

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

May 22, 1984

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

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

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Sveinson: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and to the Assembly, 50 students in the Speaker's gallery from Al Pickard School, accompanied by Jo Ann Friesen and Verna Taylor. I hope you have an educational and informative stay in the Assembly, and will see you after question period for pictures and drinks.

And I just ask the group to stand up, and ask the Assembly to give them an applause while they're here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, a group of visitors from Douglas Park Elementary School in Regina. These visitors, 22 grade 8 students, along with their teacher, Mr. Ken Farago, and a parent, Mrs. Samkoe, are presently sitting in the west gallery. I hope that you find your visit interesting and profitable. I wish to advise that I will be meeting with you in the rotunda for pictures and in the members' dining-room for refreshments.

I would ask the members on both sides of the House to join with me in extending a cordial welcome to our visitors.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel: — I'd like to introduce some people to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker,, and through you to this House, and I would like them to stand. They are sitting in the top row of the Speaker's gallery. They're farmers that have driven in from the north-eastern part of Saskatchewan, some of them more than 200 miles, and they're here to watch this Assembly operate today, and to, hopefully, pass a private member's bill that would save their farms.

I'd like you all to join in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Concern Regarding Farmers' Operating Loans

Mr. Engel: — I've a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Groups have been meeting with us, and farmers have been contacting us during the week and in our riding, and are very concerned that your program to grant operating loans isn't working. If it's working, at best it's three weeks or more delay. Very few farmers are qualifying that are in serious trouble.

Are you prepared to today enlist your caucus support of a private member's bill that would grant them a stay of execution and give them some time to make arrangements that they could make ends meet, that they won't be losing their farm?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not about to comment on the bill that's before the House, but I'm quite prepared to tell the farmers of Saskatchewan that we are 100 per cent behind them in terms of helping them deal with the cost-price squeeze that exists out there. And as you full well know, we have in recent days in this House passed amendments to legislation that's been in place for some good long time that supplies some good deal of security to the family farm, and certainly the homestead.

And recognizing that there was a problem out there, we went even further than that and introduced the counselling assistance for farmers program, the bill that allows for guaranteed operating funds for those farmers who are in a temporary financial crisis.

And the reports I have are quite different than what you've obviously received. The reports I have are that it's going very smoothly. In fact, I think last week there was something like 46 farm panels held interviews. To put it quite simply, the information that I've had come back suggests the program is running very well, and certainly I am very happy with it to date. And at this very point in time I would not be prepared to look at anything over and above what we have in place now, because I think the tools are there, and they're working.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a new question. The president of CAM (Canadian Agriculture Movement) in Saskatchewan said in the past, "A full third of Saskatchewan's family farmers are in serious financial trouble." A third — thousands and thousands of family farms. This is a direct quote he said. Yet your government's only response has been to set up some committees which review whether or not a select few should receive government operating loans — \$4 million to deal with a \$50-million problem.

Mr. Minister, farmers tell me these committees are inefficient, and they're an inefficient method of dealing with an immediate problem. It's taking forever to get these committees to plead your question.

My question, Mr. Minister: will you introduce a . . . (inaudible) . . . operating loan guarantee program that will begin to deal with the serious problem that's out there, not just 40 a week? Forty a week isn't going to do it, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I'm not sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the hon. member's question was if, in fact, there was one.

But insofar as his attack on the fine farmers out there that have agreed to sit on those panels, farmers that have been drawn from all over Saskatchewan, who are recognized leaders and recognized experts in farming, recently retired, or active farmers that have got a track record in terms of their farming careers is an admirable. And I don't know why the hon. member would choose to slam and put down farmers.

This government, quite frankly, honestly takes a different approach than what you took to helping farmers. Our view is that we'll provide them with the funds and let the farmers operate the program because we believe that they understand farming as well as anyone. And I think you would have to agree with that. Your answer, obviously, was to buy up all the farms and have everybody as part of a state farm. We just don't happen to think that way.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, a question to the Minister of Agriculture. I have here a quote from the now Premier of the province quoted from the *Business Review* of 1977, and in that quote he says, and I quote:

Society may not wish to support higher food prices or producer security so that the non-productive 80 per cent of the farm population can live in the country at a profit.

Mr. Minister, my question to you is this: your attitude, saying that the farmers of this province are in good shape and don't need any further assistance, are you not merely a pawn of the Premier of this province who refers to 80 per cent of the farmers as inefficient, and are you merely not referring to, and acting on the advice of the Premier of this province when he says 80 per cent of the farmers are inefficient?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, first of all I have never suggested that everything is bright and beautiful out there in the agriculture suggested today. I have said that, recognizing that there were farmers out there suffering from a temporary financial crisis if you like, we have acted.

Time and time again I have said in this House and outside this House that, frankly, as a government we could have stood up here and said, "All is well in Saskatchewan." The statistics would back that up. You know, the agriculture, all the conferences suggest that Saskatchewan's net realizable farm income is going to be better here than in other provinces.

I could have pointed to bankruptcy statistics which would suggest that Saskatchewan probably is better off than all other provinces. But, frankly, that would have been the politician's way out. We chose to act rather than to hide behind statistics.

And the reason we acted is because we happen to have 30 or 40-odd members on this side of the House who are farmers and are out in those constituencies every weekend, listening to what the farming population has to say. We have the feel for what's happening out there at the grass roots level, and that's why we put in place that additional program to provide for operating funds.

And as well, I think the evidence speaks for itself in so far as our commitment to Saskatchewan farmers and relative to that quotation that you raised. Probably no other province in the country can lay claim to the fact that we have started something like 1,500 new farmers since we took office. We haven't lost 10,000 farmers over the past decade, such as your administration did when they were in power in this province.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, a supplement to the minister. I had asked you about a quote from a periodical from 1977 that your Premier was quoted as saying 80 per cent of the farmers in this province are inefficient.

I want you to tell me whether or not you agree with the statement made by Mr. Devine when he was a professor at the university. Do you agree with it or not?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Number one, that's taken out of context. Number two, I don't think there's anybody better equipped in terms of legislators in this province on this side of the House, because of the farming backgrounds that many of our members have, to have a feel for what's happening out there in farmers. And you can trot out quotations out of context and try and lay that old line on the folks — the big scare out there. The medi-scare didn't work; this won't work. The farmers out there, the people out there are too smart. You know it, we know it, and they know it.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, a final supplementary. When the minister says, laying a line on, I wonder whose line people are beginning to suspect now — whether it's the now Premier of the province, whether they're really believing that this Premier believes that 80 per cent of the farmers are inefficient and he's trying to drive them off the land.

My question to you, Mr. Minister, is whether or not you would support bringing forward Bill 30 today to have it passed and brought forward in the debate, and passed by this Assembly?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I've already answered that question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, earlier

today in so far as what I'll support and what this government supports. And I can go through the litany of programs and legislation that we put in place, that the farmers like, and what the farmers wanted.

And it starts off with the interest rate relief, being that that was the number one issue facing Saskatchewan farmers. Well, I want to tell you another thing, that we probably wouldn't have any farmers out there today suffering from the cost-price squeeze if the 8 and 12 per cent mortgage funds had been made available in the late '70s when interest rates went up, because that's the only criticism I've ever heard of that program was: why wasn't it brought in sooner? Because we're still seeing the effects today of those people that caught in those high-interest rate programs.

And I could go on and talk about the changes in the Ag Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan, and the tax relief programs that we've brought in place to help the farmers, because the farmers in this province are extremely efficient and they like to be competitive.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to ask a question to the Minister of Agriculture also. This morning we had the opportunity of discussing the crisis in the agricultural community with a number of members of the Canadian Agricultural Movement. And they indicated that in respect to your guaranteed-operating loans program, which you have set into place and indicated that it's solving all the problems, they have indicated that, first of all, that the forms are not even distributed — there was only one form at a given bank. That the ag rep . . . That he had to drive 60 miles to an ag rep to see if he could obtain a form, and the ag rep didn't even know about the program.

But most importantly, I ask you: will you, in fact, investigate this program and the delivery of this program because farmers are desperate. And the turn-around time which you guaranteed would be five days has increased to two and three weeks, and many farmers are waiting for a decision before they can even sow their crops. Will you investigate this performance of the distribution of this program?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, hon. member, in so far as the problems that members of the Canadian Agricultural Movement have raised with you, they have not raised them with me and, in fact, I haven't visited with them, at least for a couple of three weeks. But as my memory serves me correctly, the very day that we had first reading of The Counselling Assistance for Farmers Act in this House, not myself but my Legislative Secretary and others met that day with some members of the Canadian Agricultural Movement. And interestingly enough the story I got from them was that they were very excited and happy about this bill that was being brought before the House and saw that very much as an answer to the temporary problem out there.

In so far as the distribution of forms, certainly we've used all the avenues out there — ag rep offices, banks — there's a 1-800 number in place. We have a large pool of farmers to draw from to sit on, in terms of these panels. I think their track record is a good one to date. But certainly, if you have specific examples, I'd be happy if you would bring them forth to me, and I would have them pursued with the program manager.

Mr. Koskie: — I certainly do have examples, and then I hope that the minister will avail himself of meeting with the farm community to find out.

I want to ask as a supplement, I want to ask as a . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . What's your problem, Mr. Minister of Justice? Have you got a problem? I have the . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order!

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I thought I had the floor, rather than the

Minister of Justice.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture: is it, in fact, true that before an application can proceed — a farmer making application — that he has to go to his banker or his financial institution and have the authorization of that banker before the application can even go forward for approval?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — He has to have a farm plan put together and, certainly, he has to agree to the bank . . . review of the bank's records, at least to the bank's view of his records, and then the banker and the farmer and the panel may sit down individually with one another, or all together — around the kitchen table, if you like — to sort out the problems.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, I think what you have indicated, Mr. Minister of Agriculture, is apropos as how the program's working: while the farmer's desperate plight of not seeding their crop, the financial banker's sitting around the table trying to find out what's going on.

I want to ask you specifically though: when the farmer gets the application form, fills it out, is it not, in fact, true that he has to take it to the banker, and the banker has to put his approval before it can proceed in for evaluation of assistance?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well the rules are the same whether you be a credit union or a bank, and certainly one of the steps is filling out an application form which has been kept to a minimum; as well, getting certain authorization of the farmer to review data at the bank. It seems to me that that makes some sense.

We've tried to come up with some solutions, and what we've come up with here is a program that's government funded, but farmer operated. Quite frankly, I have a lot of faith and confidence in the ability of the farmers of Saskatchewan out there to help solve each others' problems, if you like. It's something that has stood the test of time in this province.

And, as well, mention was made earlier of the fact that the \$4 million fund may not be enough to cover all those who need help. And I'm quite happy to tell you, and to tell this Assembly that, in fact, that \$4 million will very likely translate into something close to 10 million because we have, in fact, worked out an agreement with the banks and credit unions where they will also accept some of the risk. So the \$4 million is certainly something more than that; it's probably closer to \$10 million.

Settlement with Former President of SGI

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Government Insurance office who I'm happy to welcome here. We missed him on Friday. I want to ask him about a letter which his counsel will have received last Friday from counsel from the former president of SGI, Mr. Murray Wallace.

In the letter Mr. Wallace waives any requirement to keep confidential the terms of the settlement of the legal action for wrongful dismissal and the settlement of the legal action for defamation which he filed against SGI and against the minister.

What I ask the minister is this: will you, in the light of the information you have received from Mr. Wallace's counsel, will you now, immediately or today, release the dollar amount of the settlements with Mr. Wallace, the basis for calculating the amounts, the other terms of the settlements, and how much you paid to your counsel, Mr. Ron Barclay, over the last 18 months? Will you release this information in full?

Hon. Mr. Rousseau: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the member for Quill Lakes will lower it down a little bit, I'll answer the question. No, Mr. Speaker, I will not.

First of all, let me correct the Leader of the Opposition. I'm surprised that counsel for Mr. Wallace don't know who they're dealing with and who they're signing documents with. Mr. Barclay is not the lawyer that represented me . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

If your seat-mate will hold it down, perhaps you will be able to hear what I'm saying. I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the counsel, my counsel, is not Mr. Barclay, and never was on this matter. I will start with that.

However, my counsel and counsel for Mr. Wallace signed an agreement, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which included confidentiality as an integral part of the settlement and I have no intention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of breaching that agreement any more than I would breach a confidence of agreements that we make with claimants or employees.

I will say this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I believe a settlement was in the best interests of the corporation and avoided a long and arduous and expensive legal battle.

To release this information, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would set some precedents. And consider the precedents that this would set. The issue isn't simply an agreement between SGI and Murray Wallace. The issue is the confidentiality of agreements signed by all other Crowns, departments, and agencies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, confidentiality is a long-standing practice of this government, other governments, and the members opposite when they held office. Breaking precedent would call into question all confidential agreements. Anyone who has or is contemplating entering into such an agreement would have justifiable concern over the secrecy of their dealings with the government. Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will make no further comment.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Deputy Speaker. An agreement was signed between the minister, SGI, and Mr. Wallace to keep confidential certain documents. Mr. Wallace has waived that. The issue is: will you similarly waive it so the people of Saskatchewan will know just how much your incompetence and your attack on Mr. Wallace has cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan? Will you waive your confidentiality?

Hon. Mr. Rousseau: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I indicated to the Leader of the Opposition that the matter is confidential. The matter is between Mr. Wallace, his attorneys, myself, and my attorney. I have no intention of breaking or breaching that agreement. If Mr. Wallace breaks it, I can't control that. I will not breach or break the agreement.

The Leader of the Opposition was indicating the firing of Mr. Wallace. I might add this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the question of cause, in fact, was irrelevant in any case, because he would have been terminated in any event, since Mr. Wallace was not considered to be suitable as a policy adviser.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A week ago, Mr. Minister, you said to this House, "I would just love, would love to be able to reveal how little we paid to Mr. Wallace." And on Friday in this House, the Premier said, "I am assuming that he (that's you, sir) will reveal what he loves to reveal."

Now what I want to know is, what I want to know is: are you going to reveal what a week ago you said you would love to reveal, or are you going to hide behind confidentiality, which has already been waived by the citizen, and is being claimed only by you to shelter your government from justifiable criticism?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Rousseau: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, my personal preferences is not the question.

My personal preference here is not the question here. It is the question of government policy. It is the question of the policy of the government that preceded us, when you were government, when you were here. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we intend to live up to the same policies that we've established, that was established by the previous government, and it's we keep an agreement confidential, and the agreement will remain confidential.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is it the policy of your government in making settlements with discharged employees to extract from them promises of confidentiality, and when they waive it to insist that you have a right to keep this information from the public when the public are paying for your incompetence and your attack on the integrity of Mr. Wallace?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Rousseau: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't really believe that the Leader of the Opposition believes what he has just said. We did not extract any agreement from Mr. Wallace. It was an agreement that was signed by his attorney, and one that was signed by our attorney, and it was decided by both sides that it was better to keep the matter of settlement confidential.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, a question to the minister. He has said it was decided by both sides that it would be better to keep it confidential. Mr. Wallace has already indicated that it is not being kept confidential for his benefit. I ask you: are you now admitting that all the facts are being kept confidential for the benefit either of SGI or for the other litigant, Mr. Paul Rousseau?

Hon. Mr. Rousseau: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, if Mr. Wallace wants the information released today he should have thought of that when he signed the agreement, or had his attorney sign the agreement. They sign an agreement; they get the cheques into their hands; they cash the cheques; and then all of a sudden they want to tell the world about it. But that isn't the way they signed the agreement to begin with. They signed the agreement. They signed it on the basis that they would receive a settlement, and the settlement would be based on confidentiality. They wanted it, and it was agreed upon by both sides.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. It may well be that Mr. Wallace made the mistake of believing you wanted to keep it confidential. But you have asserted that this was not so, that you would love to make it public. Now Mr. Wallace wants to make it public. What is keeping you from making it public when both Mr. Wallace and you want to make it public?

Hon. Mr. Rousseau: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Wallace made a lot of mistakes . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Yes, perhaps just one more of them.

As I said to the Leader of the Opposition, he wanted it confidential. It was agreed upon. It will remain confidential. We will not breach or break an agreement that was made.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. We've already established that the Premier wants it public. Mr. Wallace wants it public. You, sir, have indicated that Mr. Wallace made a lot of mistakes. Will you tell us what your mistake cost the people of Saskatchewan? That's all we ask. Will you tell us what your mistake, which you have acknowledged in your letter of apology, cost the people of Saskatchewan? You've talked about Mr. Wallace's mistakes. Will you talk about your own?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Rousseau: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, nowhere in Friday's *Hansard*, nowhere in Friday's *Hansard* does it indicate to me — unless the Leader of the Opposition interprets the Premier's words differently than I do — but nowhere in Friday's *Hansard* does it indicate to me

that the Premier wants it made public.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order, order! The member from Shaunavon knows that when the Speaker is on his feet there's supposed to be silence in the Assembly.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 66 — An Act to incorporate the Saskatchewan Water Corporation

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to move first reading of a bill to incorporate the Saskatchewan Water Corporation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Bill No. 67 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the enactment of The Water Corporation Act

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Speaker, I would also like to move first reading of a bill respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the enactment of The Water Corporation Act.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE BILLS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 02 — An Act to amend an Act to incorporate The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities

Clauses 1 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the bill.

The committee reported progress.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 02 — An Act to amend an Act to incorporate The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities

Mr. Sauder: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 02, An Act to amend an Act to incorporate The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and the bill read a third time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 57 — An Act respecting Lotteries

Hon. Mr. Folk: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move:

That the order for second reading of Bill No. 57, An Act respecting Lotteries, be discharged, and the bill referred to the standing committee on non-controversial bills.

I so move, seconded by the member from Yorkton.

Motion agreed to.

Bill No. 58 — An Act to amend The Arts Board Act

Hon. Mr. Folk: — thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again, by leave of the Assembly, I move:

That the order for second reading of Bill No. 58, An Act to amend The Arts Board Act, be discharged, and the bill referred to the standing committee on non-controversial bills.

I so move, once again seconded by the member from Yorkton.

Motion agreed to.

Bill No. 59 — An Act to amend The Department of Finance Act, 1983

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move:

That an order for second reading of Bill No. 59, An Act to amend The Department of Finance Act, 1983, be discharged, and the bill referred to the standing committee on non-controversial bills.

I so move, seconded by the member from Meadow Lake.

Motion agreed to.

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

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, again with leave of the Assembly, I move:

That an order for second reading of Bill No. 63, An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the amendments to The Department of Finance Act, 1984, be discharged, and the bill referred to the standing committee on non-controversial bills.

And I would so move that, seconded by the member from Meadow Lake.

Motion agreed to.

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

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Minister. I'm pleased to move second reading of the bill, An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act.

During the past year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government has had extensive discussions with the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA), and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM), regarding the revenue sharing program. These negotiations have

included an in-depth analysis of numerous alternatives to the current distribution formula, taking into account principles of equity, simplicity, and predictability. And Mr. Deputy Speaker, after examining all of these alternatives, SUMA requested, and our government agreed, that the current distribution formula be reintroduced for the 1984 urban revenue sharing program as the most equitable method of distributing the pool. This has been done, Mr. Speaker.

Another important aspect of our discussions with SUMA and SARM has been a review of the escalator index which is used to establish the amount of funding available for revenue sharing each year. As members are aware, because of our government's initiative in eliminating the gas tax, relieving Saskatchewan citizens of this unnecessary burden, the existing escalator index is no longer applicable.

We are currently reviewing a variety of options to establish a new escalator index for future years. As an interim measure, while these discussions continue, this bill provides for a 5 per cent increase in the revenue-sharing pool for 1984. In addition, the bill includes a provision confirming last year's increase to the pool.

In taking these steps, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some communities will receive increases of greater than 5 per cent, while some increases will be less than 5 per cent. In this regard SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association), had requested a guarantee that every community receive at least as much in 1984 as it did in 1983.

We have, Mr. Speaker, agreed with this request, and the guarantee is incorporated into individual grant calculations. As announced in the budget, our government believes it important to undertake a review of the major issues pertaining to the financing of local government and, therefore, we have established a commission on local government finance.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to reiterate that our government is continuing its on-going discussions with SUMA and SARM to determine the appropriate basis for a future revenue-sharing escalator. I believe our actions demonstrate three important points: one, that we recognize the important role revenue sharing plays in municipal finance; secondly, that we acknowledge the need to achieve an early resolution to local government financing issues by the establishment of a commission on local government finance; and three, that our continuing dialogue with SUMA and SARM clearly illustrates our willingness to maintain a spirit of co-operation on matters of municipal finance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I join my colleague, the Minister of Rural Development, to urge all members to support the bill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will just add a few words to that which the minister has addressed to the House. We do not propose to oppose this bill. We are a little bit amused by the fact that it is retroactive to a year ago due to some lack of diligence on the part of the minister or his staff.

But what I am wishing to address is the revenue-sharing issues which the minister has raised. We have regretted that the revenue sharing, as originally conceived, has not been followed. We had hoped that municipalities would get revenue sharing based upon a formula which was not set by the government at each budget period, of 7 per cent, or 5 per cent, or as the case may be, but depending on the revenues of the province. That was the objective, to provide the municipalities with a source of revenue which was more or less predictable and would not depend upon each budget set by the provincial government.

That has not proved to be possible. I do not know all of the reasons why it has not proved to be possible. Part of them, I suppose, is because sources of provincial revenue have been less

buoyant than they otherwise would have been and, accordingly, would have provided the municipalities with less money than the government thought was appropriate.

In any case, I think it is a matter for regret that we are back on a system of municipalities relying upon the amounts set by the provincial government in each budget, and no longer are we operating on a system whereby the amount of revenue which the municipalities received would depend upon things external to the government's budget-making process.

The initial idea was to provide money based upon not what the government raised but what they might raise, depending on particular tax bases. And accordingly, this being the case, there would be no strict reason why one had to make a change when a tax was lowered or, indeed, abolished, since the basis for the tax remains the same.

However, since The Fuel Petroleum Products Act has been totally abolished, there may well be a wish on the part of the municipalities to review the whole formula. The minister has indicated that. We would not wish to take a position which was contrary to that taken by SUMA on behalf of other municipalities.

And accordingly, while we regret the circumstances which have caused the basic revenue-sharing idea to fall to the ground, we recognize the minister's representation that what he is bringing forward here is that which SUMA, on behalf of municipalities, wishes to be brought forward, and we therefore will be supporting the bill.

We have some questions which we would like to direct to the minister, and we'll do so in committee.

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

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mrs. Smith that Bill No. 38 — **An Act to amend The Education Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to only make a very few brief comments in respect to it. Many of the amendments which are introduced in The Education Act are of a housekeeping type. And I might mention that I will be asking some questions — just to advise the minister — in respect to the section 5 of the act, just for clarification, and also in respect to section 7, 8, and 9 of particular. And other than that, I'll get clarification of those during committee of the whole. I have no other particular comments to make at this time. Thank you.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McLaren that Bill No. 19 — **An Act respecting Building and Accessibility Standards and the Inspection of Buildings** be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've had an opportunity to review the minister's remarks on this bill — if I may say so, his very unenlightening remarks. I think that following a review of those remarks I would like to make a few points. I'd like to make a few points because it seems to me that the minister forgot to make a good number of the points that ought to have been made with respect to this bill. He forgot to explain why he totally failed to consult adequately before he introduced the bill.

This bill is not something which is new on the horizon. His colleagues, when they were in opposition, introduced accessibility legislation. The previous government introduced accessibility legislation. It was on the order paper in 1981, I believe, and certainly in 1982.

The minister indicated that he was not satisfied with what his colleagues had previously proposed, or what the previous government had proposed, and he went forth and drafted his own bill. But he drafted it without consulting with the groups who were going to benefit from this legislation, and he introduced his bill. He introduced it some months ago, last fall.

And he forgot to mention what happened to this bill when it was introduced, that it visited upon him and his government, and on the legislation, criticism from almost everybody who was interested in this type of legislation — groups that represent the handicapped. And I will use that phrase, “groups that represent the handicapped,” to encompass a goodly number of people — the Voice of the Handicapped, several others.

They said the bill wasn't good enough. The Human Rights Commission of Saskatchewan — and that, as you will know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is an organization set up by statute and appointed by the government opposite — they said it wasn't good enough. The umbrella group of groups representing the handicapped, the provincial accessibility committee, said it wasn't good enough.

The minister did not mention in his opening remarks that the previous legislation to which I referred, introduced in part by his colleagues, one bill introduced by his colleagues and one introduced by the previous government, would have done far more than the bill which he introduced last fall. He ought, it seems to me, to have reviewed the history of this legislation and told the House why he was departing from what had previously been put forward by both main parties in this House years ago. But he didn't do that.

He might have mentioned during his review that again, last December, an effort was made to introduce accessibility legislation which we believe would have been more suitable, and the government opposite wouldn't even allow it to be dealt with in the House.

But turning to the bill itself, we note that the offensive provisions of the initial Part III of the bill have been removed, and that's a step forward. The minister proposes to develop regulations instead of having the standards in legislation. When I say “have been removed,” we are relying upon the minister's assurances that they will be removed, and that we're going to set the standards in regulations, and that makes sense.

Maybe at some future time they should be in legislation, but I don't think any of us knows what those standards should be at this time and, accordingly, what the minister is proposing is a step forward.

Having regard to the fact that the bill has been objected to by virtually every group representing the handicapped, and the fact that they have all been highly critical of the minister with respect to the way he has consulted or not consulted, I would have hoped that the minister would have told us how he was going to arrive at the regulations, and how he was going to consult, and with whom.

But he did not do so. Therefore the public, and the groups representing the handicapped, are again left high and dry, wondering with whom the minister will consult, how effectively, and what voice they will have in the regulations which will be effectively the guts of this legislation.

I suppose that under other circumstances the public, and these groups representing the handicapped, might have been able to assume that the minister would consult in an effective way, in a timely way. But having regard to this minister's record of consultation, they would be

unwise to assume that.

And I hope the minister, when he closes this debate, will give firm assurances of how he proposes to consult, and with whom he proposes to consult in developing the regulations which, as I have said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are going to be the guts of this legislation.

We are pleased that the minister has agreed to put in an appeal board, and that is a step forward, as well. Unfortunately, as it seems to us, the appeal board will be open to building owners and developers who wish to appeal against decisions which will restrict their activities, but it does not seem to us to be an effective vehicle whereby handicapped persons, or groups representing the handicapped, will be able to have their concerns appealed.

Finally, I would have hoped, and invite the minister when he closes this debate, to tell us how, in general terms, he expects this act to be administered. Will he tell us whether or not the Department of Labour will be the agency; whether he envisages that a chief inspector of building standards and other inspectors are likely to be appointed in the relatively near future? I think it would be very much appreciated by all those who have been so actively involved in this issue to know what the minister has in mind, and what time frame he has in mind with respect to the administration and the effective introduction of the bill.

If he would, when he closes the debate, indicate roughly when he thinks the regulations will be passed; roughly who he thinks he will be consulting with, and when. And when he thinks the chief persons administering the bill (and I believe it will be chief inspector of building standards — but that name may not stand), if he would indicate when those people will be in place, it would be, I know, greatly appreciated by all those who have been so interested in the progress of this legislation.

I would also invite the minister to indicate whether or not there are funds in the budget to carry on the functions envisaged by this bill.

I say then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, that the minister and the government of which he is a member has a record of delay and vacillation in dealing with this whole issue. It was an issue, an active issue, under consideration before the current government took office. It is now two years later, and we're still talking about maybe getting regulations. Not very good! Not a very impressive performance on behalf of the handicapped.

The minister's first attempt at the bill last December demonstrated that he was overwhelmed by insensitivity. He was simply not responding to what people who are handicapped, and organizations on behalf of the handicapped, were saying to him and had been saying for some time. He simply was not responding. He then tacked together, cobbled together, a so-called consultation process in January which was ineffective and which was stated to be ineffective — stated loudly to be ineffective — by so many groups.

This has caused the minister to reassess his position. And I compliment the groups who hung in there, put their case to the minister and to the public, and in the course of so doing, forced the minister to take a more sensitive approach to the problems which had been addressed, but which he was failing to address.

By putting the amendments before us the minister now claims that he has heeded the voices that were raised against his bill which he introduced last December — heeded the voices of those who clamoured to be consulted, and who ultimately are being consulted.

I hope they are right. I hope they are right. I hope he is right in saying that he's responding to their concerns. He's clearly responding to their concerns in taking out of the act some things they don't want. What we don't know yet is whether he's responding to anybody's concerns in putting anything into the regulations.

He may well take the things which he took out of the act and put them into the regulations, and nobody will be any farther ahead. I trust that will not happen. I can assure the minister that if it does happen, we, as an opposition, will raise our voice, and I know it will be joined — indeed, we will be joining the voice of organizations who have spoken so effectively on behalf of the handicapped.

Because they have done such a stellar job in putting forward the case of the handicapped, we have a prospect of a better bill. We now ask the minister, in closing this debate, to tell us to what extent we can look forward to a better bill, to what extent the handicapped people of Saskatchewan may look forward to legislation which will give them some protection in carrying on their daily lives — some ability to choose a place to live which is accessible to handicapped; choosing a place to work which is accessible to handicapped; choosing a place to enjoy their recreation, as we enjoy ours, in public facilities which are accessible to the handicapped.

With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, we will be listening with a good deal of interest to the comments of the minister in closing this debate and when the bill gets to committee.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I listened with interest to the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition and the member from Shaunavon when he adjourned debate last week — the talk of the total failure to consult. I would like to suggest to the members opposite that we consulted for 18 months.

An Hon. Member: — Well, you didn't listen.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — We did listen. We did listen. And I would suggest that you people had the opportunity, and you listened for 11 years and did nothing about it. That's the difference.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Within 18 months, at least we had a bill on the Table for the opportunity of the handicapped people of our province, to look at.

And I'd like to remind the members opposite that the provincial committee on the accessibility question could not agree on their own report. We had people on that committee that refused to sign the report that came up after many, many months of meetings through that group. So it's a difficult area for people to come with a bill and have everybody happy with it.

We proposed the bill, gave it first reading, and to me, what we did, we did listen to the people of Saskatchewan, the people involved with the Voice of the Handicapped and all the other interest groups.

And out of those hearings that we held last January the members opposite are not quoting the fact that there were accolades handed out at our meetings on the fact that we did come with a bill. And the two major concerns that we were asked to consider was the appeal board, and the fact that there was too much specifics in the bill itself as far as . . . and felt that they should be in regulations.

And this was what the idea of the hearings were all about — to listen to the various interest groups and to take their criticisms and suggestions into consideration. And we have come with amendments to that bill and, in response to the Leader of the Opposition, I'm sure you will find that, in general terms, that all these groups are very happy with the two major amendments that we have made.

I read in the May 5th *Star-Phoenix* where the chairman of the Human Rights Commissions says:

Now everything depends on how the regulations are written. They are generally pleased with the bill. We have the provincial co-ordinator for the Voice of the Handicapped, Mrs. Pat Danforth, saying that the exemptions are still too broad, but appear to be a fair compromise. The amendments have gone a long way to addressing her organization's concerns with the original bill. Like Mr. Kruzeniski, however, she said the test of the bill's worth will depend on the regulations and appointments of the appeal board. Mrs. Danforth, also says the Voice of the Handicapped will be willing to work with the government in drafting of regulations.

And we have handed this suggestion out to the various interest groups in this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where we have asked for these various groups to name a representative to be on the committee to write the regulations for the bill. And I would like to suggest to the members opposite that you don't find that kind of action too often, or didn't find it in the actions that they had in presenting bills in the past.

The regulations will be handled that way. We are setting up our committee at the present time, and hopefully within three months the regulations will be written, the bill proclaimed, and it be effective commencing on that date.

As far as delay is concerned, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we can spend that kind of time in coming with amendments to a bill where you find all the interest groups generally very appreciative of the bill, happy with what's in the bill itself, and willing to participate in the writing of the regulations — I think that goes a long way in saying that we have worked with the groups.

At no time did we say no to any group, unless it was in the latter part of January/February, where we felt we had to get on with the job, get a bill in place, get the amendments in place, and this we have done. And we're happy to say that the groups around the province are happy with the amendments that are coming, and happy with the bill that is coming. With that, Mr. Speaker, I close my remarks.

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 33

Mr. Chairman: — Does the minister wish to introduce his officials?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have beside me and to my right here the chairman of the Public Service Commission, Mr. Stan Sojonyk; immediately behind me is the assistant chairman, Trevor Roadhouse; behind Mr. Sojonyk is Murray Bender, the director of the administration branch; and over to my left and one seat behind is Michael Roberts, acting executive director of the employee relations branch.

Item 1

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you would get me a list of your personal staff and their salary. While I'm on my feet, as well I will ask for the trips that you have made, first of all, using the executive aircraft. You will remember a couple of weeks ago when we did estimates on another area where you were responsible for, you were going to give

me a total list, and I still don't have that. And I wonder if you could at this time get that for me as well. I need it for the whole executive aircraft operation, if you'll get that for me as well.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Chairman, as it relates to the exec air sheet that the member talks about, I'm honestly quite surprised that you don't have it, but I'll have it to you today — this day. Okay? The other question was what? Personal staff? Personal staff that come under the purview of the Public Service Commission. I'll provide that to the member and send it across.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, you've sent me a page that has listed a ministerial assistant 4, a Dan Stephens, at \$43,000 per annum, added to an already long list of secretaries and EAs. Well, if I remember correctly, you gave me a list of three. Did that include these secretaries? What we're trying to do here, Mr. Chairman, is to build up the case — and the government is making it relatively easy — of the large number of people who are working in ministerial offices and, I think as much as that, the very large salaries that are being paid to ministerial assistants, and all the names that they have chosen to describe the people who do the political work for the Conservatives while they are in government. I wonder is Mr. Dan Stephens — is he still employed by your department and paid for by the taxpayers of the province?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, first of all — and I will just refer to my own personal office. In the estimates of the Department of Supply and Services, I believe I handed you a list of three people which includes two secretaries, who are both called ministerial assistants, and one other ministerial assistant by the name of Mr. Jarrett. Those were three . . . This one that you received now makes up the sum, in total, of my personal office that is to look after the following responsibilities: Public Service Commission; the Department of Supply and Services; the liquor board; and the Northern Affairs Secretariat, formerly DNS.

So by anybody's standards, that is a modest number of people for help — anybody's standards, and especially the standards set by the former administration whom we replaced.

As far as your question as it relates to Mr. Stephens, he has just recently returned back into my office. He's been on leave for a period of time where he's been involved in some other activity — very successfully, I might add.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Are you telling me that this individual, and maybe you could confirm that, recently ran for the nomination and was successful? Is this the same person — Dan Stephens?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Be very pleased to say that. And if Mr. Benjamin or any of his people are watching, I would suggest that they really get to work if they want any chance whatsoever of opposing this . . . of putting on a good show against this man.

He's a very good organizer. He has a good deal of ability, and that is why he's in my office. And yes, he is one and the same person. He was on leave from, I believe April 9, 1984, until very recently, I believe until last Tuesday, when he came back to the office to work.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether the minister could tell the committee and the members of the public whether he would consider it appropriate that a member of his staff earning \$43,000 per annum would be working to win in the upcoming federal election at the same time as he is employed by the minister.

Do you see any conflict or any problem existing where you and the taxpayers of the province — the taxpayers of Regina West, for example — are paying the salary of this individual who is employed by the government in a very sensitive area, whether or not you see a conflict, and whether or not a leave of absence, which is the normal procedure if you're an employee of the federal government or the provincial government?

I think the normal procedure would be — and I know because I was a federal employee when I ran for the nomination, and I know when I won the nomination I was asked to leave on a leave of absence to run for the position. And the leave of absence guaranteed you a right to come back to work after the election was over. But I wonder if you can explain to me whether or not you find that appropriate?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, I think it is quite appropriate that the person in question works in my office now that he has the nomination. The time for a leave of absence, certainly I agree with the member that there is a time for a leave of absence, and that is when the writ is dropped in the federal election, and when that person is out actively campaigning on a full-time basis.

There's no question that that's the case, and it would be appropriate to do that. And certainly I can assure the member that that will be the case in this case.

You can take many examples as were outlined by the Premier here the other day in this House — many examples of people who happen to work in the public service as others happen to work for banks or for school divisions or for whatever, in whatever other field he may have been in, who have exercised their democratic right to run for nomination, have run for those nominations successfully, and have continued to be employed in the period between the nomination date and the date of the election.

I can give you an example of one of your very colleagues, the member for Cumberland, who was an assistant to the — an advisor to the former minister of northern Saskatchewan, who ran for election and was successful — ran for election for your party. At that time he was an advisor to the minister of northern Saskatchewan, and I don't believe there is anywhere on record a record of a leave of absence even during a writ period, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well you don't believe, but you're not being very certain. For a minister to stand up and accuse and hint at, I think, is unfortunate when the member isn't here.

Mr. Minister, I would like you to table the regulations and guide-lines that you have in place at the present time as it would regard people running for the nomination of various political parties in Saskatchewan. Can you tell me how many months this individual will be able to remain in the employment of your office, or is there a certain time when he will have to leave? Is there a guide-line in place at this time?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I can give you, I believe it would be section 50, sub (2) of The Public Service Act, and it reads as follows:

A person in the public service, who desires to become a candidate for public office, shall be entitled to leave of absence for 30 days prior to the date of the election.

Which as I pointed out here, is the period of a writ period, or would certainly take in that writ period portion.

I would just repeat that once again for the hon. member, Mr. Chairman.

A person in the public service, who desires to become a candidate for public office, shall be entitled to leave of absence for 30 days prior to the date of the election.

That's in The Public Service Act. I believe it's section 50, subsection (2).

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well it doesn't actually in any way address the issue that we're talking about here, about someone having a nomination. And let's say the federal election isn't held until next March, for example. Are you saying that Dan Stephens can earn his \$40,000 or \$43,000

a year up till that time?

What I'm trying to ask you is: what are the guide-lines, not what the act is pertaining to the election period, after the calling of the writ. And also, you're talking about provincial writs, 30 days; I'm talking about a 60-day federal election. And you seem to either try to avoid the question or to not understand, not understand the issue. How does this apply to the circumstances of Dan Stephens who is talking about seeking the federal position in Regina West, where it's a 60-day election period? And if you have a guide-line for that, quote it, but don't try to talk about an issue that isn't here.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — No, Mr. Chairman, I'm not trying to avoid anything. The member says don't try to talk about something not here. He asked me for the portion of the act where it speaks to the whole question, and I gave that portion of the act. I gave, also, the undertaking just a few minutes ago, Mr. Chairman, I gave the undertaking that when the federal writ is dropped, and regardless of the length of that writ period, Mr. Stephens will not at any portion of that time be working in my office, nor, I will predict here, after that election is held will he be working in my office because he will be taking up his duties in Ottawa.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I just want to get clear that any public servant who works for the Saskatchewan government will be allowed to seek the nomination and have that period between the time of when they are successful at the nomination and the calling of the next provincial or federal election, they will be able to remain in the employment of the Government of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — No, that's quite correct, Mr. Chairman. We have no problem with that as I think of my own case, and it's the one I obviously should know best. I work for a school division, the Meadow Lake School Division. I ran for a nomination. I was successful at the nomination and was able to carry on my duties in the particular school until such time as the writ was dropped. When the writ was dropped I obviously took a leave of absence because the campaigning at that stage becomes a full-time basis and would obviously not . . . it could obviously not carry on in a reasonable way the duties at the school.

The member for Rosthern worked for the city of Saskatoon prior to his election in 1975. And he had his nomination, continued to work for the city of Saskatoon until such time as the writ was dropped in 1975, and then he took his leave of absence, and then he took his seat here in the House in '75 and continues to hold it to this day.

So certainly it's appropriate that people should exercise their democratic rights, regardless of whom they should work for, and they should be able to continue in their employment until such time as the writ period comes about.

Obviously, you know, the only riders is, at any time . . . Oh, let's see here. "No person in the public service shall at any . . ."

And here's section 50, subsection (1)(d) which says:

50. — (1) No person in the public service shall:

(d) at any time take such part in political activities as to impair his usefulness in the position in which he is employed.

And that means that, obviously, be out campaigning during their work hours and so on; that wouldn't be appropriate. So I would say that.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I raise this issue particularly because . . . Not to worry about Tory hacks who may be seeking nominations across the province — I think their interest will be well

protected as ministers attempt to slide in an EA in various places, whether it's the Minister of Environment, or whether it's the minister of Public Service Commission, or the brother-in-law of the Premier. I'm not really concerned, for example, about Rene Archambault in Assiniboia-Gravelbourg if he intends to seek the nomination there again. And I would advise him against it, but if he were interested, I'm sure his interest will be protected by the government.

But the people I am concerned about are others who may want to seek the nomination for the Western Canada Concept or for the Liberal or for, in fact, the New Democrats. Because I think it's very important that you, Mr. Minister, or the minister responsible, protect equally all the rights of all the people. And I just want to get it on record from you that any individual, regardless of political persuasion, will have the same rights and same privileges as you're allowing to your executive assistant.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — There is no problem whatever with that, Mr. Chairman. I have indicated very clearly that people have their democratic right, and by that, democratic right means to run for whomever they should like to choose to run for. There's no question about that. And we have no problem whatever in that undertaking, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I would like to turn for a moment to, I suppose, the executive directors and deputy ministers and that sort of thing. If you would have a list of their salaries that are being paid, and also the qualifications of that list of . . . well, I suppose down to directors, if you'd give me directors, executive directors, ADM's and deputy ministers.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, I have here the positions and the salaries of the top four — well the top five, senior management positions, but I don't have all of the qualifications on them, but I will undertake to provide that, and anyway I will undertake to provide it, but I'll have to gather it all together. But I will provide it to the member.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — What I would like there, and I will accept the minister's offer, is the work experience and qualifications as they were hired. And I see here, as opposed to deputy minister, chairman is the more appropriate term.

I would like now to turn to another matter, Mr. Minister, and that is an issue that we were dealing with this morning, or this afternoon, in Crown corporations, or the minister in charge of SGI — the dismissal of an employee and the settlement that was subsequently given. What I would like to know: in your area of responsibility, since May 8 of 1982, can you indicate to the Assembly and to the committee: the amount of money, the number of individuals who have been either dismissed or some arrangement made with? Not all of them were dismissed, but I think you may call it being bought off. Some employees were paid a sum of money and asked not to report back to work. Can you give me a list of those employees and, also, the sum of money — settlement or payout — that was made? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The Minister of Agriculture talks about making sense; I can tell you that there's a good number of farmers in this province who know one individual who makes no sense, and that is the member from Weyburn. And if the member from Weyburn wants to get involved in the committee work, I wish he would, because when he usually stands up he makes no sense at all.

What I would like to ask the minister is whether or not he will get me a list of the people who were dismissed, or some arrangement made with the provincial government to get them out of the public service, and the cost of doing that.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure . . . I'd like the member to clarify because, under my responsibility here as Public Service Commission, there were none. There were none that were terminated and paid severance and so on under the public service . . . you know, that worked for the Public Service Commission.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I suppose I can raise the one issue which I want to spend more time on

later, but one Julie Campbell, who was . . . The Public Service Commission dealt with her case and paid her \$22,000. And your department works very directly with these people. What I want to know is a list of all those people who, in the public employment of the government in whatever area, were dismissed by your government. And you, as minister, certainly do have a responsibility.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Okay. Mr. Chairman, I misunderstood the first question because I thought that you were going department by department, and you were using, you know, that you were talking about Public Service Commission in the same sense.

In terms of our involvement, since May of '82, the appeals to the Public Service Commission by people who were dismissed from throughout the . . . out-of-scope people this is now, were 20 people — 20 appeals to the Public Service Commission: 13 of those were withdrawn; four were settled; and three have yet to be heard. Four were settled, 13 were withdrawn, for a total of 20 out-of-scope people.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — What about the other group of people, Mr. Minister? I very specifically asked you for all employees of the provincial government who had been dealt with in-scope, out-of-scope; people who were temporary; contracts that may have been cancelled that were two-year contracts that were paid out. I want the whole issue, and I won't be accepting some sort of an answer that will be in the best interest of the minister and the government.

I want to know the total amount of money that was paid out by this government in dealing with fired civil servants, whether in-scope, out-of-scope, part-time, full-time. We know the number is not being paid out for two people or four people. And I wish you would discontinue the insulting of this committee to try to make us believe that four people have had a settlement from an area where you're responsible because that's not accurate, and I'd like you to clarify the record.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Chairman, it is very accurate. The out-of-scope people, and that's, you know, it's very clear that we say out-of-scope people for the very reason the only appeals that go through the Public Service Commission, which is what we're dealing with in the committee today (the Public Service Commission), are out-of-scope people. There were 20 of those that filed appeals with the Public Service Commission: 13 of those were withdrawn; 4 were settled; and 3 are still to be heard.

And there are others, you know. And I think you are referring to others that were in-scope folks, and so on, that filed their grievances through the union — all those kinds of things — and with the various departments. And settlements have been reached by department with the people in some cases, and certainly nothing . . . and the Public Service Commission has no involvement in it. We have involvement with out-of-scope people.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, you are simply trying to avoid the central question of how much firing individuals has cost the taxpayers of the province. I think the whole issue here is the simple fact that many hundreds of people have had their jobs severed by this government who were hired through the Public Service Commission. You, very clearly, are responsible from the time that these people apply for a job through the Public Service Commission till the time they are dismissed. And trying to shift that responsibility off onto independent, or ministers and their departments, simply isn't adequate.

And I'll tell you that there are many, many families in this province — and I say again, hundreds in the Department of Highways alone — over 300 families who have seen their security and income done away with by your government. And you, Mr. Minister, as the minister in charge of the Public Service Commission, have to be responsible, because part of the responsibility falls with the Public Service Commission, and the guarantee of some sort of rights by these employees.

And I say again, Mr. Minister, that not only are we losing the service of a good number of individuals — in excess of 1,000 by some conservative estimates — but a great amount of money is being paid out to pay these people not to work. We're in the irony now, Mr. Minister, where we have the case in Saskatchewan where the unemployment rate has gone up by about 40 per cent. The announcement today of the welfare numbers in the province of Saskatchewan, where we now have 64,000 people on welfare in the province of Saskatchewan.

An Hon. Member: — No, we don't.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Yes, we do. The Minister of Social Services doesn't even know his own statistics. I can quote them very clearly, and I'll take the opportunity here before we get done this committee to quote 64,000 people — up 14,000 from the day that you took office. A good number of these people — contrary to what the Minister of Highways will say — are people who used to work for the Department of Highways, for the Department of health, for the Department of Social Services at Valley View. Many of these people are now not employed. They are now on unemployment insurance or on welfare.

Where do you suppose these 14,000 new people on welfare came from? Do you think they suddenly appeared from out of the thin air? Or where do you think they came from? And a good number of these are people who were working in the civil service two years ago and are now finding themselves on a different payroll — still on the payroll of the provincial government, mind you, but being paid to stay at home, being paid welfare.

And I would ask you, Mr. Minister, to tell me how many individuals have been fired by this government in the first two years of your office. That's what I want to know. In-scope, out-of-scope, part-time — how many have been fired or let go or bought off and paid a settlement to leave the service of the provincial government?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the Public Service Commission clearly has the responsibility for those that launch appeals with the Public Service Commission, and there were 20 of those. I honestly, Mr. Chairman, I can honestly tell you I don't have the figures, nor have any way of having them here. It is not the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission to have them. It's a departmental responsibility in the Department of Highways, the Department of Supply and Services, the department of northern Saskatchewan, whatever department — has a responsibility when they have job abolitions within their departments. They have those responsibilities. The member should certainly have been asking those questions department by department, if he wants to know those things. The Public Service Commission has 20 people — 20 people — that have referred appeals to us: 13 of them were withdrawn; 4 were settled; 3 are still to be heard, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, the minister can continue to duck, but I can tell you there's one member, and that's the member for Estevan, who is in Palm Springs today, who we will be asking this question. And you can shift the responsibility and say it's someone else's turn to answer. But I'll tell you that you do have a record of all of the people in every department: 25 or 2,600 in Social Services, and so on in Health, and you do have a record of who is hired and who is dismissed. You have that list. You have the numbers, and the reason that you're not giving them is because you're embarrassed.

And I want you to tell me whether or not you know how many people have been fired or dismissed by this government, because I can tell you we're going to be asking the Premier and he will have to answer. And you can duck on this one and let him do it, but I'm telling you that the member who is presently in Palm Springs is going to be asked this later on this week or early next week or whenever we get to it. And the member from Moosomin, once again, shows us why he's not in cabinet, because he makes no sense. But I would like you, Mr. Minister, to tell me how many people were fired since you came to office.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, there are several points that need to be clarified. I've already clarified the point of what the responsibility of the Public Service Commission is with out-of-scope people and so on. The member makes so many wild sort of statements about job abolitions and so on. I would say to the hon. member, in the 1984-85 budget, these are through the budgetary process, job abolition. And I think that's what you are referring to when you make some of your references, you make some of your reference to job abolition in the Department of Highways and other places.

I would say in '84-85, the total positions abolished were 361. The total of those 361 that were vacant were 240. The total that were occupied at that time were 121, and the total of those 121 — which are the jobs where we should be most concerned about because obviously those are the jobs that were encumbered and that people were in, individual held those jobs — I can say to the member that of those 121, 79 of those people, or 65 per cent, have been placed and are continuing to work.

Now, that does not include labour service, which includes a good number of the labour service people that were in the Department of Highways, which is the large group that has been referred to many times here in the House and elsewhere. But I just want to make . . . For the record to be straight, Mr. Chairman, I want to point out that this is not something that . . . The job abolition during the budget process is not something that's a brand new process. It's something that goes on and on and on, and everybody . . . And I see the Leader of the Opposition nodding, and I believe that they agree with that.

But I'll just refresh your memories. In 1979-80, when someone else was in government, the total positions abolished, 352, as it compared to the 361 that I've just outlined in this budget; total vacant 262, compared to the 240 that I've outlined; total occupied were 90, and the total occupied in this case were 121. But the key figure there — total positions abolished in the '84-85 budget process, 361; total positions abolished in 1979-80, by the former government, at the budget process, 352.

So it's not something that's new, or it's not something that's any kind of . . . As the hon. member from Shaunavon would have us believe. That is certainly what you were talking about. As the hon. member would have us believe, and attempt to have people believe, that this is something brand-new and it's some sort of new Tory administration, abolishing positions and putting people on the street, and all of that. Nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Chairman. Nothing could be further from the truth.

So I just want to make it very, very clear that the hon. member is not altogether laying out the facts as they are.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, what you are trying to do here is not give an answer about a very important issue. We're not talking about abolition of positions or the attrition process that every government goes through. If you want to cut back in an area, one of the, I think, probably better ways to do it is through attrition. That hasn't been done by the Minister of Highways and hasn't been done by a number of other ministers.

But what I'm talking about, Mr. Minister, is a position, let's say, at a nursing home in the province, where one person is fired and another one hired. Let's use the example of Mrs. Campbell, who was an administrator at a nursing home. Was that position cancelled or abolished? Can you tell me that? When that employee was fired, was that position cancelled or abolished?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — In the case of the job that the hon. member refers to, there was a competition, and then the competition was cancelled, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — When Mrs. Campbell was fired, how did you classify that? Would she show up in a job abolished or a vacancy not filled? Where would she show up in your statistics?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — It would show up as a termination within the Department of health, I believe.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — And would you, Mr. Minister, be involved? Would your department be involved in any way in hiring the new person who would fill that position?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Now if the question was . . . Was your question: were we involved in the hiring process? Just clarify that for a minute, please.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I would like to know whether you were involved in either the dismissal . . . Were you notified that the dismissal was taking place? Or, were you involved in the refilling of the position after the person was fired?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, we were not involved in the dismissal. Okay? And in the refilling of the position — because obviously there is still that position — there was a competition which was conducted by the Public Service Commission. Then the competition was cancelled at the request of the department, and we did cancel that position or that . . . Not the position, I'm sorry. We cancelled the competition and, subsequent to that, the position was filled, as has been said before, by order in council.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Can you inform the committee whether or not the Public Service Commission, when filling that position, was notified as to why it was vacant?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, our involvement there was that Mrs. Campbell had had the right of appeal as an out-of-scope employee, and she is one of those 20 people that I talked about before, one of the 20 that brought an appeal to public . . . So we were involved in that sense. And that's really the extent of our involvement. I think I've outlined all of our involvement.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The question was: were you notified as to why the position was vacant? What I want to know is: when you went to hold a competition to fill the position of administrator, were you informed as to why the position was vacant?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — No. No, we weren't. It's not in our purview. It's the department's purview. They come to us and say, this position is vacant. They don't give us the reasons it's vacant. They say, this position is vacant; will you, in this case, conduct a competition? Which we did, and then subsequently that competition was cancelled. So, no, we were not informed or we were not in any way a part of why the position was vacant, that you refer to.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you would care to just outline the procedure around a competition coming into being — the procedure that is involved when a department comes to you with a position to be filled. It would seem to me that you would have been notified, and I find it very curious that when the administrator at the nursing home, who had been fired, that that would not become knowledge to the Public Service Commission. And I would like you to outline that procedure for me.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Okay, the steps are the following: the department informs the department involved where the position is held; informs the Public Service Commission that it would like a position to be filled; there's an advertising stage, a screening of applications, an interview stage. There's a stage after the interviews of certification, and then an offer is given. In this particular case, just to . . . At the end of the interview stage, the competition was cancelled, and the position was subsequently filled by order in council.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, on that point, I would like to follow up the dismissal of Mrs. Campbell a little more. When she was dismissed, as you mention, your department or commission were involved. In fact, in the hearing that was held, The Public Service Act was

quoted as to clearly presupposes that public servants are to be appointed on the basis of their employment skills and educational qualifications, and are to be protected from arbitrary dismissal. In that case, I wonder if you, Mr. Minister, could comment on whether or not you feel the actions of the Minister of Health — in this case, of dismissing one Julie Campbell; and then subsequently asking you as minister to hold a competition; then to cancel the competition; and then come to cabinet to fill the position — whether that is an appropriate way for a civil service to operate.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — No, well, Mr. Chairman, what I will say in this particular case is that, you know, and it's really irrelevant what my feelings might be, it's really not a relevant question here. The relevant question is that this lady had the right to appeal which she has through The Public Service Act. She exercised that right, went to the Public Service Commission. They heard her case, they recommended a severance payment, and the department — subsequent to that recommendation by the Public Service Commission — the department accepted the recommendation, and Mrs. Campbell was provided with a severance payment. And those are the steps in their chronological order.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, I think your position of authority and considerable power, I might say, with the livelihood of a good number of people, that your attitude towards the Public Service Commission hearing is important, and what my question is, is whether you support the Public Service Commission hearing, which said very clearly that the act presupposes that public servants are to be appointed on the basis of their employment skills and educational qualifications, and are to be protected from arbitrary dismissal, which is what happened in this case, according to your commission. I wonder if you agree with that statement and, in so doing, telling the Minister of Health that kind of action will not be allowed by you and your cabinet colleagues in the future.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Chairman, certainly the Public Service Commission is appointed by Lieutenant Governor in Council, and it's a commission that hears these appeals. And that's why the Public Service Commission is in place, to make judgements on this sort of thing. They in fact ruled, in the case of Mrs. Campbell, they in fact ruled that a certain severance, and they recommended a certain severance, as I've said, should be paid. And the Department of Health accepted what they said, and the department, subsequent to that, paid that severance. And so, Mrs. Campbell had her hearing. Her case was put forward by the Public Service Commission, and a recommendation came out, and she was paid her severance.

And really, comments from me as to what my feelings might be, and all those kinds of things, would be inappropriate in any case. What's appropriate is that the structure is in place, the mechanism is in place, and the mechanism worked in this case, and Mrs. Campbell received her severance pay.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, I think that you will well know, after the debate that has gone on in this Assembly on the issue of the severance pay and said consequent settlement that was made, and having that listed on your record, that oftentimes money does not preclude other types of apology, and that that might be made by your government to individuals. And you'll well know that the minister in charge of SGI, as bad or as good a minister as he is, at least publicly he apologized when it was found that he had inadvertently and mistakenly fired a member of the Crown corporation, one Murray Wallace.

What I'm wondering is, here in the case of Mrs. Julie Campbell, whether you, as the minister in charge of that area, or the Minister of health, would do the same courtesy of writing her a letter to put into her file so that when she's going around looking for jobs, that she would have this in her file that she was dismissed inappropriately (as the Public Service Commission so accurately proclaimed); whether or not you, as the minister, would be large enough, or the Minister of Health would be, to write her a letter apologizing so that that would be added to her file, because she very clearly will have a very difficult time in getting employment when she has the

actions of the Minister of Health on her record.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — No, Mr. Chairman, what the hon. member would like me to do, and I'm sure that if he was in a similar position he wouldn't do it either. I don't believe so, although I can't presuppose that. You never know that. But what he would like me to do is to comment on Public Service Commission rulings, on the rulings of the commissioners themselves. I certainly will not undertake to do that, now or in the future. I'm not about to comment on those rulings.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, I think it's important for the commission to know your position and whether you fully support the position that was taken on the Julie Campbell issue.

And I'll ask you again, quite pointedly: do you agree with the decision made by the Public Service Commission hearing, in saying that Julie Campbell was dismissed without cause, or not? That's what I would like to ask you. And I think your failure to support them will indicate that in the future they do not have the support of the minister and should not be making that kind of decisions.

On the other hand, very clearly, if you support their position, then you're telling other ministers that they should not, in the future, go around the Public Service Commission, which is an important body in this province, I agree. But you, Mr. Minister, just stand on the sidelines and take no position. It's not an honourable position to take, and I would ask you to be very clear whether or not you support the position taken in this case of Mrs. Julie Campbell.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I've made it very, very clear that I, as minister responsible for the commission, will not — will not — be commenting in the various and sundry rulings of the commission. Commissioners are responsible people appointed for just that purpose, and it is not — it is not — in the purview of the . . . in the responsibility of the minister.

And I would suggest to you it would be irresponsible for me to try to influence, as you would suggest, to try to influence the actions of the Public Service Commission. I won't do that now, nor will I do it in the future. And I guess I could just leave it at that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, in a general way, what are people to believe from this, in terms of whether you support the Public Service Commission or not in decisions they make? In the area of classification of an employee and the certification of an employee, do you agree with and support that when people are certified, in a competition, that they should have first chance at the job that they have applied for and been certified? Do you agree with that principle within your own operation?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, the Public Service Commission is a vehicle that's put in place. It's to provide fairness; it's to provide justice to the people who have the right of appeal, as the lady in question here that you have raised has had the right of that appeal. She exercised that right, as I've said. It certainly is inappropriate for me to say whether I agree or disagree or whatever. It's not in my jurisdiction to comment on their rulings. It is not.

All I can say is that they had recommendations. The recommendations were accepted by the Department of health. The Minister of Health accepted those recommendations. And the severance payment suggested by the Public Service Commission was paid. So what more can we say?

They made recommendations, and we accepted them. What does that indicate to you? That we don't agree with them? It certainly doesn't indicate that to me.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I think in this whole case we have a number of people who have been harmed in the process, Mr. Minister, not the least of which was Mrs. Campbell. But you talk

about the importance of your Public Service Commission, and I agree that in the past it has played a very important role, and should, because if it doesn't, then you have political patronage of the worst type creeping into all areas of government.

What I would like to know is: in the process of calling for competition to refill the position that was the position of Mrs. Julie Campbell, who was the person who asked you to fill that position? That's what I would like to know. Who called for that competition? Who asked you to fill the position at the nursing home?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — We don't have any documentations, but we believe it was probably, as in the case of the director of personnel in the Department of Health, who is the liaison between the Department of Health and our department, of the Public Service Commission.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — And that competition is, as we would have it here, 116014-3-2861, had a closing date of July 9, 1983. Mr. Minister, I would like to ask you: how many people applied for that position when it was held?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — We don't have the information on that particular one here, but I'll certainly undertake to give that to you, and I can have someone try to get it here in a short time. I believe that number, in fact, was given by my colleague, the Minister of Health, one time before here. But we don't have it with us now, but we can certainly provide it again. Look it up in *Hansard*.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I have done that, and I suppose I would have expected the minister and his staff to be better briefed. And the number given on Tuesday, May 9th, of the Minister of Health was 36. Thirty-six people applied for this position. Now we go past the one place where one person has been taken advantage of, Mrs. Julie Campbell. You have written her off; the Minister of health has written her off; and we can ignore her. She's only one person, and you may say that's not important.

Now we have 36 people who have applied for a position, a very important process, you admit and I admit — the competition for a vacant position. Let's not worry about why it's vacant — the fact that the Minister of Health wanted to open it up for a political hack. We are now at the position where we have application forms coming in. We have 36 people who have applied for the position. We know that the process works, that people apply, and there's a closing date.

But I would like you, Mr. Minister, to run over how this process took place in this instance: the date that the competition opened; when it closed; and the process that people went through who was interviewed; how many people were interviewed; and who made the selection of the individuals who would be certified?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I can just indicate as I did before, that after the interview stage, the steps that we're advertising . . . First of all, the steps that I've gone through before in terms of the department asking for the position to be advertised — we did advertise the screening of applications and interviews. Those stages were all gone through, and then we were asked by the Department of Health . . . The Department of Health asked us, then, to cancel the competition, which we did, and that's really the end of the role for our Public Service Commission. And that was the end of our role when we stepped aside then.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I wonder who did the screening, and who did the interviews? Was it . . . Who made the decision of who in that competition was certified? That's what I would like to know. What was the committee?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, I would say that the people who did the interviewing . . . There was a Department of Health representative; there was a commission representative; and there was no certification completed because at the end of the interview stage, and prior to

certification taking place, the competition was cancelled. So there was no certification process. It wasn't completed.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, are you saying that none of the 36 were certified, in fact? I want to get this very clear for the record. None of the 36 were certified by a committee?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, I'm just going to clarify that just to be exactly sure. I believe it's as I stated just prior, but I'll clarify it just to be very, very sure. No, there were no certifications. The certification process did not go through to its fruition because the competition was cancelled at the end of the interview stage.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Could you tell me if one of the people who applied and were interviewed, were the end result employee who was hired by the government, Mrs. Hextall? Did she apply, and was she one of the 36?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — As I indicated I don't have the whole file on that particular thing. I can get it, but I would say to you, I would say to the hon. member, it's . . . I believe that that's the case. I believe that that's the case, that she did apply, and that she was interviewed.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I think that here again, Mr. Minister, you, as the hon. member who is being paid 70,000 a year, have to give me a clearer answer as to whether she was or not. And if someone should go get that file, then it's important that you do. But I would like to know whether or not she was one of the 36.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — As I've said, I believe that's the case, and someone is bringing the file in, Mr. Chairman. I can . . . If you want to go on to something else, I can certainly provide that. But I don't care what you do. If you want to sit and wait, but we'll wait and it'll be here.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could tell us, of the people, the 36 who applied for the competition — I think it was 36 — how many people were, in fact, interviewed for that position.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — No, I'll undertake to provide that when it comes in with the other stuff.

Mr. Sveinson: — While we're waiting for that file, could you please outline the other three grievances that were settled by your department with respect to the Public Service Commission? You indicated earlier there were four that were settled and there were 13 that were withdrawn. Could we have that information? The 13 that were withdrawn, and the three members that were settled, and what the settlement was with those three members?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Yes, the other three, Mr. Chairman, and hon. member, the other three were, besides Mrs. Campbell whom we've been referring to for some time now, Mr. Jeerakathil, Mr. Archer, and a Mr. Hunt. Those were the other three whose appeals were settled.

Mr. Sveinson: — Could you be more explicit, Mr. Minister? Could you outline who Mr. Jeerakathil, or . . . I missed the name, who Mr. Archer and who Mr. Hunt are? Could you outline, also, the departments they were employed in, the reasons for dismissal, and the settlements that they were given?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well all of this Mr. Chairman, there's no problem to give this. All of this has been public information prior. Mr. Jeerakathil was a former employee of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan; Mr. Archer was a former employee of the Department of Supply and Services; and Mr. Hunt was a former employee of the Department of Supply and Services. All of them were provided with severance in the following denominations: Mr. Jeerakathil, \$53,380; Mr. Archer, \$57,483.11; Mr. Hunt, \$12,746.28.

Mr. Sveinson: — Were there any settlements with those people that withdrew their grievances?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Not that I'm aware of. They were withdrawn and so they had no appeals with the Public Service Commission. When they were withdrawn, that's . . . If there were any settlements they may have been done at the department level, but we have no knowledge of that.

Mr. Sveinson: — There's three more individuals who apparently are still before the appeal process. Could you outline their names please, and where the process is at?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — No, there are three people who are before the commission. As I've said, their appeals are yet to be heard. I'm not sure if their appeals are yet to be heard if it's appropriate, really, to give what their names are, although I don't have any real problem with doing so, except I'm not sure that it's a good thing to give their names if they're still to be heard before the commission, and their cases have not been heard. But those are three.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I see the individual you sent for that file is back. I wonder if you can elaborate on the couple of questions that are outstanding?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — The file that you're referring to on the various details of the whole process with Mrs. Campbell's competition. It would certainly . . . The file is not here, nor do we have the file of every competition that's been carried out. But I have sent for it and I will undertake to give it to you. But they have to run to the Public Service Commission building for it.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you could inform us that when you were preparing for these estimates, whether you thought this might be of interest to the opposition and to the public and to Mrs. Campbell. Have you got that many of them that you would not be prepared to answer questions on, on this issue?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well first of all, Mr. Chairman, I've been very prepared to answer questions on this issue. I have not, and I did not anticipate the very detailed questions regarding how, you know, who are the people that applied, and what day were they interviewed, and how many people were given interviews, and those kinds of things.

I have said to you, though, that now that you have asked those questions and have raised them, we'll certainly give you the information that you asked for, but we can't anticipate all of the absolute detail on any particular case that you might raise. So we do the best we can in terms of anticipating what you might ask, but as any of my colleagues would tell you . . . Any of my colleagues, from the cabinet would tell you it's a waste of time to try to anticipate what you might ask, in any case.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could tell me, in the competition, the 36 individuals . . . Can you tell me whether or not all of them were interviewed? What is the normal process? You would have . . . I imagine your advisers would be able to tell you what is the normal procedure. When you have 36 applicants, what would be a normal procedure for this?

I just simply find it hard to believe that when this issue was brought up in question period — these are the people who would have got the answers ready — that there would not have been a detailed study done and that these individuals, along with yourself, would not have at the tips of their fingers the answers to these questions. I simply find that difficult to believe, Mr. Minister. We'll wait for the file, but I find it hard to believe that you cannot tell us how many people were interviewed. If the situation were to happen tomorrow, how many would be interviewed?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well I would say . . . And I'm quite ready for questions like that — how many. I don't believe . . . The normal process . . . I know the normal process took place. The

pre-screening of applicants would probably get it down to seven or eight interviews, and that's probably what happened. As I've said, you've asked for the details on who was interviewed, and how many, and we will certainly provide that. But I'm sure I'm safe in saying to you that, no, not all 36 were interviewed, and that pre-screening did take place, and that it was cut down to a lesser number than that.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — And here again, can you give any indication of how many people were precluded and were screened out? That's what I would like to know. Whether it was five or six, I don't think it makes a great deal of difference, but I would like to know roughly how many people were brought in for that final interview.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Chairman, if you want the absolute details, I'm prepared to give them, so I will wait for those. You know, the next thing, if it comes back and there were nine people interviewed and I said something like seven or eight, the next thing that will happen is you'll say, "Well no, you said seven or eight and it was really nine," and so on, so I'll wait for the actual details.

I'm giving you a broad overview of how the process works. I thought that would be a . . . And we were prepared for that sort of thing; we were not prepared for the absolute detail on individual files of an individual competition, of which there are many hundreds in any given year.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I . . . Whether it's six or seven or eight may make a big issue to you, but what I would like to know is whether or not Sandra Hextall was one of the people who were giving an interview. This is not a detailed question. I think, in looking at this process, it's a very relevant one, but I would like to know whether or not she was part of the people who were screened out, or whether she was part of the group, seven, eight, two, three — however many — was she given an interview?

Mr. Sveinson: — I was of the opinion that the political assistant in your office who deals with the Public Service Commission had taken a leave of absence because of another political endeavour. That was, by his own admission, shortly after he was nominated as a Progressive Conservative candidate for Regina West.

I was just wondering, today I had reason to call the office to try to find this particular individual, and he wasn't in. Your office wasn't clear on whether he had taken a leave of absence or whether he was still employed. Could you clarify that point?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, the only . . . I can clear up one point. As I've said before, the person in question, future member of parliament for Regina West, who will be your future MP, took a leave, I believe, and starting on April 9th, and came back to my office as of last Tuesday.

The only thing that concerns me in all of this is the fact that the hon. member for Regina North West was phoning to talk to the individual.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well there was a day when this individual worked for me, and fairly hard, to get me elected as a Progressive Conservative. But at that time he was self-employed. He was spending his own dollar to elect one of the members of this legislature, just happening to be me.

My question is: the gentleman is on a \$43,000 salary. He did claim to be on a leave of absence, which I think is politically wise, politically wise. You've called him back into your office. I'd just like an explanation of how much time does he actually serve you, and how much time does he actually serve himself in the interest of getting elected as a Progressive Conservative in Regina West?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, I just . . . I can say that that individual serves me for a lot more hours in any given day than most people who work in the public service, and a lot more

working hours per day serving me, more hours serving me and my office — something in the order of 16 hours on many days, 16, 17 hours on many days, which I would say is more hours per day than the hon. member for Regina North West spends in promoting the causes of whatever he's promoting today.

Mr. Sveinson: — I hardly think, Mr. Minister, that you're qualified to indicate how many hours of the day I spend working as a politician. But I can say that I don't sit in the galleries every day watching question period. It's not the entertainment . . . I don't find that my entertainment period during the day. Most of your political hacks, not only your own but the political hacks of other members of that government, find it their entertainment period. They follow it down to the coffee shop and spend . . . I've seen days when quarter after three, half past three, they are still moaning over question period, wondering how their political masters have performed that day, and coming up with new presentations for the following day when they're back in this House. I see he's in here today, again, watching your performance. I wonder, Mr. Minister, how that can be accounted, how that can be accounted in that \$43,000 salary. That's my question.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, this leads into quite a discussion. I think, first of all, I should ask the future MP for Regina West to stand and be recognized by everybody in the House. He's in the gallery, as the member has suggested, but I would say to . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — But, Mr. Chairman, as you know, it's not really, it's not really . . . you know, the member comments about performance, and about the number of hours spent, and so on. I mean, I could talk a little bit about the number of hours, the number of House appearances of the member from Regina North West and how much time he spends here in the House, and all those things, but I won't do that, Mr. Chairman. I wouldn't get into that, but I could do that.

All I would say, . . . The hon. member said something about the particular Mr. Stephens, and he suggested that when he was out working for his election campaigns, meaning his own, the member from Regina North West when he was running in North West, he said he was out there as a member of the private sector at that time. That's true. Working very hard to elect a member from Regina North West. He admitted that that was one of the large mistakes of his life. I would say that he certainly was doing that on his own hook, Mr. Stephens, that is. He was doing that on his own hook financially and every other way. No question about it. No question about it. And I believe the hon. member from North West was probably running . . . I think the member for Regina North West was probably running on Mr. Stephen's hook, as well, if I recall.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I see the minister is trying to submerge himself into a mud bath here, but I certainly don't accommodate that. I certainly don't accommodate that, and certainly won't accommodate that. Again, my question, Mr. Minister, is what effort the member, or the nominee for Regina West, misled the public in Regina West by saying he, in fact, was on a leave of absence. He did that immediately after he was nominated. One week later he sneaks back into your employ.

My question is: how much time is he actually spending in your employ, and do you agree with him working outside your employ to get nominated and elected as the member for Regina West, if that, in fact, happens? I think it is somewhat presumptuous of the minister to be congratulating the future member from Regina West on the basis that the NDP presently hold the seat, and the Liberals are coming on fast in national polls . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . I guess you didn't hear my question, George, as I would like a definition from yourself as to how much participation should employees of your government in becoming elected members of parliament while on the public dole.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, as I've indicated before to the member from Shaunavon, and others, the person in question, soon to be a member, serves me very well in my office. I am

very, very satisfied with the work that individual does; there's no question about it. There's no question about it. He serves very well. He's one of the premier public servants that there are in the city of Regina.

I would say to the hon. member, what that person does in the off hours, and into the late hours of the evening, and on his weekends, and so on, is totally up to him. And some people would go to Regina Beach; others will campaign for election. This particular person suggests that he wants to campaign for election, and I say more power to him, and I believe that he'll be very successful.

Let's look at some polls and think about where the NDP is. His only opposition in Regina West, the NDP, they are somewhere at 9 per cent these days in certain polls that have been published recently, and that indicates that he's going to be very successful.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, the question of the minister wasn't how successful his employee will be as an MP; it's how successful he is representing the taxpayers of Saskatchewan in your employ, Mr. Minister, and I think today he's demonstrated, and you've demonstrated very aptly, that you're unprepared for these estimates. The reason you're unprepared for this estimates, I contend, is that your political hack, if you like — and maybe that's not the right word — was too busy, was too busy out campaigning, and left you unprepared for these estimates.

You still haven't answered the question that I initially asked you, and that is: how much of his time do you allocate to election as a federal MP and how much do you allocate to the services of the people of Saskatchewan? I think \$43,000 is likely as much as he's ever earned in his life in any given year. I don't know what his qualifications are to earn that much money, but I suggest to you that the people of Saskatchewan are paying his salary.

It's not a joke, Mr. Minister. I don't think federal polls should be discussed in this context. If you want to discuss federal polls, I think the Liberals certainly have a position that is envious of every Conservative in the government benches. I think they're fast coming on, and they'll win the next federal election, but that's not the debate here, Mr. Minister.

The debate is: how are the government funds, and how is that person's income — who is on the income of the people of Saskatchewan — how's that being spent? And how can it be divided? How can the mind be divided? Only Mr. Lane, or Mr. Andrew, I suppose, could run a law practice while they're the Minister of Justice, or the Minister of Finance. I'm just saying that possibly they could.

I say our employee at \$43,000 a year should be working 16 hours a day, and that's not even including overtime. And on the public payroll, I believe you have to be accountable for the time that he is, in fact, in your office. I think he misled the people of Regina by saying he was on a leave of absence. He was not on a leave of absence. He was quietly placed in a position where he was coming back into your office shortly after he was nominated.

I think you've got to be accountable, Mr. Minister, and I just ask you to account for that.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, there are several things there. The member talks about being prepared for the estimates. I am saying to the hon. member from Regina North West, if he wants to get in and ask any questions about this, we'll find out how prepared. We're very prepared for the estimates; we're very prepared for the estimates. There's no question about that.

As it relates to the questions of your cousins in the NDP here, who asked these questions about a particular file, out of a total number of competitions — there are 928 competitions in the given year of '82-83 — that number of competitions, how would we have every file? Do you expect us to walk in with every file — 928 files carried in with us? We will have the file. I've undertaken to bring that here. There's no question about that.

As it relates to the hon. member's trade about the service, let it suffice to say that I'm very satisfied, as are all members of the government, with the work that's being done by Mr. Stephens. There's no question about that. He does excellent work for us, and does work . . . And as far as the member's suggestion, as well, that he misled the people of Regina West, he told the people of Regina West, I'm sure, what the facts are, and the facts are that he was on leave from April the 9th until the time of his nomination, which was a reasonable thing to do because he wanted to go on a full-time basis in a very, very highly contested nomination — something way over 12 or 1,300 people at that nomination — the largest nominating convention in the history of the city of Regina for any party, I'm told.

And all of those things speak for themselves. The person asked for leave to go and do that, and I said, "Fine. You do that because it's your democratic right as a citizen of this country to run for office wherever you would like to," as you did, the member from Regina North West, as I did, as everyone else in this House has done, regardless of where they worked or what they did for a living. And that still carries on, and you're elected as an MLA, and I know that you're involved, or at least my belief is that you're involved, in selling real estate. And that's fine, and so be it, and you should be. You can sell real estate and you could conduct your business as an MLA, and you should be able to.

And I'm saying that the person who works for me puts in very long hours, that I've indicated, working for this government, and more particularly, for me. And what he does in his off hours is certainly up to him. He's a very young, very energetic young man who has a good deal of energy, and he will put that energy to work for me in the daytime and to get elected at night.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I don't think, Mr. Minister, the debate was whether or not I believed in the democratic process and the right of every individual to participate in it. I sold my real estate company shortly after I was elected. I sold it shortly after I was elected and I haven't been involved in the real estate industry to any great degree since I've been elected, other than to keep, other than to have a window on the industry. As you so aptly say with respect to the Crown corporations that just lost \$54 million, you want a window on that \$54 million. Well, I like to have a window on the real estate industry.

The question wasn't whether or not I believe in the democratic right of anybody to run for public office. But I believe any public servant, whether he works for Mr. Minister or whether he works for anybody in this House, should in fact put in his eight hours a day, if that's required. And I would believe he should put in more than eight hours a day. I always did when I was working. But when I ran for elected office, I never functioned as an employee of the company that I worked for. I put in the full time.

The member we're talking about, the nominee we're talking about, started his campaign in December. He worked on the public purse, he worked on the public purse for several months before he took a leave of absence on April 9th. On April 9th he thought it was probably politically sensible to take a leave of absence. Shortly after he's nominated, he's still campaigning. He'll be campaigning until the day the writ is dropped. And after that he's going to have to be a full-timer, although he'll still come in for consultative work. At 43,000 a year, who wouldn't come in for consultative work?

My question, Mr. Minister: what's the policy of this government? I see several front-benchers here today. I think you could get your heads together and put something together with respect to political hack, political appointments within your ministries. What's your policy on the political hacks of your ministries running for public office while still on the pay of the public purse?

That's a fairly easy question to answer, Mr. Minister, and I ask for an answer with respect to the policy of your cabinet.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we could put that to rest very carefully. If the hon. member had been listening, I gave what our belief is and what our policy is in that sense a while ago to the other opposition member from Shaunavon. And I said that at the time — and I gave the undertaking — at the time that the writ is dropped federally, when the writ is dropped — which means when the election starts . . . Okay, when the election's been called . . . When the election's been called and for whatever days the writ period is, that person will not be in my employ. That person will be gone out into full-time campaigning.

I've said that before, and that will be the case. And that is the case for people who work in the public service, whatever their role in the public service. At the time that the writ is dropped, they take a leave of absence and go on about their business, attempting to become elected for whatever party their beliefs direct them to. That's the way it is, and that's how it will remain.

In answer to the hon. member from Shaunavon, we have the file here now, and he has certain questions. There were 36 applications, as you indicated. But to be precise now, there were 36 applications. The screening process brought them down to seven. There were seven that were interviewed. Three of those were women; four of them were men. Sandra Hextall was one of the seven that was interviewed.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I would like you to inform the committee whether or not Sandra Hextall placed first in the competition. Was she at the top of the list when the interviews were over? The committee, when they did the interviews, must have subsequently met and made a decision on where she placed. Can you tell me whether she placed first in that competition?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, I can tell you that there was no certification process completed. There was no certification process. So the interviews took place, and after the interviews, the competition was cancelled, as I indicated before, and so there was no certification. And under certification, as it were, people will be ranked.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — And how many days after the interviews was that decision made to cancel the competition? Can you tell me what day the decision was made?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, the interview dates for the competition in question were on August 15th and 16th of 1983. And the competition was cancelled on October 19th of '83.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The interviews were done, and then a month later the . . . (inaudible) . . .

An Hon. Member: — No, more than that. Almost two months.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — No decision was made on these interviews for almost two months, Mr. Minister. Is that what you're saying, that interviews were done in August, and then no decision was made on who would fill that position? I find that hard to believe, but maybe you can confirm that.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — That's what I'm saying. I've given you these numbers. Our role is . . . That's certainly a departmental responsibility, not ours. But we conducted the interviews, which is our . . . Along with a representative of the department, August 15th and 16th. October 19th, the competition was cancelled, and subsequent to that, I'm not sure of the date there, there was an order in council passed for the appointment of Mrs. Hextall.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, why did you not proceed with the certification? If you did the interviews on August 15th and then in the next two months, why were none of the individuals certified?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Okay. I'm just told that with the back and forth between the Department of Health personnel branch and our people, nothing happened in that period of time. And so it must have been put on hold, or whatever. But it was October 19th was the official date at which the competition was cancelled, and I suppose messages were sent out, or whatever.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I would like to know what the communication was between the Public Service Commission and the Department of Health between August 15th and October 19th. I would like to know . . . The Department of Health asked you to hold the competition; they asked you to go about selecting a person to fill that position; and what correspondence, or what communication went back and forth between them that would indicate that they should not certify the individual who they had been previously asked to fill the position?

Who made the application to the Public Service Commission that it should stop? I would like to know who made the decision that you shouldn't go ahead and certify an individual.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — The PSC was informed by a personnel administrator from the Department of Health, and the only thing we have on the file here is October the 19th. That's the day it was officially cancelled. It's competition number whatever, as you quoted:

No. 116014-3-2861, administrative officer 4, Lakeside Home, Wolseley. I'm writing in respect to the above-mentioned competition. Please cancel this competition. The department is taking an alternative course of action to have this position covered. Thanks for your assistance . . . (so on) . . . Personnel Administrator, Department of Health.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, you were asked . . . The Public Service Commission was asked early in the year to fill a position. On August 15th or 16th the interviews were completed on the individuals who had been, through a screening process, selected.

Then I would like to know, very clearly, what happened in the following two months. You can't tell me that for two months the Public Service Commission sat on these interviews, sat on these individuals, didn't meet, didn't discuss who was at the top of the list. What happened? I would like to know what happened during those two months. Did you notify the individuals who had been interviewed, or what was that process? Because a two-month waiting period simply doesn't add up.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, I'm informed that the appeal was held. The appeal that was . . . For the hon. member, the appeal that we referred to, that Mrs. Campbell took her right to appeal to the Public Service Commission — her appeal was held on September 19th of '83. And I'm informed that, I believe it was the counsel for Mrs. Campbell requested that nothing be done on this until such time as the appeal was heard. So that is the reason for the delay in between those two dates.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, so on August 16th we completed the interviews. Then an appeal was launched by Mrs. Campbell, which subsequently showed that Mrs. Campbell had been inadvertently or wrongfully dismissed. At that point in time did you, as minister, see any problem with what was happening out there, and did you not think it a possibility to wait until after this appeal process to fill the position, knowing that there was a good chance that that would come forward, that she had been wrongfully dismissed?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well we did, in fact, wait. The appeal was heard on September 19th, as I've indicated. The results of the appeal were released on October the 11th. I have here that it was October the 19th, as I've indicated to you previously, that there was communication from the personnel administrator of the Department of Health that we cancel the competition. And I believe it was . . . November 3rd was the date of the order-in-council appointment.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — And, Mr. Minister, what was the date of the hearing at the Public Service Commission on the dismissal of Mrs. Campbell?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — September 19, 1983.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, I think that, when we were talking about the Public Service Commission earlier on, and we were talking about the responsibility that it has in meeting the needs of the civil service in Saskatchewan and attempting to have a meaningful civil service that is professional in every sense, I think that what you did, and what your government did during this whole dismissal and subsequent rehiring of an individual leaves one to believe, and every civil servant and every person in the province to believe, that the Public Service Commission of this province is merely a smoke-screen, as a result of what you have done.

What we have here is a case of Mrs. Campbell, who has a record. Her supervisor and the nuns who worked with her said she was doing an excellent job. She appealed her dismissal on September 19th. It was proven by your group, by the Public Service Commission appeal board, and I quote again:

The Public Service Act clearly presupposes that public civil servants are to be appointed on the basis of employment skills and educational qualifications, and are to be protected from arbitrary dismissals.

That's where we were at on the 19th of September. What you did during your competition was to find out that the applicant that the Minister of Health wanted in that position, the business manager for the Minister of Health, Sandra Hextall, could not win in that competition, Mr. Minister. That is the process you went through. When she could not win at the competition, the Minister of Health asked you to cancel it, which you did. And then you went behind the closed doors of cabinet and hired her anyway.

I say to you, Mr. Minister, that this kind of a record is despicable. It's the worst type of political patronage in the hiring of hacks that has ever been expressed in this Assembly.

I would ask you to show us another individual who had been fired, another individual who had been fired — where the opposition had brought up a case, for example, where a competition had been held; were in the middle of the competition when the individual you wanted to be hired couldn't make the grade; couldn't meet the qualifications; was subsequently hired by order in council.

I say to you, Mr. Minister, that not only has Mrs. Julie Campbell been wronged by your government, but 36 individuals who went through the process of applying for a job in good faith by coming in for interviews, by being in a spot of opening up and telling people their qualifications — that you would cancel all of those interviews and say, "No. Because my person that I wanted hired didn't make it, we're going to cancel the competition and hire through cabinet."

Mr. Minister, I think what we have pointed out today is the fact that the Public Service Commission now means very little to the hundreds of individuals who are applying for positions. Because I think that we know very well that what will happen in the future is: when an individual is fired for political reasons, that you will go through the process, if the Public Service Commission does not hire the person you want, to cancel the competition and to subsequently hire by order in council. And I find that disgusting. And, Mr. Minister, I think that it gives a good indication why earlier on you would not support the recommendations of the Public Service Commission, and why you, Mr. Minister, are taking the side of a very closed and very big government in hiring political hacks at every opportunity. And it has very little to do with shrinking the government, but getting rid of qualified people and hiring in your own political folk

out there. And, Mr. Minister, I can tell very well why you will not get up and support the Public Service Commission, because you don't believe that they should have the power that they once had.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, we have many things we could talk about here. The hon. member from Shaunavon gets up and paints a picture of how . . . (inaudible) . . . a very misleading picture of the events that have taken place. And let me just quote about what happened in this particular competition. You, a while back in your line of questioning, were suggesting that there was a long period of time in between when some sort of . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . clandestine, that's right; that's the word I was looking for. That some sort of clandestine activity was going on for the two-month period.

Here's what was happening: the clandestine activity that you refer to was that the fairness and justice of the appeal procedure to the Public Service Commission was taking place. The counsel for Mrs. Campbell that you refer to, the counsel for Mrs. Campbell as you referred to, requested that nothing take place in that competition until such time as her hearing had been heard. Now what's more fair and more just than that? I ask you that question: what's more fair or more just than that?

So August 15 or 16, there were interviews. September 19, there was a hearing. And nothing happened for a period of time there because the counsel had asked for nothing to happen, and we said, to be fair and just, that's the case.

On October 11, the decision of the Public Service Commission was published. On October . . . the Public Service Commission ruled that Mrs. Campbell should receive a severance payment. That recommendation, as I've said before, was accepted by the Department of Health and by our government. and that was paid.

On October 19, after all of that procedure had been completed, including the hearing and including the payment, after that had been concluded . . . On October 19th, the competition was cancelled, and on November the 3rd, that was an order-in-council appointment to appoint Mrs. Hextall, who is a very competent lady. And I would ask any member of that opposition, any member of that opposition, any member of the public, to go to Wolseley to the Lakeside nursing home today or any day, go to Wolseley and ask the people who are most concerned here, or should be most concerned — and those are the elderly people who live in the Lakeside nursing home in Wolseley — and ask those people, or the families of those people, about the administration of that Lakeside nursing home under the auspices of Mrs. Hextall, and you'll find a very different story from that which you are trying to paint in this House — a very wrong story that you're trying to paint.

Mrs. Hextall is a very competent individual who has training in that area, and she is a very, very competent individual and is doing an excellent job in that Lakeside nursing home. I would ask, and I would challenge any member of that opposition to go to Wolseley and ask those elderly people, or their families, or people who know that home and know that community, one . . . any questions you would like about Mrs. Hextall's competence. And you will find that she does a very, very good job.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not questioning Mrs. Sandra Hextall's qualifications. The person I'm calling into question is you, Mr. Minister. You are the one who is responsible for holding a competition. I would like to know why, after September 19th, was that competition cancelled?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — The reason that the competition was cancelled is not for the Public Service Commission to say. The competition was cancelled at a request from the personnel administrator of the Department of Health, and we cancelled it. We cancelled the competition, and it was covered in a different way. That's a Department of Health decision.

But I want to reiterate one more time: you will carry on with this line of questioning. You will carry on with this and you will continue to try to drag the name of Mrs. Hextall and her abilities through the mud. I will tell you, you will not be successful in that. You will not be successful in that. Mrs. Sandra Hextall is a very competent administrator. I have said so before. The Minister of Health has said so. And what's even more important than that, than what the Minister of Health says, or what I say, is what the elderly people of Lakeside nursing home say, and what the people and their families whose parents and grandparents are in that home, what they say about Mrs. Hextall and how she handles her responsibilities there; and she does one excellent job.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister, when he's talking about individuals being harmed in this case, I think it's obvious that Sandra Hextall hasn't been harmed. She was a business manager for the Tory operation in the last election, and she has been paid off very well by the taxpayers of the province. So don't tell — talk to me about who is being harmed in this process. I'll tell you who has been harmed. Mrs. Julie Campbell has been harmed, and the 35 other applicants who applied for the job. And I would like to ask you, Mr. Minister, whether or not you felt that Mrs. Campbell, who in the dismissal appeal hearing was referred to by a number of her peers, and I quote to you counsel for the appellant by way of a . . .

. . . documentary evidence and the testimony of Mrs. Campbell and Sister Nestor Kyba, director of nursing care at Lakeside . . . demonstrated that Mrs. Campbell was a well-qualified, competent, and loyal employee.

And I would like to ask you, Mr. Minister, is that your opinion of Mrs. Campbell, the person who you subsequently fired?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — I have no opinion of Mrs. Campbell, nor how could I have? I have not been near the Lakeside nursing home; I have not been near the Lakeside nursing home when it was under the jurisdiction of Mrs. Campbell. I have, in fact, been at the Lakeside nursing home since Mrs. Hextall has been there, and I know what the people there feel of her. So I have no, I have no opinion of that, nor should I have.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, in the hearing of your commission it was decided that Mrs. Julie Campbell was a good employee, and that she was wrongfully dismissed. Do you agree with that, that she was wrongfully dismissed by your government? Do you agree or disagree that she was wrongfully dismissed?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, I don't know. I mean, how would I know what Mrs. . . . No, I don't know that I agree with the . . . No, it's not the commission.

I believe that the report that the member from Shaunavon is quoting from, although I'm not sure, may be a personnel report by a senior manager in the department at that time, I believe was Mrs. Giles, who I know was the member for Quill Lakes' sister, who was, I believe, appointed by some kind of order in council.

So I don't know how that works, but I just would suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, that the member is suggesting he's quoting from the Public Service Commission. I don't think that he is.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, this is the Julie Campbell dismissal appeal hearing by the Public Service Commission, September 19th, which you earlier referred to. You say you don't know whether it's from that or not. Can I ask you, Mr. Minister, have you read this decision? Have your read this decision? Have you read this decision of September 19th?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Yes, I have read the decision of the 19th.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, I have to quote again one section from it which says:

Counsel for the appellant by way of documentary evidence in testimony of Mrs. Campbell and Sister Nestor Kyba, director of nursing care at Lakeside nursing home, demonstrated that Mrs. Campbell was a well-qualified, competent, and loyal employee.

From your own hearing. I want to know whether or not you agree with this report . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You don't. Well that's what I'd like him to say.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, I've said before that it is not for me as Minister of Public Service Commission to comment, to agree or to disagree with what the opinions — with what the decisions of the Public Service Commission are.

That's why the Public Service Commission is where they are. They're appointed to do just that, and is to make recommendations. Those recommendations they do make. In this case, they made a recommendation; it was accepted by the Department of Health. And what more can I say?

What you're saying to me is that you would stand in this House, and I don't doubt that you would probably do that, stand in the House and ask the Attorney General: do you agree with the judgement of Judge so and so? Obviously, he's not going to say that he agrees or disagrees with the judgement of one of the judges in provincial court.

I'm not going to agree or disagree with the opinions or with the decisions handed down by the Public Service Commission. It's not in my purview to do that.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Can you tell me whether or not you paid out money? Did the government pay out money because of the judgement or not?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Can I tell you that? I've told you that three times in the last half hour. Yes, there was money paid out on the basis of the recommendation. And the Department of Health received a recommendation and accepted it and paid the money.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Then why, Mr. Minister, did you pay the money out?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — We paid the money because it was the recommendation of the commission, which we respect. And they said, "Here is what should be paid." And we said, "We accept your recommendation."

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, did you agree with that decision of your commission or not? Did you pay out the money because you agreed with them or not? You must have agreed with them.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member from Shaunavon — if he went to court and the judge said, "You're guilty," he would say, "I don't agree with you so I'm not paying." the way his logic works. You would pay because the judge told you to pay.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, if I went to court and the judge said I was guilty and I didn't believe it, I would appeal it. But you didn't appeal it. You paid the money. And therefore I ask: did you agree with the decision or not?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — There is no appeal beyond the Public Service Commission.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, I think it becomes just absolutely obvious that in this case the minister and the Minister of health were dead wrong in firing Mrs. Campbell. And I'll tell you, Mr. Minister, that if this individual, Mrs. Campbell, had the money and power of one Murray

Wallace that you would be standing here sued for wrongful dismissal as surely as the member for Regina South, and you would be apologizing and you would be having to defend yourself.

You, Mr. Minister, are using the taxpayers' money, \$22,000, to buy yourself out of that problem because you know that this woman cannot afford the legal costs and that to take you to court. And I would tell you, Mr. Minister, that if you were an individual of credibility, you would stand and apologize because you have admitted you made the mistake, and you would give this woman a letter of recommendation to help her find a job which she was wrongfully dismissed from.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, as I said before, the commission recommended a severance payment. The Department of Health accepted that recommendation and, I might add, Mr. Member from Shaunavon, so did Mrs. Campbell because she accepted the payment. Mrs. Campbell accepted the recommendation, as did the Department of Health. The case is closed. She's been paid her money. Her severance money is paid.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, the case certainly is not closed. Mrs. Campbell can't find a job. And we believe that if you, or the Minister of Health, would apologize for what you agree within the dismissal notice, that is, that she was wrongfully dismissed . . . You paid out \$22,000 to prove that point. Why not apologize to her so that she would have that letter for her file? I want to know why you refuse to apologize to a woman simply because she doesn't have the money and that to take the government to court and go through that process. Why not apologize to her and put the matter to rest? Why is it that you have to go through the process of the minister in charge of SGI? Why not just apologize and give the woman that recognition?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, it is not for me as the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission. It's not for me, nor is it for any of the ministers of the government, to comment one way or the other on the rulings of the Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission ruled. They said what would happen. The Department of Health accepted the recommendation, and so did Mrs. Campbell accept the recommendation, as she accepted the cheque. That's the end of the story. Mr. Chairman, I don't know what else the member hopes to accomplish by that line of questioning, because the case is closed.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I think what we're trying to establish here is that any civil servant in the province is at a chance to get fired for a political hack who you may want to hire. They're at risk of losing their jobs, and the people who apply for that job subsequently don't have to go through any process of the Public Service Commission, that if the people you want at the top, Tory card and all, aren't there, then you simply cancel the competition and hire through OC. Mr. Minister, I think you, as minister, should be concerned about that. And I would like to know how many other cases where competitions were cancelled in the final days, have taken place over the last year. How many competition similar to this have been cancelled?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, I'll undertake to give that information to the member. I will give you the number of competitions that were held in the year, the number of applications, the number of employment interviews, and the number of certifications, and the number of competitions. And I'll undertake to give you then umber of cancellations. We don't have that. I'll undertake to give you that right after supper, if you like.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you can indicate in the process of the competition, were there any others where one of the individuals who had applied for the job was in the competition placing high or low, that the competition was cancelled, and then subsequently one of the 36, or one of the people in that position, were subsequently higher. Why would you, in any case, if this woman was at the top of the list, why would you cancel the competition and then hire her through order in council? What would be the logic of that? Can you give me two or three reasons why that would happen?

An Hon. Member: — Just one.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Give me . . . Well I can see one. One is obvious, because she was the only one who had the right background and the right Tory connections. But can you give me some other reasons why this process would be ignored — the Public Service Commission hiring — and one of the individuals who was in the competition would then be hired through order in council? Give me a few reasons why that would take place?

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.