report back with due speed.

Social and Economic Conditions in the North

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I direct my question to the Premier of this province. This week, on Tuesday, we introduced a resolution. My colleague from Athabasca and I introduced a resolution in this House. It was debated but never voted on. The resolution recognized the deplorable social and economic conditions of northern Saskatchewan, and we stated that that situation is very volatile. You, as the Premier of this province, have the responsibility, and the authority, and the majority, to . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order. Does the member have a question?

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question. I was telling the Premier that he has the responsibility, the authority, and the majority to do . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 60 – An Act respecting Venture Capital Corporations

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Deputy speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Tourism and Small Business, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I move first reading of An Act respecting Venture Capital Corporations for the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Bill No. 61 – An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a bill to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act.

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

Bill No. 62 – An Act to amend The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move first reading of a bill to amend The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act.

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

Bill No. 63 – An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from amendments to The Department of Finance Act, 1984

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, it's again with a great deal of pleasure that I move first

reading of a bill respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the amendments to The Department of Finance Act.

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

Bill No. 64 – An Act to provide for the Establishment and Maintenance of Public Libraries

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move first reading of a bill to provide for the Establishment and Maintenance of Public Libraries.

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

Bill No. 65 – An Act to amend The Constitutional Questions Act

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move first reading of a bill to amend The Constitutional Questions Act.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTIONS

House Adjournment

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, before orders of the day, and by leave of the Assembly, I would move the following motion, seconded by my colleague, the member from Meadow Lake:

That when this Assembly adjourns on Friday, May 18, 1984, it will stand adjourned until Tuesday, May 22, 1984.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 56 – An Act respecting Medical Radiation Technologists

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to explain the purpose of the bill respecting medical radiation technologists. This act constitutes a major revision of the existing X-ray technician act. The request for revision came from the Saskatchewan Society of X-ray Technicians, and the society is in agreement with these revisions.

The purpose of the revisions is to bring the act in line with the current practices of medical radiation technology. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the major revisions provide for the inclusion of new occupational groups who work in similar technological areas – for example, nuclear medicine technicians and ultrasound technologists. The old act provided for the registration of X-ray technicians only.

Under the new act, occupational groups can be registered by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, designating additional diagnostic and treatment procedures for the purpose of extending the meaning of the practice of medical radiation technology.

The name of the society is also being changed in this act to the Saskatchewan Association of Medical Radiation Technologists. This will make the Saskatchewan society consistent with other provincial associations and also with their national association.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a number of other revisions to this act to introduce principles used in other recent health professional legislation. These include ministerial approval for policy-making regulations; the power of the Lieutenant Governor in Council to require changes to these regulations; and public representation on the governing council of the association. As well as adding public representation to the governing council, the act will result in other changes to the composition of the council.

The council now consists of five members elected from the membership, and two physicians appointed by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan. The new act provides for the election of six members, and deletes the physician representatives. This has been discussed with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and the college has agreed to this deletion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are also revisions dealing with discipline procedures, and provisions dealing with a number of administrative matters. The act is consistent with other recent health professional acts. I am confident that it will prove to be sufficiently flexible to enable the association of medical radiation technologists to conduct their affairs in an optimum fashion in the years ahead.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that An Act respecting Medical Radiation Technologists be given second reading.

Motion agreed, bill read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole at the next sitting.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

WOMEN'S SECRETARIAT

Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 41

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

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my pleasure today to introduce the executive co-ordinator for the Women's Secretariat, Leah Siebold, and directly behind her is our senior research officer, who is Danni Boyd.

Item 1

Mr. Shillington: — I wonder if you'd begin, Madam Minister, by giving us the names and salaries of the senior staff in the Women's Secretariat. Given the newness of this organization, I don't know quite what your senior staff consists of.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Because the member was out in the introductions . . . We have, basically, two senior people right now – or what I consider the senior positions – Leah Siebold, the executive co-ordinator; and Danni Boyd is the research officer, and I will send you over the salaries.

Mr. Shillington: — Madam Minister, the abolition of the women's division of the Department of Labour of last year was, I think – might accurately be described as – the

crowning insult in the record of a government which has an abysmal record of women's issues, and was met, quite rightly, with a storm of protest – with which you had some personal experience, I might add.

Madam Minister, the establishment of the Women's Secretariat has, I think it's fair to say, not allayed that skepticism. There was some skepticism about that the Women's Secretariat was not any carefully thought-out approach to redressing the inequality which women face in society, but was rather a knee-jerk response to a grave political error. That skepticism was expressed by members of this opposition. I think it's fair to say that skepticism was felt by a goodly number of people in the community . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And I'm informed, supported by the Liberal party as well.

Madam Minister, I would appreciate knowing from you what your secretariat has accomplished in the time it's been in office. What have you done to allay the skepticism with which this agency was greeted by society?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, let's begin right back at the beginning of your statement. I would suggest that the women's division was transferred to the Department of Advanced Education, and if you ever had the time (and I believe we went through this approximately a year ago) to go and visit the branch . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, we certainly haven't convinced you, because you haven't taken the time to go down and to visit. I would suggest when you were talking about the fears in general about women's programs, that you are talking about a specific group as opposed to the general public. And I would gladly debate that with you any day.

You want to know what we've accomplished. We've been open three months. We have managed to put together a package on the issue of wife battering and family violence that included approximately four or five departments. The Women's Secretariat chaired an interdepartmental committee. They were successful in identifying some new areas – new areas where the gaps had been before, no programs were being delivered – and even to the point of having a public educational awareness program.

They put together a presentation that included two other departments: Department of Social Services and the Department of Justice, on the issue of pornography and violence. And those two departments, along with the Women's Secretariat, compiled the briefs that they presented to the Fraser commission. I don't recall seeing you there, but perhaps you were. I consider, in two or three months, even one of those to be successful in terms of getting things done.

We also are looking at a few other areas, namely employment opportunities and advanced education for women.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I can believe, Madam Minister, that you are studying the problem. I can believe that you have reported to . . . the brief to a commissioner, rather. I guess what I'm skeptical about is whether or not wives who are . . . or women who are in danger of being battered or who suffer violence, will feel any appreciable difference as a result of your department's studies.

And I wonder, Madam Minister, specifically what you think that you've accomplished in the area of wife battery. What will the women out on the street experience and feel as a result of this department's activities?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, first of all will be the expansion of some programs to rural women. They have had absolutely no access, under the previous administration, when it came to any kind of programs in dealing with wife battery, family violence. There was nothing in place.

There is an expansion that will be taking place this year in dealing with rural women. It will even include things like transportation – that's a problem in the rural areas; also some legal assistance

and self-help groups. One of the other areas that you will see in expansion is for post-crises. That's brand-new in this province. Approximately \$25,000 will be allocated for that, and tied in to a transition house.

We will be looking at setting up a new program for the batterer. You know, you can build transition houses for ever and a day, but it doesn't get to the bottom of the problem. So we budgeted for a program to help the batterer. And that will be carried on through the Department of Social Services.

One of the other areas that is new, when it comes to wife battery, family violence, is the public educational awareness program. And that will be developed and will be ran during this fiscal year.

We will also be looking at a component of staff training for those centres where the intake is, such as the nurses, doctors, orderlies, and the emergency wards of hospitals, the law enforcement, police officers that deal directly with a complaint. And we will also be setting up a consultation meeting with the various groups for June, in order to put the total package together.

We are no longer at the point where we are beginning to study. The studies have been done time and time and time again, by various women's groups, by even some governments. And what we suggested this year, when we took all the studies together and we highlighted the main components out of each of those studies, was study time was over; now it was time to take action.

Mr. Shillington: — Madam Minister, one of the serious problems which women have experienced in the last two years is the cut-back in social services to groups in society.

I wonder if I could have a page here. I'm going to send the member from Maple Creek a candy. She seems to need it; she's so sour. Would you give that to the member from Maple Creek?

Madam Minister, the difficulty that women have had is that your government has cut back social services and legal aid. Well, you mentioned you're going to expand legal aid services. One of the problems women have faced is that your government has cut back on legal aid to the point where, in many cases, it's simply not available.

And I ask you, Madam Minister: don't you think it would have been more to the point to have left intact the funding of many of these groups, including legal aid, rather than now begin considering a new program?

If legal services were something that was needed, then why have we seen the legal aid cut back, by way of example? And I can pick any number of other service agencies who have had their funding reduced, Madam Minister. It strikes me it would have been more to the point to maintain the existing agencies rather than crank up some new ones.

By cutting back on existing services, you create the suspicion that what this agency is is cosmetics. And to date, Madam Minister, there's nothing to disprove that. The activities of your government, in reducing funding for social agencies and legal aid, in fact, I think confirms the worst fears of many women's groups.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I would suggest that the greatest difficulty facing women is attitude of males. I just think back to a few comments even made by yourself, and it comes back to basically stereotyping — women talk too fast, women are sour, women's intuition. Those are attitudinal problems. That's the biggest problem we face.

And for the members on this side of the House that are female, the biggest problem is looking at you and your attitude and how you relate to us in this House. That's the biggest difficulty.

You want to talk about cut-backs. Let's talk about increases. You seem to forget that there is a category, a very large category of increases.

I take a look at the Saskatchewan skills development program, and that's jointly sponsored by Advanced Education and Social Services. You know, they're talking about 2,400 training seats with 50 per cent of those expected to be filled by women, and some of them will be in the non-traditional areas.

The Saskatchewan Employment Development Program is another one – 1,500 jobs for single, unemployed social assistance recipients, with the majority – a very large majority, in fact – being women with families.

Saskatchewan Income Plan. What we see in society is approximately 60 per cent of women that are over the age of 65 living below the poverty line, and we saw a substantial increase on the supplement by the Department of Social Services this year. It went from \$25 a month to 50. I don't view that as a cut-back. I'm not sure why you do.

And if I want to go on to some non-governmental organizations like the sexual assault centres – a 5 per cent increase. The total budget is 140,000, plus there's an additional 75,000 that's been approved.

Transition houses is another good example. Six houses, located in Regina (two of them), Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, North Battleford. You have well over a \$1 million – well over – more like a million and a half going in for '84-85. And they saw an increase of 6.5 per cent in their funding for this fiscal year. That does not take into consideration the 800,000, close to another \$1 million, that we are putting into family violence through the interdepartmental committee.

I take a look at Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, and the three single parent family demonstration projects, with the majority of those single families being that the head of the household is female; and that has a very heavy impact and a positive impact on women.

Now if you want to talk about some more programs – affirmative action. I look at what has taken place in the last two years that never happened before. The major Crown corporations, one of the largest employers in the province, have formalized affirmative action programs, and there's one or two others, while they have not gone the formal route, they have certainly made some deliberate efforts to improve the opportunities and the hiring practices of those Crown corporations.

I take a look at boards and commissions, and it's increased, particularly on those high profile boards like Sask Tel, Saskoil, Sask Power, where under the NDP we just didn't have the inroad for female participation in them for whatever reason.

I look at women in management in government, and I go back to your last year of 1981, and I compare the percentage points from 1981 to 1983; and while they are not as high as I would like them to be, we've doubled it. So you know, you talk about the dismal record. I would suggest that perhaps you'd better put all your information together and take the blinders off and have a second look.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Madam Minister, if you have indeed doubled women in management positions, you've cleverly concealed it from public view. There were a good deal more women deputy ministers on March 31, 1982 than there was on March 31, 1984.

I'd ask you, Madam Minister, if you will give me the details of the doubling of women in management position, because it certainly is not a very visible achievement – if you have, in fact, achieved that. I would ask, Madam Minister, if you'll provide me with the details of that.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We will provide you with the details that you want. I would remind you that senior management is much more than a deputy, or two deputy positions. You know, you have executive directors, the directors of branches, etc. That's senior management level. But we will provide you with the details as quickly as possible.

Mr. Shillington: — Madam Minister, you didn't address yourself to the issue of the reduction in the funding of legal aid. It strikes me, Madam Minister, that this is a service which women do use, and which has been reduced in both size and scope – and there can be no question about that.

Anyone who has anything to do with the legal system will know that the legal aid system has been drastically curtailed under this administration. I ask you, Madam Minister, if you think that is something that was in the best interests of women.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't have the details of the Minister of Justice's budget when it comes to the total allocation for legal aid. When I talked about legal aid earlier, it was in regards to battered women, and that portion of the budget was increased – not decreased, but increased – for a very specific, severe problem.

Mr. Shillington: — Madam Minister, the funding for legal aid was not increased. You say that you have some funding in your budget for legal aid. I'll tell you, Madam Minister, what you have in there is minuscule. You've only got . . . My book is closed, but you've only got in total in your entire budget some \$298,000. That is not going to provide very much in the way of legal aid, much less any other programs.

So I say, Madam Minister, that if you're telling me the funding is in your budget – well, you're wrong. There is virtually nothing in your budget but salaries.

Madam Minister, one of the things that I think both we of the opposition and women's groups wanted was to see the Women's Secretariat act as an advocacy agency. But there was some considerable discussion took place last year at this time. You, Madam Minister, firmly rejected any public role for the Women's Secretariat – and I suppose, given the secretive nature of this government, we should have expected that.

But, Madam Minister, I wonder if your secretariat has acted as an advocate on issues like minimum wage which directly impact on women; whether or not your secretariat has made representations to the Department of Labour, and brought to their attention the effect that a two-year freeze, now going on three, has on women.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I guess I view the secretariat very similar to a department, for instance, the Department of Education. I consider that department to be an advocate of education. I consider the Department of Urban Affairs to be an advocate for city councils and the various activities that they choose to get in. The Department of Agriculture is very much and advocate of agriculture.

The Women's Secretariat is no different. They are an advocate of improving the status of women in the society. That's very clear. I'm not sure what your definition of advocacy is, but I consider the role of the secretariat to be a governmental administration, besides being and advocate on women's issues and the status of women with government.

The public role . . . The role of the secretariat is no different than the role of any department. We operate within the same rules and guide-lines. But there's perhaps something more unique about a secretariat, and this one is no different than the native secretariat in that we try and do a lot more co-ordinating than what various departments do. We are not into funding specific programs. We want the departments to pick the ball up and carry that through their funding and,

when they do their budgeting, to take those kinds of things into consideration.

Yes, I've had some discussions, and so has the secretariat, on minimum wage. I've had some discussions with the Minister of Labour, and I guess what I consider to be the key issue – when you are talking about the level of employment, the salaries that women make, their advanced education, their education and their training skills – and that's probably key.

You know, we can stand here and we can talk about the minimum wage being \$10 an hour, and you know, at least I would hope that you know, if minimum wage is set at \$10 an hour, all the other wages above that are going to go up in accordance, and the difference will be kept the same. Women will never – if you want to just about upping the minimum wage – they will never improve their position when it comes to how much money they make, the kinds of jobs that they have an opportunity for, if they do not have the education and the training skills to go with better jobs. That's the reality of it.

When I talked about minimum wage, I've also looked at some of the other support services that are there. For instance, the family income plan is there for low income earners, and because many of them are single parents with the majority being female, that has an impact on women. There was a 5 per cent increase in the family income plan this year.

So I do not believe that the total answer, as you say, to improve the status of women, is to simply up the minimum wage. I would prefer to see women have greater opportunities, and the door is wide open when it comes to employment practices.

Mr. Shillington: — Are you telling us, Madam Minister, that while you don't think it's the total answer, you think that upping the minimum wage is a part of the answer?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, I didn't say that at all, and I don't think that you can go at it in part answer. That isn't the way the world works, and you know that, and I know that.

Mr. Shillington: — Well you and I both know that is the way the world works. To problems as fundamental and as deep in our society as the inequality faced by women, there are no simple pat answers that one can give. One needs a wide variety of approaches, one of which is would be a fair minimum wage.

Madam Minister, if all you do, if all the secretariat does is to parrot the excuses made by other departments for the unfair and unjust programs which they have, and which impact on women unfairly, you are simply going to confirm that worst skepticism about this agency, and that is it is simply window-dressing.

I have, Madam Minister, the brief of the Sask Action Committee on the Status of Women, and it is virtually a recitation of complaints about various government programs, some of which I think are justified. I refer to the cut-back in the funding to legal aid; I refer to the abolition of the mediation and diversion program; I refer to the inadequacy of the machinery available for enforcing maintenance awards. The paper pre-dates the "welfare reform," but I have no doubt, Madam Minister, that had this paper been prepared after the welfare reform – and what a travesty that title must be – if it had been prepared after the welfare reform, it would have complained about that as well.

Madam Minister, you say your department is like Education or Agriculture. They have budgets, and you have virtually none. You have no budget for no programs. So if you aren't going to act as an advocate with respect to other departments, so that they may rectify some of their programs which impact unfairly and unjustly on women, then it is not obvious what role this secretariat's going to play.

The issue, I thought, was not whether or not it had an advocacy role with respect to other

departments, but whether or not that role should be public or private. What I thought I heard you just say was that that isn't the role of the secretariat. They don't have a responsibility to deal with issues like minimum wage, or to deal with issues like welfare reform – which impacts on women a good more so than men – or to deal with the issues of legal aid or day care or unemployment.

Madam Minister, I would ask you by way of example: did you have any discussions with the Minister of Social Services before he brought down the harsh cut-backs in social services? Was that something that your secretariat discussed with the Department of Social Services? Did your secretariat point out to the Minister of Social Services how difficult that was going to make an already difficult like for many women? The problem with many women, Madam Minister, is that, as the report says, and I'm reading directly from the report:

Women are still seen as secondary human beings. They are still largely invisible or ignored. They, in many instances, live lives of minimum survival.

Madam Minister, the difficulty women have is that they live very close to the poverty line, and they are major recipients of social welfare. Did your secretariat have discussions with the Minister of Social Services before that travesty occurred, in an effort to dissuade him from cutting back social services to women who cannot find jobs because there are no jobs available? Did you secretariat attempt to bring some reason to bear on that department?

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I would like to introduce some guests, with leave.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the committee giving me leave to introduce a group of grade 6 students from the Val Marie School, in Val Marie, who are here with us today to watch the proceedings. We are working on estimates of the Women's Secretariat, and I'm sure that my colleague from Regina Centre will be doing a good job, as the minister will be.

I want to welcome the students; and their teacher, Elaine Belza; and chaperons, Leo Laturus and Nettie Laturus; and there a number of others there, as well, who I will be meeting with at 11:30 for drinks and to have pictures taken. I'm sure that all members will want to join with me in welcoming the group here and wish them a safe return back to Val Marie when they're finished their tour of Regina.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

WOMEN'S SECRETARIAT

Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 41

Item 1 (Continued)

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I've had discussions with the Minister of Social Services before the budget. Let's talk about clout, and the member from Regina Centre's perception of what's important and what isn't.

For the second time, I'll go through the figures again because the figures are hard facts. What you

are throwing out, what you are throwing out is your own perception with – and I will admit, blinders on – with them, because you refuse to look at the facts.

Some of the major areas that the Social Services budget impacts on saw increases this year – some of it substantial, particularly in the area of family violence – increases; not cut-backs – increases. Family income plan, which I've already told you . . . A very large portion of single parents, being female, have access to the family income plan. That's an increase. The sexual assault centres, transition houses – those are for women. They saw an increase, with a large increase going, once again, into the issue of family violence – almost a million new dollars that you refuse to acknowledge.

Let's talk about day care. The day care budget has been increased in total by 9.5 per cent. The impact is on women. And you're asking me if I agree with the cut-backs that the Minister of Social Services did that impact on women? What cut-backs? I've given you the increases.

If you want to talk about the welfare reform, I will stand here all day and talk with you about the welfare reform and what is important to women. They want the opportunity to complete their education if they didn't complete it before. They want the opportunity to get into some skills training, particularly in non-traditional areas that, for some reason, pay more than the female traditional areas. They want those kinds of opportunities.

That's what the welfare reform package was all about – through the Department of Social Services and the Department of Advanced Education – was to give women the opportunity to improve their education and to take some training and improve the skills area, particularly in the non-traditional areas. And that's important, and that's key.

You know, I ran over the figures with you before about the Saskatchewan skills development program, and Opportunities '84 was another one. There is also the national career development program. The impact on women is very substantial, and I might add that it's a positive impact.

You know, you wonder about the role of the secretariat. I'll go over that again. Our mandate is to improve women's status through input into the policy and decision-making activities of government. We are no longer just a branch within a department that has to report to the associate deputy, then to the deputy, and never to the minister. They report directly to the minister. And that's key to the decision-making process. If you don't believe that, then I don't wonder that you didn't last as minister of consumer affairs very long.

You want to talk about the objectives of the secretariat, the provision of policy research on women's issues, not just in one department, but in a lot of departments. Because anything that governments do in departments, the decisions that they make, they should have the ability to be able to analyse those policies and how the impact is going to be on women.

You know, we try and be supportive to the government departments. Granted, with a little bit of prodding, that maybe they should consider an analysis to see the impact on women, if they haven't thought of it first. But we consider it to be more, perhaps, not adversarial, but from the other side of things. I think when it comes to women's issues that perhaps the adversarial approach has been used much too often, and that only serves to bring up confrontation and not understanding – and if there's one thing that someone needs when it comes to trying to change an attitude, it's that.

Mr. Shillington: — I wish Madam Minister would deal with the facts. The facts are that grants to day care were cut by 12 per cent. The minister's response is, "But we didn't spend all the money we had last year, so if we spend all the money we got this year it will be an increase in funding."

To put it mildly, Madam Minister, I think women would have preferred that last year's program

were redesigned so that the money could be spent, and that more money had been available this year. The money budgeted for grants to day care is down by 12 per cent.

Madam Minister, I wonder if you have any intention of dealing with the question. The question is: do you believe that the cut in the level of assistance to unemployed employables is in the best interests of women who fall into that category?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, that wasn't his first question, with all due respect. It was put in a much different way. First of all, I said I did . . . On your first question, it was all the cut-backs in social services and how they impact on women. I believe that welfare reform did indeed need some reform, and if you are going to talk about the employable employables, you're talking about a percentage of women. I'm not sure what the percentage is, but there is a percentage in there. But I believe when it comes to the employables and being on welfare, the opportunity must be there for retraining and job opportunities, and I fully support the Minister of Social Services in his endeavours.

Mr. Shillington: — I would say, Madam Minister, when you continue to support all of the various programs about which women's groups have complained, you deepen the skepticism about the actual role of your agency.

Madam Minister, on March 8th of this year, an incident occurred which I think deepened the chasm between women and this government. Madam Minister, I am told that there was a meeting between the cabinet and a number of women's groups set up, that your cabinet found itself too busy, and indeed, that individual ministers were not available to meet with them.

I wonder, Madam Minister, if you have any more palatable explanation for this unfortunate incident, than was offered to them at the time.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I would be glad to clarify for you the week of March 8th. It was not that cabinet found itself too busy. I had asked cabinet to postpone it because that was Education Week. As always has been the tradition in this province, Education week has been approximately that week for as long as I can remember, maybe even for the short time that you were Minister of Education. Because I felt it necessary that I be there, and the Minister of Advanced Ed was going to be away — I felt that was key that he be there also to hear the presentation — I asked for a postponement. Not the rest of cabinet being too busy. That was explained to the group in question, you know. Whether they accept it or not, I don't know. I only know that I told them the truth, why I asked for a postponement, and nothing more and nothing less.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Madam Minister, that is a new explanation, and it's . . . I'm really saying, Madam Minister, I'm not doubting the veracity of what you said, but there was a television interview that very day in which you explained why you couldn't meet with the women's groups. That wasn't . . . (a) that was not the explanation that was offered, and (b) the explanation was offered in your office. I am quite sure that was your ministerial office in which that interview took place. And I wondered at the time: if you've got time in your office to give an interview to CKCK television, I think it was, why did you not have a few moments to meet with the women's groups?

In any case I would add, Madam Minister, that you are asking for a considerable degree of generosity of spirit, for this House to believe that all of the ministers with whom the women's group wanted to meet were involved in Education Week. That might involve the Minister of Education, but I think it's unlikely to involve the other ministers who were also the subject of the same complaint. And I wonder, Madam Minister: why, if you are able to give an interview to CKCK television in your office, and that's certainly where it appeared to me that the interview was given, why didn't you have a few moments to meet with them?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Education Week involves, basically, two ministers: the Minister of Education, and the Minister of Advanced Education. The interview was done at noon time. It was not planned. They arrived on the spur of the moment. I was there because it was lunch-time, and we took about 10 minutes and then I left, and they left. It's that simple. The brief that they wanted to present, I would suggest that deserved more than a few minutes of cabinet's time — that it was probably anywhere from one hour to two hours that they were looking at meeting with cabinet.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, could I indulge the House and introduce some students? Do I have leave?

Sitting in the Speaker's gallery are 28, I believe, grade 4 students from Assiniboia. They're accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Mona Karst. Mona has brought students in on many occasions, maybe even when Mr. Hepworth was one of your students. I'm not sure how long that goes back, but if he was, you didn't do a very good job! The Minister of Agriculture is a critic of . . .

The bus driver that's brought them in today is Garry Jonescu. I'm pleased that you're here, and I'm looking forward to meeting with the students for a time afterwards. And I wish you'd join me in welcoming them here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I would like to join as well with the hon. Member opposite in bringing greetings on behalf of the Assembly to the students and teacher and bus driver from Assiniboia.

I did spend a good many of my school days at Assiniboia, although I can't say that I had the pleasure of having Mrs. Karst as my teacher. But certainly, that being my home area, I hope that they've had a safe trip up here, and that they have a safe trip back, and that they do have an enjoyable tour of the legislature today. And I would as well ask all members to join with me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

WOMEN'S SECRETARIAT

Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 41

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Shillington: — Madam Minister, I don't intend to spend a great deal more time on the estimates of the Women's Secretariat. I don't expect anything to come of this secretariat, and that is no reflection on those involved in the Women's Secretariat. It is a reflection, Madam Minister, on this government's priorities.

Madam Minister, your government abolished a women's division which was working well, which had achieved a national reputation for the excellence of its work. You replaced that with a secretariat with minuscule budget, with a mandate which is strange and bizarre, and which I think is unworkable.

I think, Madam Minister, that women in this province have already concluded that the inequality which they face is not a priority of this government. Unfortunately, I think they're right. I don't expect a lot to come of this secretariat and I don't intend to waste a lot more time in the House reviewing its estimates.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, it doesn't surprise me that the member views the secretariat in that role, particularly when I look at some of his statements that are on public record. I want to remind the member of that, such statements that he said, that "affirmative action programs have done little to enhance the status of women." What that suggests to me is, the member doesn't agree with affirmative action. That's on record in public accounts. So it does not surprise me that he chooses to say the Women's Secretariat has done little.

He views affirmative action programs as doing nothing — absolutely nothing. And I'm not sure what his mechanism would be to deal with it, but I look at the numbers over there and I know that the mechanism is not one of direct participation in the democratic system — nothing absolutely zero.

So what's the process that the member says should be used to enhance the status of women? Elect all male members and they'll tell you what to do. That day's over. Maybe it's why there's only eight over there and 56 over there.

An Hon. Member: — That could be changed very quickly. That could change very quickly, madam.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, if it ever changes, I can only hope that 50 per cent with the NDP are female — because it couldn't get worse; it can only get better . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I want to remind you of the number of positions in government that deal directly with women and women's issues.

You're right in one respect — that the women's branch in the Department of Labour met its objective, and that was basically equal opportunity of equal pay. That's what started the movement. And it was in Labour because women were not going on into advanced education and skills training. You know, the opportunities for senior management, they just weren't there.

I guess the other aspect, when I look at the issues, is the monitoring of maternity leave and that type of thing. Yes, they were successful and the laws changed, and the attitudes changed with it. But the point had come that they had to move on, and that's into the area of advanced education and skills training. And I have met very few young women that disagree with me on that point.

When I look at the overall positions as they relate to women, I think we've made some pretty successful steps, including having direct — direct — positions at PSC affirmative action.

Of course, you're going to disagree with me in view of your statement in public accounts, and that's your privilege. We'll just agree to disagree on that point. I believe it's necessary; therefore those positions are in there.

I look at the positions in Advanced Education and Manpower where the women's branch was transferred to. I look at the Women's Secretariat, the positions in the women's division, and I see an overall increase, not a decrease. And I would suggest that the member have a look at those also.

Mr. Schmidt: — I don't really want to hold myself out as a spokesman for rural women. There's a concern that bothers me, Madam Minister, and it's bothered me for a long time. Under the former government there was a department or a bureau responsible for women's concerns,

and they did a few things. The women's groups of this province advocate some useful things for women, but I hear no one ever give any consideration, or speak up for rural women, and I represent a constituency where there are a lot of rural women. And I'm wondering if your secretariat would consider studying the situation of rural women.

Now you indicated you weren't going to have any more studies, but the former government never even considered the problem, and I would want you to consider studying the situation for rural women, who would be very pleased if they could find jobs, even at minimum wage. The situation that the rural women are in is that their husbands are usually farmers who have not very large incomes, and they would like to earn some money to supplement the farmers income. And there is no way that they can ever find a job if they are living in small towns in rural Saskatchewan, or on farms. And I think this point should be given some consideration.

All of the direction in the past has been in favour of urban women who are in a very privileged position in comparison to rural women. I'm wondering if your department has any intentions or directions in seeing what can be done to give rural women some equality with urban women.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Thank you. The issue off rural women and their status is a difficult one, and that's not to skirt your question. Yes, it is a concern. Like, for instance, we put six rural women on the advisory council to the minister on the status of women. It had never had rural women on it before. It was basically Regina, Saskatoon. I believe at one time there was one woman from rural Saskatchewan. So perhaps that's a starting point. We tried to address the very unique problems that rural women have on wife battery. And the problems are more severe because of the isolation and lack of close by programs and support people to go to. So a very large portion of the family violence package this year was trying to address the issue of rural women.

In some of my discussions with the women's groups, particularly the SWI, the Saskatchewan Women's Institute, which is basically rural women, they raised the same concern that you've raised in terms of opportunity for rural women versus the opportunity for urban women. And I guess there are several problems that come into it. First of all, there has been a very sad lack of recognition of what the farm wife adds to the farm. When I say there's been a lack of recognition, I mean by society in general. She has not been given very much credit or recognition for her efforts that go into maintaining a viable family farm operation.

The day care is a problem for rural women, particularly the farm wives, if they are going to be choosing to working outside of the home and off the farm, because of the isolation and the geographical differences. I would be willing to take it to the secretariat, to have a look at the area. Whether a study is the answer or not, I don't know, but I would be willing to have a look at that.

Mr. Schmidt: — Our further comment and question: Madam Minister, day care is not a big problem in rural Saskatchewan. And the reason it's not a big problem is because there aren't any jobs for women. And I have had very few requests for additional day care in rural Sask. In a lot of cases, they have granny care, and that works out rather nicely. But there are no jobs.

And I would like a firmer commitment from your secretariat to seriously look into this situation with rural women and give it a serious look: not a commitment to think about it or anything like that, but I want action from your secretariat on this particular topic. Can you give me some commitment on that?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes, I will give you a commitment that I will take it very seriously, and we'll see what we can do with it. I just want to maybe educate you a little bit on the day care issue and rural women.

Rural women are very much outside of the home at seeding time and harvest time, and other

times, whether it's farming operation or a ranching operation. And because of the number of your farmers, young families, that have gone back to the farm, if she is going to actively participate in the operation of the farm, she has a day care problem. And that's what comes forward to me from rural women, particularly if they are going to be active in the operation.

Perhaps, you know, one doesn't consider that a job, because you don't get a salary for it. That's one of the issues that rural women talk about. You know, I can spend as much time in the operation of the farm – there's no salary. I get absolutely no recognition for it, and the status is about the same level as where a lot of people consider the home-maker to be.

So they are all tied together, but I give you my commitment to have a serious look at the other issues that you raise.

Mr. Schmidt: — If we are going to educate each other – and I agree very much with education – could you give me one further commitment that your executive director will contact me and I will give her some information on the real situation in rural Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. I just want to ask one question. I don't believe my colleague directed this to you – you can correct me.

And I was wondering whether you, as minister in charge of the Women's Secretariat, or indeed the Women's Secretariat, whether any comprehensive survey has been made across the province to determine the main issues of concern to women.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, if I understand the question right, a main survey out of the secretariat? No, no.

Mr. Koskie: — I was wondering, Madam Minister, whether you believe that a survey which would reach out to all women, and I know that the secretariat are made up of a cross-section, but whether a detailed survey to the women of this province to arrive at some of the issues and concerns which they may have, and a broader, I would suspect, a broader representation could, in fact, be achieved through this mechanism. I'm wondering whether the minister would be amenable to looking at the nature of a survey.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I guess one of the first things that comes to mind is the difficulty that one may have with it. I guess the other point is, with the various groups around, and with greater participation in every stream of society by women, you, know, a lot of the concerns are coming to the forefront through one channel or another.

I would think that perhaps a survey just to female . . . I guess, first of all, you would want to have in mind: what is the main purpose of it? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the member from Quill Lakes says to find out their concerns. I suggest that the member of Quill Lakes start meeting with various women's groups, and he'll find out very quickly some of their concerns. You know, at this point in time, my answer to your question would be no, I'm not going to do a provincial survey for women.

Mr. Koskie: — Madam Minister, you have rejected, really, going out to the people – to the ladies, the women of this province – through a survey. And, therefore, what I'd like to ask you, if you would, since you are an authority on the basis concerns, would you lay before me what, in your view, are the basis concerns of the women of Saskatchewan? You indicate that you know them.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I would never profess to be an authority on how women think. I don't think women are any different than men. We all have our own ideas, we have our own religious

thoughts, our political thought. We're no different. For one person to presume to be a spokesperson for all the others is absolutely ludicrous.

What I did indicate was, if you sit down and talk to enough of the groups, you will get a feeling for the overlying concerns that often run through the majority of women. For instance, the issue of attitudes, the stereotyping of roles – that is still a concern. Educational opportunities is very much a concern with the young women, as employment opportunities is. For the woman that is older and has family responsibilities, if she's in the work-force, one of the difficulties she faces is a work-load – the work that she does from 9 to 5, and then when she goes home from 5 o'clock till 10 o'clock at night. Those are concerns that they have, and they're difficulties that they face in trying to work them out.

Mr. Koskie: — I want to be fair to the minister. And I take it that having asked her specifically in her capacity as minister in charge of the Women's Secretariat, and having conversed with the Women's Secretariat, and having conversed with all groups across Saskatchewan, and having decided that no survey to determine what the women of Saskatchewan might prioritize as concerns to them, that that which she has laid before us is a summary of the essential concerns of the women of this province. Do I take that as being correct?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, I had indicated you can't lump them all into one category. Some women have different concerns than other women. What I gave you was the basic concerns of the groups that I talked to – the status of women, the stereotyping, and the attitudes.

You know, there's a fair number of issues that fall into that category alone, including wife battery. That was a concern to them, and is a concern to them, and it's one of changing attitudes. You know, if you want to get down to individual concerns, some women may have an individual concern with day care; others will have an individual concern with something else. You can't put them all into one category, because we don't think any different than men; hopefully better – maybe not all the time, but some of the time.

What I'm trying to impress upon you is the female, when it comes to looking at the issues and the concerns, are no different than males. We have our differences also.

Mr. Koskie: — well, there's no doubt that we have our differences, but I thought the Women's Secretariat was indeed established to address some of the major concerns of women in society. I assumed that it was going to be addressing some of the concerns.

Now if you can't document, and if you haven't, indeed, even prioritized the particular concerns, then what action are you going to be taking? Unless, in fact, you do do a survey – determine what the women of this province are seeking – what action are you going to be taking, or are you going to be taking any action whatsoever?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The title of the minister responsible probably says it better than anything else, and that is responsible for the status of women.

The member says: what are we going to do? Well, if the member had of been in here at the beginning of this, along with the member from Regina Centre, he would have known what has taken place. I talked about the issue of attitude and family violence.

In January, we chaired an interdepartmental committee, along with three or four other departments, and we were successful in getting the departments to identify the areas that they could zero in on, in trying to fill the gaps when it comes to dealing with family violence or wife battery.

And we were successful in getting close to a million new dollars into the budget through various departments this year in dealing with that issue. The greatest impact will be felt on women. It

also includes, for about a quarter of a million dollars, a public campaign – an educational campaign – on family violence. That's one of the things that we've done in the three short months that we've been in operation.

To talk further about attitude and how women are perceived in stereotyping, we were successful – the Department of Justice, the Department of Social Services, and the Women's Secretariat – in compiling a presentation to the Fraser commission on pornography and prostitution. Now the member may think that's not very worthwhile, but I suggest that is a concern of women, and it is part of the problem that they face when it comes to attitudes and stereotyping.

The other priority that will be held this year has to do with education and training, and we will be working in conjunction, particularly with the Department of Advanced Education, and the women's services branch in that department, to try and better address the opportunities for females in society.

Mr. Koskie: — I was wondering whether the minister could indicate whether she can express her views, or that of the secretariat, as to whether or not maternity leave with pay is, in fact an issue of concern to women; and further, whether she would indicate her views in respect to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. I want to know whether those have been looked at as issues of concern to the women in society, and whether you could give us an update of your views and that of the secretariat – indeed, whether it is a concern to women in society.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, the member knows about UIC (Unemployment Insurance Commission), and the maternity leave, the maternity leave clauses.

My own views on maternity leave . . . Is that what you're asking for? We do not get a lot of complaints, Mr. Chairman, about maternity leave. I believe that the Labour department, with the position over there are monitoring maternity leave, has not seen an increase in the number of complaints. I would suggest that most employers are at the point where they recognize some of the benefits that come with maternity leave, and I do not believe that it is the problem today that it was in the past.

On equal pay for work of equal value, the law is now that it is equal pay for equal work. I've had some discussions with some people, including some women's groups and individuals, on the idea of equal value. And the discussion that I have had have been one of perhaps more questioning, trying to come up with an idea as to how one monitors equal value. Who is to define equal value? Is it going to be done in collaboration, or is it going to be one person? Will it be something that is negotiated, or in fact, maybe, will some other external force define equal value?

That question is a problem, and the groups that I've talked to have suggested that also. Not all of them. There are a few women's groups that have simply said it should be equal pay for work of equal value. But there are many others out there who suggested it needs a lot more study than what it had had to date on the impact, and how one monitors it, if it goes in after it's in.

Mr. Koskie: — On the principle that I referred to of equal pay for work of equal value, I'm wondering whether the minister can advise me whether in any jurisdictions in Canada, either provincial or federal, that that principle has been adopted.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I am not familiar with any jurisdictions that have gone towards the equal value. I know that there are many that are in discussions, including the province of Ontario. I believe that Alberta has just started to get into the discussions.

I've been in touch with a couple of the ministers responsible for status of women from Maritimes. The concern has been put to them. The issue is on the table and there's been a lot of

discussions, but I'm not familiar with those that have taken it and adopted it as practice. There may be a few who have said we agree in theory, but the technicalities of it have not been worked out yet.

Mr. Koskie: — I'm wondering whether you have taken a look at the federal situation in the, particularly with the public service, and I was wondering whether you could advise me whether or not they have, in fact, adopted the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I don not believe anything has been formalized. I don know that there will be some discussions the end of this month on Niagara-on-the-Lake, when all the ministers responsible for the status of women meet with our federal counterpart, and that is one of the issues up for discussion.

But as far as formalization goes, and all the technicalities that go with it, I do not believe that has taken place.

Mr. Koskie: — I am advised that in respect to the federal that they have, in fact, with respect to women in the public service, have applied the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, but that that was passed on to me without me doing a total check, so I'm not disagreeing with the minister, but I am advised that they have put it into place.

Just in concluding this then, in respect to maternity leave here in Saskatchewan: I know we have introduced it, and it was introduced under our administration. I was wondering whether the minister has reviewed the maternity leave with pay, as is adopted in some of the, very extensively through the European countries. If you go to the Scandinavian countries, Sweden and Denmark and Norway, and so on, if you go into West Germany, they have a very comprehensive . . . In France, in many of the European countries, this principle is even more widely adopted and developed — my understanding — than what it is here.

And I was wondering whether the minister has, in fact, gone to jurisdictions outside of North America in order to get some guide-lines in respect to what they're doing in some of the European countries. I don't say that it's necessarily applicable, but certainly it would give you a basis of understanding of what other very civilized societies are doing in respect to the issues of women.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, I have not gone outside of this jurisdiction yet. It may be something to have a look in the future. I'm happy to know that you have such a concern. I guess, when you tell me about other civilized areas it makes me wonder what you consider this province to be — basically non-civilized? That would surprise me considering you just finished, you know, the rule of terror of 11 years in government, unfortunately. Perhaps if you hadn't been there it would have been much more civilized at this point in time.

The issue of maternity leave with pay is one that a great number of people have an interest in, and a concern, and I believe some very hard questions that have to be answered.

As I said, I haven't gone outside the jurisdiction, and I would ask the member from Quill Lakes to remember that the secretariat is but three months old, and within those three months we probably accomplished more than what you did in 11 years.

Mr. Koskie: — Well I want to make a conclusion on the comments of the minister. I don't think I need any lecture from her as to my commitment to Saskatchewan. I don't know what her grandfather did, but mine homesteaded in 1905, and that land is still in the family. So my commitment is every bit as good as hers.

I think that this was a very civilized province when it had a very civilized government like the New Democratic Party as a government. The changes that have rapidly occurred, and which I

was referring to, is the sudden advent of a right-wing, neo-conservative government, which have done acts to the people in this province which go beyond the dignity that people had become accustomed to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I would hardly want the Minister of Agriculture to determine when I'm talking sense, because that would be like asking, well . . .

But anyway, I would urge the minister to, indeed, at least expand her horizons to look at other jurisdictions and to look at what is being done on the two particular issues that I have raised. And certainly I think that she might get some enlightenment. She need not have to travel quite as much as the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, but I think there are ways of getting that information, and I would urge her to take a look at other jurisdictions.

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2 agreed to.

Vote 41 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE
WOMEN'S SECRETARIAT
Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 41

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 41 agreed to.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Thank you. I just want to take this opportunity to thank my officials and the opposition.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, I'd like to thank the minister and her staff too for assisting us with the estimates.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE
PROVINCIAL LIBRARY
Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 29

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I would like to introduce the officials with me today, Mr. Chairman. To my right I have the Acting Provincial Librarian, Mr. Stan Skrzyszewski; and directly behind him I have Mr. Marcel de Laforest.

Item 1

Mr. Koskie: — I was wondering, Madam Minister, if you could briefly outline the highlights of the activities and the developments vis-à-vis the Provincial Library during the currency of the past year.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — It has basically been a year that has been very busy in looking at new legislation for libraries and putting that together, with the results we will see very shortly in this House. That legislation was done with a steering group, to ensure that consultation was very broad and all the concerns of the respective parties were taken into place.

I guess one of the other issues that the Provincial Library is very interested in, and has been busy in, is the automation field, pursuing automation. Also, we are in the process of interviewing for a new position, and you know, that takes time within. We've had some staff changes, and it all adds up to a very busy year.

Mr. Koskie: — You indicated some new positions you're looking at, and staff changes. I wonder if you could indicate what staff changes, in fact, took place, and what new positions you're referring to.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We have two positions: obviously the top one being the provincial librarian, and also the head of technical services.

Mr. Koskie: — And the staff changes that you're referring to, can you . . . Oh, that's changed, eh? And those are the ones, I take it, that have to be filled. Okay.

In respect to the new legislation, and I don't want to get into the details of it, but I understand in taking a look at the annual report of the Saskatchewan Provincial Library for 1983 that, indeed, one of the activities was to undertake a study of a new provincial libraries act. I note here that you appointed, by the minister in charge of libraries, a small working committee or design team. Could you elaborate on that, Madam Minister? It says a small one. Could you indicate how many members were on the design team? What was their mandate? Who, in fact, were the personnel on this design team?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I'm sorry for the delay, Mr. Chairman. I was looking for the names of the people. I thought I had them but I don't. I don't have them. I just wanted to be accurate and ensure that he gets all the information that he's always asking for and he claims he never gets it.

The design team . . . First of all I'll take you back to 1981, and the minister in charge then appointed a committee to review library legislation. Now that committee, when it brought forth its report, had about four items that were left unresolved. And after that, a design team was put into place. And the design team represented the major library interest groups, plus city councils — all those groups that have an interest and either work with libraries or as city council on the financial end of things. Plus the geographical area were taken into consideration on the design team.

Mr. Koskie: — You indicated that 1981, we were well under way and doing a review of it. And I know that in respect to funding, a lot of work had been done. And you said there were four issues unresolved. Would you outline those particular four issues that you were looking at, that you mentioned as being . . .

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — A mechanism to resolve disputes was unresolved; representation of cities within regional systems, on regional boards, and executive committees; resource centres in regions; and the powers and duties of regional library boards, were the four main items left unresolved.

Mr. Koskie: — Now we're getting somewhere. Just in respect to the process, you had the design team . . . Did the boards have an opportunity, before drafting the legislation that you have submitted to the Assembly this morning, did they have a fair amount of input in respect to it?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes. Every region had the opportunity to submit proposals and I believe all of them, or most of them, did.

Mr. Koskie: — In that process of consultation, I was wondering whether you indeed submitted to the various boards a draft of the bill that you're proposing. Was that part of the consultation process? Have they seen a draft of the bill that you are submitting?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, they have not seen the draft or the piece of legislation that will be coming in here. What we did was: with various groups, including the, I believe it's called the SLA (Saskatchewan Library Association), and other groups' annual meetings, etc. — we met with them to discuss the legislation and options. And they gave us feedback on the options, and we then took those concerns into the draft legislation. I believe that the previous provincial librarian met extensively with some groups and their concerns to talk about what would be in. And basically, what we did was gave a summary of what would be there.

Mr. Koskie: — My discussion with some of the people in the library system are concerned, at least a little concerned, but we'll look at the legislation, so I won't dwell on it. But they indicate to me that there was a library development board which was advisory in capacity, and this particular library development board, apparently under the proposal or draft or the submission of discussion, was to be abolished and replaced by another name of board. I'm not sure of the name — library board, or something of that nature.

The concern that was raised by the groups which had some participation is that they didn't really get a clear picture as to whether this is going to be advisory or whether some administrative duties were going to be assigned to the library board which you were proposing to the groups. I was wondering if there's any clarification on that.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I believe you're talking about what is the Saskatchewan Development Library Board (Saskatchewan Library Development Board). The legislation that will be brought forward will be suggesting a change to that, and it will simply be the Saskatchewan Library Board. Yes, its main function will still be advisory. We did, or we have suggested that the legislation in the make-up of the library board be expanded to include such things as the CNIB, who have some concerns on reading materials; the North; French; SUMA; and SARM will also be expanded there. The regions will be able to appoint their representative, a trustee.

Mr. Koskie: — I'll leave that. I'll leave with the minister that they want the boards . . . The regional boards want to continue a strong element of local autonomy as much as possible. They wouldn't want it superseded by a board which would, in fact, place in jeopardy some of the local autonomy which they've had in the past.

The other concern that is raised with me is the concern . . . And I know that you're addressing this, and maybe in your legislation you will be dealing with it too — that is the opting out. I know that in the Palliser Regional Library, and you will be familiar with that because the city of Swift Current is indeed a member of the Palliser, if my information is indeed right. I was wondering . . . My advice is that Swift Current city has given notice of withdrawal from the Palliser Regional Library system. I'm wondering whether you are aware of that, and could you indicate whether during the year there has been a problem with municipalities and/or cities opting not to continue to participate and fund their particular regional library?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, it has not been a problem. Yes, I'm aware of the Swift Current city. They are not in the Palliser regional system; they are in the Chinook. We did have a representative of the Swift Current city council who had an interest in libraries sit on the design team, and I believe some of the issues that the two groups in the Chinook were having, including city council, had full discussion and a good airing. They seemed to be able to come to a compromise on what should be in the legislation. So it has died down somewhat over the past year.

Mr. Koskie: — I thought that you would be familiar with it, because I'm led to believe that the alderman Wilson of Swift Current, the PC candidate federally, was in fact urging the withdrawal, unless, you know, some forms of their grievance was in fact met.

But I more specifically ask you: can you indicate throughout the library system whether, indeed, there has been any opting out at all? I'm led to believe that that is not true; that no municipalities

have indeed opted out; and I would like a clarification of that. And if indeed there has been some opting out, I would like a list, a comprehensive list, of all the municipalities, and/or cities, towns, and villages, etc., that have opted out.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I guess when I indicated that it had not been a problem, it is not a growing. For instance, in 1982, there were 21 notices of withdrawal, notices that were in effect; and in 1983, we saw that decline to 17. We had two actual withdrawals, one being the R.M. of Rodgers, and the other one was Briercrest, which is kind of in a different category – more of an institution as opposed to the R.M.

Mr. Koskie: — I have a report here which I want to go into, and it has to do with the south-east regional library system, and I'm referring to a report of the regional chairman, and this covers the area of Weyburn. And the report of the regional chairman reported that four rural municipalities: Stoughton, and Tecumseh (T-e-c-u-m-s-e-h), Estevan, and South Qu'Appelle, announced they were withdrawing from the regional library system. And it says both Stoughton and Tecumseh rescinded their motions to withdraw. And no reasons for the withdrawals, but the chairman of the regional library said he assumed it was economic considerations. Are you aware of whether any of those particular municipalities withdrew?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — They all withdrew. I mean . . . I mean, they all rescinded their notice of withdrawal.

Mr. Koskie: — Okay. I'll take your word on that. You know, that's not what the information is, but that's good to hear.

I want to turn to another concern, and that is in respect to the funding. I want to, I guess, first of all ask the minister whether she thinks the particular funding that is going to be provided to the libraries will, in fact, be sufficient, because it's very difficult because they have to purchase their books, and very difficult to continue building their libraries with a curtailed amount of funding.

I'd like to know whether it is your view that the funding that you have provided here, which will go into the library systems, into the regional libraries, in your view is going to be sufficient, in view of the ever-rising costs of purchases of library books.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We had budgeted for a 5 per cent increase on the operating grants to provincial libraries, and I believe, particularly if I compare that with other jurisdictions across Canada, that libraries in Saskatchewan have been able to gain their fair share of the pie.

So while we have a 5 per cent average on the operating grants, I am informed that the price of books is up approximately 2 per cent.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, I'll only refer you to this article, and that's from Weyburn, and it says:

The biggest problem facing the south-east regional library system is lack of books, and although the region's book budget was increased in 1982 (this is), it is still lowest per capita book budget of all public libraries in Saskatchewan, Bob Krieg, a regional librarian, said Saturday at an annual meeting of the south-east regional library system.

It says:

While parkland region, a comparable system, bought 10,912 hard-cover books in 1982, the south-east bought only 6,415. The parkland region has a material budget of 153,000, and south-east has 120.

And he goes on to indicate . . . It says:

For instance, book cards which cost \$81 in 1981 cost \$200 in 1982, and library staff (he goes on to say) attempted to save money wherever they could by ordering books directly from the publishers instead of through the agents.

So he goes on to say that:

The budget squeeze also forced the library to take a hard look at the audio-visual collections.

And all I'm pointing out to you there is that there is some considerable tightness of budget in providing the necessary books, and there has been, according to one regional library director, some cut-back in what they can provide.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — What the member from Quill Lake reads out of the report . . . You know, I think it's a problem that faces almost any institution, whether it's the delivery of a service on books, or perhaps the delivery of service on health in trying to meet the demands, in trying to keep up with changes. And that's one of the difficulties that libraries are going to face, are facing, and will even see greater problems in the future, if they are going to be keeping up with technology and the kinds of changes the technology will bring to libraries.

I guess I see several factors coming out of what you were reading. If they had a low number of books, we are talking about trying to increase the quantity, the variety, the choices that they may offer to their various publics. Yes, then they would have a hard time juggling within budgets. They would have to perhaps evaluate and review the various services that they had, and perhaps some of them should be changed. The people that run the libraries have been very adept at looking at what they need, not only for today but for the future.

I guess one of the other factors that comes into play would be the level of support that they are receiving from the municipalities in the given areas that they may be in. And that varies from one municipality to another across the province. So if they are in an area where it's relatively low, then they will have more difficulty than a library system that is in an area that has a fairly healthy municipal support.

Mr. Koskie: — There's one other concern that has been brought to my attention, and that is in respect to the government's decision in the budget speech in '84 that the E&H tax on electricity has been removed for some selected groups in society.

I have a copy of a letter that was addressed to the Minister of Finance from the Saskatoon Public Library system, Alice Turner, chief librarian and secretary to the board. And this is the particular request that she set forward, Madam Minister, and:

The board respectfully request that the Minister of Finance consider extension of this new measure to include public libraries.

Municipal libraries are totally non-profit, tax supported, public service institutions operating, not only as community information resource and program centres, but providing recreational resources and programming for all ages and interests in the communities they serve. The board feels strongly that the public libraries qualify and should be included in categories receiving the new exemption of the E&H tax.

I wonder if the minister is aware of that request that was sent in on May 15, 1984, from the Saskatoon public library system, and I wonder if she'd care to comment whether she has discussed it with the Minister of Finance, asked him to come to his senses, and to allow exemption to the libraries as he has done for other recreational and cultural facilities.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes, I'm aware of it, Mr. Chairman; and no, I have not yet discussed it

with the Minister of Finance. I will assure the member from Quill Lake, because the Minister of Finance has such good sense, that we will be in communications with each other on it.

Item 1 agreed to

Item 2

Mr. Koskie: — We have a slight decrease in staff, but other expenses under professional services have been cut a fair amount in the total budget there. I wonder if you could just outline the reason and the nature of the cuts.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — It's basically a service that was considered developmental, and as the regions have developed, they have gotten into those particular areas.

Item 2 agreed to.

Item 3

Mr. Koskie: — One question there, Mr. Chairman. Technical services: there's a decrease in staff and a decrease in other expenses. Can you indicate what technical staff was cut, or are they just simply positions that weren't filled?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Those positions were vacant, and the decrease in the other expenses has to do with the Provincial Library system conducting a reconversion from manual to automation processes, and that process is now completed.

Item 3 agreed to.

Item 4 agreed to.

Vote 29 agreed to.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank the member from Quill Lake and my officials for a very efficient session.

Mr. Koskie: — I thank the staff.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:33 p.m.