

April 23, 1985

EVENING SITTING

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 51 — An Act to amend The Farmers' Counselling and Assistance Act

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, last fall when our government introduced The Farm Land Security Act, at that time there were cries from the opposition benches that there was not one thin dime put on the table to help the farmers with their cash flow. I think others used the expression, “no cash on the dash.”

And I said at that time, Mr. Speaker, that we would wait as any prudent government would do; we would wait and see and determine the outcome of three things. The first one being the final grain payments and what they might look like and how they might affect the cost-price squeeze equation. The second thing we said we would like to wait and see on was the final pay-out under the crop insurance scheme. And the third one was, we said at that time we would like to see if, in fact, we could get an interim payment from the grain stabilization fund, the Western grains Stabilization Fund.

Since that time, Mr. Speaker, we have now learned that, in fact, the final grain payments were \$387 million in Saskatchewan, probably healthier than most expected. The crop insurance payments have been a record, something in the order of \$258 million or \$9,600 on average for Saskatchewan farmers. And, in fact, as it relates to the interim grain stabilization payment, not only were we successful in getting one before this spring seeding, Mr. Speaker, but in fact it's been a very meaningful payment. And for those who have contributed, with these three payments now in the last eight months, farmers have some \$12,000 of cash in their hands.

And I said at that point in time, Mr. Speaker, we would wait and see if we had to do more, and if we had to do more, we would.

And so, Mr. Speaker, it was with the usual Tory commitment to Saskatchewan farmers that just some few days and weeks ago, I announced that on behalf of our government that, in fact, we would be putting up \$200 million in government guarantees to help those farmers who might be viable in the long run, but who might be experiencing some short-term difficulties, but to make sure that they would have the necessary cash on the dash, if you like, to make sure that this spring's crop got in.

And that, Mr. Speaker, I think rounds out, if you like, a very, very, very full and indeed meaningful commitment to Saskatchewan farmers, the safety nets that are in place and this additional kind of program.

And I suppose I could talk about other things that have helped our Saskatchewan farmers — the federal sales tax removal on farm fuels; the interest write-downs at the Farm Credit Corporation; the interest subsidies that we ourselves offer our farmers, averaging something in the order of \$5,000 per client to the Farm Purchase Program — in total between Farm Purchase Program and ag credit corp of Saskatchewan, in the area now of close to \$30 million by the end of this fiscal year.

And as well, Mr. Speaker, I suppose I could go on to talk about how the development and licensing of something like HY-320 could, in fact, contribute perhaps as high as \$240 million to the Saskatchewan economy.

The point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that we have a federal government who is prepared to

help our farmers, and a provincial government who said if more needed to be done we would do it. And that's what the amendments to this Bill are all about, Mr. Speaker.

We have, as I mentioned, put \$200 million of the treasury behind those farmers who might be viable in the long run. We want our farmers to get the crop in, and I expect that the NDP opposite will not only welcome these amendments, Mr. Speaker, but in fact support them.

It was with interest that I read from a copy of a letter in September of '84 to the Premier from the Leader of the Opposition, and one of the points that was outlined in this letter to the Premier from the Leader of the Opposition was that amendments of the farming operating loan guarantee program in fact would be put in place to eliminate the government's red tape etc., etc. And so I have every reason to believe that the NDP will welcome and in fact endorse these amendments. It was part of their four-point, or six-point, or two-point, or whatever program that they variously have described over the past several weeks.

For the information of the members, the Counselling and Assistance for Farmers Program was established almost one year ago, to provide assistance for those farmers who were experiencing financial difficulty, and assistance is provided in the form of counselling, or in the form of government guarantees on operating loans.

In the past year, counselling assistance was provided to over 500 farmers; loan guarantees for more than \$9 million were issued to 110 farmers. And I think that's significant in that when we originally announced the program, Mr. Speaker, a year ago, we suggested at that time we would put up \$4 million, government funds, farmer run, and that number over the past year has swollen to \$9 million, and, Mr. Speaker, I and the members of this government, and this caucus, have absolutely no difficulty with that increased commitment, and now a further commitment to the \$200 million number.

As a result of these guarantees, commercial lenders provided loans, up to a total of \$9 million, that would have not otherwise been provided had that program not have been in place. It's provided assistance to many farmers and more importantly, perhaps, the panel members, these experienced semi-retired and retired farmers, have provided technical and financial information that was accepted by both lenders and the farmers. And not only have they provided good advice, Mr. Speaker. They've done it in a very compassionate, undertaking, and sincere way.

However, as members in this House will know, since over the past year many things have changed in rural Saskatchewan; many things have changed as it relates to agriculture in Saskatchewan. Since a year ago in this House we have had in various parts of the province a drought, flooding, grasshoppers, wheat midge, slow wheat markets, low wheat prices, production cuts. In other words, Mr. Speaker, the situation worsened out there. And it is our view, Mr. Speaker, that 600 to \$700 million in total operating loans will be required by Saskatchewan farmers for this, for the upcoming year.

It has also become apparent that lending institutions are becoming increasingly reluctant to risk additional loan money to financially strapped farmers. The domino effect of this, Mr. Speaker, is that local businessman, and the people employed in those local businesses and the farm service sector and in main street Saskatchewan, were as well suffering from a low volume of business due to the general agricultural economic conditions, and thus were not in a position necessarily to provide, or go on continuing to provide, goods and services on credit.

Now we were faced with a number of options given this worsened situation out there. I suppose as a government we could have said, and thrown up our hands and said, the federal government should look at it, as the NDP government in Manitoba did, said, all is well out there, we've done all we can do and could have done nothing. We could have gone with the program the way it. We could have drafted yet another program if you like, Mr. Speaker, or in fact we could strive to make this a new and improved program for our farmers, and, Mr. Speaker, we chose that latter

course. The changes in the Counselling and Assistance for Farmers Program are aimed at continuing and strengthening the counselling aspect and guarantees for operating loans, we well as a guarantee for consolidation loans. And over the next two years, Mr. Speaker, we estimate that perhaps something in the order of 2,500 farmers will use this program, and guarantees could be issued for the amount of up to \$200 million.

The amendments essentially cover four areas: guarantees for consolidation loans; more flexibility; an increased amount of guarantee for the multiple-operator unit; and an increase in the eligibility criterion.

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, under guarantees for consolidation loans, a guarantee will be provided for a loan used to consolidate accounts payable. Examples of that, Mr. Speaker, might be fertilizer, fuel, and feed bills, land rent (except for Crown leased), and up to one year interest in arrears on farm loans owed to government agencies. These loans will provide immediate relief to farmers by consolidating over a longer period accounts that are payable now. The lenders have agreed to charge interest at prime plus one-half, Mr. Speaker, and that is an improvement in the program as well. Previously the number, as I think members will recall, was prime plus 1. The lenders have agreed to charge interest at prime plus one-half and to have only interest paid on these loans for the first two years — interest only, Mr. Speaker. Repayment of principal plus interest will begin after the second year, begin after two years, and will be spread over a number of years. The guarantee of these loans will last for seven years.

These consolidation loans will also provide relief for that main street Saskatchewan, that farm service sector out there, that employs so many people. It will bring relief to the supply companies, and in particular small town independent dealers, by bringing their accounts payable up to date.

As it relates to the point on more flexibility, when guarantees are issued for both a consolidation and operating loan, the amount guaranteed may exceed 100,000 for one loan, but the total guaranteed for both loans cannot exceed 200,000. This change provides the farmer with more flexibility when he is reorganizing his financial structure and using guarantees on both a multiple-operator unit, where a farm unit . . . And I think this recognizes the reality of the world out there today. Single-proprietorship farms are not necessarily the only rule of operation out there. There are many modes and instruments used in terms of running the farms today, and where a farm unit has more than one individual who is principally involved in farming, the maximum amount of guarantee on an operating or consolidation loan is 200,000. The maximum if both loans are used is 400,000. This increased limit recognizes the needs of farm units with more than one operator for larger amounts of capital.

The points relative to an increase in the number of farmers who are eligible, or an increase in the eligibility criteria. These have been increased to allow more farmers to qualify for the assistance under this program. Individuals with up to 60 per cent equity, in place of 50 per cent equity as previously the program had, are eligible for this program. And this change will allow an additional 3,500 farmers to qualify for assistance.

The eligibility criterion, as I mentioned, have also been changed to accommodate multiple-operator units. Farm units with more than one farm operator can now qualify, provided the net worth of the farm unit is less than 1 million and their equity is less than 60 per cent.

As far as processing applications, or, as I think the Leader of the Opposition described it, eliminating or minimizing program red tape, the Act has been changed to allow farmers who are at the upper end of the eligibility criterion, or who have had a panel hearing, or who have received counselling from the lender's agrologist in the past few months, to apply for a guarantee through their lender if the lender is prepared to recommend the loan. When the program chairman is satisfied a guarantee may be authorized without a panel hearing, it can

proceed forthwith. And we expect that this change will allow applications to be processed quickly.

Counselling is available to all farmers, and has been extremely popular and well received out there, Mr. Speaker. And, in fact, if one would visit with the many counsellors and panellists that we have — as I have done, and as some others may have done — they would find that their general view out there is that perhaps the counselling aspect of the program is maybe more valuable than even the government guarantee part. They feel very much that getting some of these farmers on the right track, putting a farm plan together with them, a workable farm plan, is key to working them out of their difficulties, because it's not something that you do over a three-month or a six-month period, or even for that matter a year. When you get yourself into a difficult position, it may involve not just one year of putting together a farm plan, but it may take three or four or even five years to put together a plan that in fact might see your way out of this difficult situation.

Counselling is available to all farmers. It will be part of the process on all applications forwarded directly to the program chairman, and on most applications forwarded through lenders. Both lenders and applications recognize the value of the panels and the counselling provided. Counselling by the panel will provide as follow-up on guaranteed loans, as required by the program chairman.

I, at this time, Mr. Speaker, as well would like to acknowledge all the help and assistance and input that we had from the lenders, the banks, and the credit unions out there in developing these amendments.

(1915)

I would as well like to acknowledge and thank the hours and hours of work that went into these new amendments on the new and improved program that people such as Barry Andrew, the program chairman, put in; my officials in my department put in; and as well, the input from various farmers.

I think, as I mentioned at the outset, Mr. Speaker, even the NDP recognize that an expanded loan guarantee program had some merit, and that is what we have put up here. And so, Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I move second reading of Bill 51, An Act to amend the Farmers' Counselling and Assistance Act.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened with interest to the Minister of Agriculture and I thought that the dinner hour has done a wonderful thing for this place, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if you noticed it or not, but I'm sure anybody else that was listening did.

Before we went for lunch today, we had a 75-minute debate where a number of members from the government side stood up in this House and applauded how wonderful things were in Saskatchewan. Well tonight when the minister stood up, we got a little bit of the truth. We finally got down to the place where we start finding out that some people are admitting there's a little bit of a problem around.

They came up with a program that was supposed to solve all the problems in agriculture, and they are going to cover the loan guarantee. And 110 farmers — 110 farmers — received some help. So they decided we better go to work on this Bill, and we'll spend hours and hours of time, and they come up with amendments. One suggestion you said, the eligibility thing — we're going to include another 3,500 farmers, are going to be eligible. Well, I'd like to tell the minister: if you are making amendments and you're putting money forward to help about 1,000 farmers, why make the eligibility for 3,500? You know, if you really think about it, Mr. Minister, when you

really think about this, any improvement in a loan program is a good improvement.

I'd like to see a loan program out there that would truly help some of the farms that Farm Credit Corporation said are in trouble. Eighty-five hundred farmers are in serious, 8,500 farmers are in serious trouble. They, 8,500, are in serious trouble. Now if your Legislative Secretary doesn't know there's that many, at least, in serious trouble — people that can't make it. They've come up with a loan interest program and it's remarkable that this minister would throw out statements like, Manitoba did nothing. Oh, for nothing like that in Saskatchewan. Oh, for a Saskatchewan Agricultural Credit Corporation with 8 per cent money for farmers that are in trouble, like Manitoba has. Not 12 per cent, not at prime plus a quarter, but come up and say 7 per cent like Sask Wheat Pool asked for, or 8 per cent. Why should farmers that are in distress, that are in serious problems, be paying more than prime plus, more than inflation plus 3, you know, if the inflation rate is less than 4 per cent? The economists in Ottawa and the federal government tells us inflation has ground down to less than 4 per cent, and you're still telling farmers that 12 per cent is good enough, 12 per cent is okay, and they can pay their 12 per cent.

And he says, well, Manitoba did nothing. And I'm just saying again, Mr. Speaker, the flat tax that this minister introduced will flatten farmers — the Minister of Finance — to flatten farmers right across the board. A 1 per cent flat tax adds as much as 12 per cent on the income tax — 12 per cent increase. And they said they're going to cut their interest rate to farmers.

So even the farmers that are making a little bit of money, this government has taxed every small farmer in Saskatchewan. This government has put the screws to them and the boots to them and the evidence is clear in the amendments they made here.

The evidence is clear who they're really trying to help. Those that need a \$400,000 line of credit, they're up for some help. and the eligibility is changing a little bit. I'm going to need some time — I'm going to need some time — to seriously study the minister's remarks, because so much of it was fluff and wind and smoke and mirrors and dust, and once we clear the dust, we'll really see what the amendments are. And so, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 41 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the Enactment of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to speak about Bill No. 41, An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the Enactment of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is before this House for consideration.

Mr. Speaker, the constitution of any country is its fundamental document. It creates the system of government of a country. In Canada, the Constitution Act of 1867 created the federal and provincial governments, and the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government.

Furthermore, the constitution assigns powers to government. In Canada, those powers, primarily, were assigned in the Constitution Act of 1867, with sections 91 and 92 being the key provisions.

But a modern constitution should do more than just create government structures and assign powers to the various intuitions of government. Modern constitution, I contend, should also speak to the shared values and aspirations of the people of a country. In other words, Mr. Speaker, a good constitution should not just be structure-oriented; more importantly it should be people-oriented.

In Canada the great value that lies at the head of our system of government and our way of life is a profound belief in the dignity of the individual, and a deep respect for the basic rights and

freedoms of the individual. That great value was not, for a long time, reflected in our constitution. Although the Constitution act of 1867 and subsequent amendments created a system of government, it did not address in an explicit way the great rights and freedoms which all Canadians cherish.

The Constitution Act of 1982 began to fill this void. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms in that document contains explicit protection for most of the individual rights which Canadian hold and exercise.

Many of those rights are rights protected in the constitutions of other democratic countries, and in major international human rights documents: the fundamental freedoms, freedom of expression, association, religion and assembly; the democratic rights, that is the right to vote and, for example, to stand for public office; the legal rights, for example the rights to life, liberty, and security of the person; the right to be protected against arbitrary searches, seizures, and arrests, detentions and imprisonment; and the equality rights, for example the right not to be discriminated against by reason of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability; all of these are now enshrined in our constitution.

In addition, the charter enshrines other less traditional rights, which are particularly important in a Canadian context. For example, section 6 of the charter protects the rights of all Canadians to move freely from province to province, to live and seek employment, and section 23 of the charter protects the right of most Canadians to receive public education in either English or French language where numbers warrant. This is particularly important given the great history of co-operation between the English and French speaking peoples of our country.

The charter has profound implications for all Canadians. It says, in effect, the individual rights are profoundly important and must be respected. But the charter also has a great impact on government. Governments must make sure that their laws and practices are not only desirable in policy terms, they must also comply with the charter.

As Mr. Justice Estey of the Supreme Court of Canada said in *Skapinker*, the first charter case to be decided by that court:

With the *Constitution Act, 1982*, comes a new dimension, a new yardstick of reconciliation between the individual and the community and their respective rights.

The Government of Saskatchewan recognizes the new obligation which the charter imposes upon it. We recognize that all of our laws and practices — past, present, and future — must comply with the charter. And we are committed to making sure that they do comply.

On April 17, 1982, the charter came into force. On April 26, 1982, this government was elected and shortly after taking office, I became Attorney General. One of the first things I did in that office was order a review of all the laws of Saskatchewan with a view to determining whether they complied with the new charter.

The initial review was conducted by staff lawyers in the constitutional branch, with assistance from officials in the line departments responsible for administering the various acts. As well, since Saskatchewan is obligated to ensure that its laws comply with the Saskatchewan Human Rights code and with various international human rights documents, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission assisted the government in the early stages of the review.

The review identified approximately 45 laws which appeared to be clear violations of the charter. I decided that since this was such an important matter, I would like to seek the views of interested parties and individuals before proceeding with the legislation, making changes to these laws.

With that in mind, we published a discussion paper in September of 1984. The discussion paper described the review process, identified the laws which appeared to violate the charter, and suggested how those laws could be amended or repealed, and invited public reaction and discussion. This proved to be a highly valuable exercise. We received a large number of written submissions from individuals and groups throughout Saskatchewan. In addition, either I or my officials met with every individual or group who requested a meeting, to discuss the contents of the discussion paper.

The comments we received were very helpful. Especially helpful were comments pointing out possible commissions from the discussion paper. In some instances when we examined those comments, we agreed that we had overlooked some laws. We immediately added those to our list.

Today marks the culmination of the entire review process. The omnibus Bill which is before you consists of all those Saskatchewan laws which appear to be clear violations of the charter. The law falls into a number of categories. By far the largest category consists of laws that violate the sexual equality provision of the charter, section 15.

Some of those law, for example those dealing with choice of name at marriage or selection of a child's name at birth, discriminate against women. Other laws, for example some laws providing protection for farm land, discriminate against men. All, in my opinion, should be amended to provide for equality of the sexes.

A second large category appears to discriminate on the basis of physical or mental disability, which is also contrary to section 15 of the charter. Provisions in several Acts which disqualify persons from holding certain offices, for example school board members, because of physical or mental disability, need to be amended or repealed.

A third important category consists of laws which appear to violate the presumption of innocence protected by section 11(c) of the charter. Like most jurisdictions, Saskatchewan has had so-called reverse onus provisions which put the onus of proof on the accused. Some of these provisions go too far and must be repealed.

Let me conclude by saying that this charter Bill is not the final step in this government's commitment to ensuring that Saskatchewan laws comply with the charter. For one thing, we are constantly monitoring judicial decisions, especially decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada, to see how the charter is interpreted. We then review our laws to see if they are valid in light of those judicial interpretations. If they are not, we will make the necessary changes.

One provision in the omnibus Bill reflects this process. In the Southam case, the Supreme Court of Canada interpreted section 8 of the charter, which provides protection against unreasonable searches and seizures. We studied that decision and examined our provincial search and seizure laws in light of it. One of those laws, section 129 of The Liquor Act, does not seem to meet the test set out by the Supreme Court. Accordingly, we are proposing to repeal it. We will continue to assess all our laws in light of other judicial decisions and we'll make changes when they are required.

Secondly, the government intends to introduce two other charter-related Bills in this session. One will propose substantial amendments to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code. It will contain provisions as well designed to enhance the independence of the commission. The other, to be introduced by my colleague, the Hon. Graham Taylor, will be a new mental health Act designed to provide much greater protection to the mentally disabled in Saskatchewan. These two pieces of legislation, coupled with the omnibus Bill before you today, underline the deep commitment of this government to human rights values.

Let me conclude on this note. There is nothing more important in this country or this province

than respect for individual rights. Human rights cut across geographic boundaries, and they also cut across political allegiances. Saskatchewan has always been in the forefront in protection of human rights, and the first human rights code in Canada was enacted by the CCF government of Premier Douglas in the late 1940s. The first human rights document at the national level, the Canadian Bill of Rights, is part of the legacy of another Saskatchewan leader, the Hon. John Diefenbaker.

(1930)

The Bill which I propose today is consistent with Saskatchewan's long tradition of support for human rights. It is not a final step nor, I concede, is it a perfect document. But I do say that it represents an honest and concerted effort to show how deeply committed this government is to the values enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

If the members of the House agree with that, I hope that they will register their agreements by voting unanimously for the passage of this Bill. I move second reading.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister of Justice has indicated, this is an important first step in recognizing the Charter of Rights and Freedoms set out therein, and it affects, as he indicated, some 45 laws; the Bill touches on some 45 different individual laws. and what we would like, Mr. Speaker, is an opportunity to review what the minister has said and also the specific provisions. And I therefore beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave of the Assembly to revert to Private Bills, Second Readings, to deal with items 1 and 4, in the name of the member for Saskatoon Eastview who wasn't here this afternoon to move them.

Mr. Speaker: — Since Bill No. 01 is not printed, we could not proceed with that one. But we could proceed with 04. The House Leader has asked for leave to revert to private Bills. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

PRIVATE BILLS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 04 — An Act to amend an Ordinance to incorporate the Assiniboia Club

Mr. Young: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 04, An Act to amend an Ordinance to incorporate the Assiniboia Club be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, Bill read a second time and referred to the Select Standing Committee on Private Bills.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 8

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Minister, I dealt with one of the propositions that your government seeks last day, and I have had a request by a number of teachers asking whether or not you could give a further clarification of one of the things that the government is seeking in the next five years, as it relates to teachers.

And the area that they asked me to address you again tonight, because of the lack of clarity of your answer last day, has to do with page 13 of the *Partnership for Progress*. And it says: "The government seeks: An agreement that teachers and professors will hold the line on salary increases . . ."

They asked me if you would give them your interpretation of an agreement that teachers and professors will hold the line, the significance of that, as set out in the document by the Minister of Finance and apparently supported by yourself. Could you clarify the interpretation of it, and could you indicate whether you feel it proper that one group in society should be spelled out?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, we had had some discussion last night, and I believe perhaps even on Friday, on this particular issue. My general comments, while I'm quite sorry that the member from Quill Lake doesn't feel that they are clear enough, nevertheless are still quite general.

I appreciate that the member from Quill Lakes says that teachers ask him. I think that there has been a fairly good clarification and good discussion with several teachers, including some of those teachers in the Saskatchewan Teachers' federation executive and the staff, in terms of what is meant, what is said, and who said what, where, and when.

As far as I'm concerned, that statement that the member from Quill Lakes talks about in the *Partnership for Progress*, as I had indicated last night, first of all, there is more than simply salaries when it comes to teachers — that it's much broader than that.

I think that I had also indicated to the member from Quill Lakes that it's no secret that we are into bargaining, and perhaps when you are into bargaining that is one way of seeking a certain goal that either party may have in a given year. And this year, it's no secret that we were looking at zero per cent on salaries at the bargaining table, and that was exclusive of the increments.

Mr. Koskie: — Undoubtedly you've very, very cautious in respect to the approach that you take to this, but I think, Madam Minister, your position has been made fairly clear because what you have put to the teachers across this province is a zero percentage increase. And that may be fair enough in your view.

The concern that they have, and I'll just repeat this and I'll go on to another aspect, but their concern is the government spelling out in this document one particular group, and an important group in the process of building the excellence with which you talk about, should be spelled out as making the contribution. and that's the point that they wanted me to share with you, their deep concern.

I want to ask the minister: if it comes to teachers making a contribution to the quality of education and so that more money apparently can go to the students themselves so they get the maximum benefit from new funds. I was wondering if the minister similarly feels that, in her operation, that she herself should be making a contribution and certainly being frugal in the expenditures of the taxpayers' money. Have you taken any particular position, Madam Minister, commensurate with what you are asking the teachers of this province? Have you been most frugal in respect to the executive administration, in your view, which has risen from \$413,000 to

\$499,000 or almost \$500,000.

What I'm asking you, Madam Minister: do you feel that it's fair that you call upon the soldiers of the education system, those who are in the class-rooms, to make this sacrifice of a zero increase in salaries at the same time as you and your executive administration in the first subvote have increased it some 23 per cent, if I'm not mistaken — from 413 to almost \$500,000? And what I want to ask you, Madam Minister: what is your justification, at a time when you are asking teachers to make a sacrifice, that one of the items which is increased the highest of all is in the executive administration of your department?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, when we talk about zero per cent, that the member from Quill Lakes has said, I believe that we also have to be clear about that and talk about the other factors that come into play with that. For instance, Mr. Chairman, increments are anywhere from 1 to 2 per cent of the cost to a school board's budget of their total expenditure.

Now, 1 per cent of the provincial budget, operating budget, is approximately \$3 million. Two per cent obviously would be 6 million, so that it is not at zero, that's over and above. You have for instance, the cost factor of early retirement. Last year, 1984, was the first opportunity that the teachers of this province had an opportunity to gain the early retirement clause in their contract, and I might add it was the first one in Canada and to this day I believe it is still the only one in terms of teachers and early retirement clauses.

Obviously, Mr. Chairman, those kinds of gains don't come without a cost factor. The cost factor in 1984, over and above the normal cost of superannuation was \$1.7 million. There will be an increasing cost factor for 1985. So when we are talking about zero, let's be clear that it is not zero right across the board. It is 6 million at least, for increments, plus you have \$1.7 million on early retirement, and some other cost factors in that area.

In regards to the member's question on the executive administration, subvote number 1, I would like to also make it clear for the member that this is not due to an increase in their salaries, this is due to an increase of two staff positions into that area that have been basically transferred out of another area. We have an associate deputy minister in charge of the programming and curriculum area, and a secretarial position.

(1945)

Mr. Koskie: — Just for a clarification point: is it the position of the minister that, indeed, her position is that so far as teachers are concerned, that she is aiming for a zero percentage increase in salaries over and above what you indicated? That is, the incremental costs of 6 million and the 1.7 million which you indicated for early retirement. Can you clarify if that is the basic position that you have taken? Certainly, publicly you had indicated that they would be looking at a zero per cent. Has there been any change since you came forward with the five-year plan, or is it indeed your position that you have to reach an agreement with the teachers to hold the line on salary in order to, as you say, implement the grand design that you have talked about?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, negotiations between teachers and the government trustee team is still going on and has not been concluded, and that question would perhaps best be answered after negotiations are completed, and not done in public.

Mr. Koskie: — Obviously you . . . There's a fair amount of your estimates that — and of interest in your department — which you seem to indicate that aren't in the public interest.

I come back, I guess, Madam Minister, for clarification point. In respect to the operating grants to the divisions, we, last night, you will recall, requested that you reconsider providing us with the computer print-out as to the operating grants that will be going to the respective divisions this year. I wonder whether the minister can indicate whether she has had an opportunity to prepare

that material and to provide it to us.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, no, we have not had an opportunity to complete the preparation of the material that the member has been asking for. As I recall, in part, some of the debate that took place last night (if one could even begin to define it as a debate) was the fact that I was doing something absolutely out of the ordinary: I was withholding information; I was basically being dishonest; plus not to mention a few other unmentionables.

I want back through a few *Hansards*, and I would like it noted for the record, so that it's clear.

You know, for instance, on April the 10th of 1979, there was a request for a list of information pertaining to formula and mill rate increases. And the minister of the day — the minister of the day, the member from Regina Centre — had said in response to a question from the opposition . . . And the opposition had said, "I would appreciate receiving a copy of that list." And the minister of the day said, we've "made a note of it and as soon as" we have them we will send them to you.

Then I went back to two years ago. April the 25th, 1983. And the member from Shaunavon, he wanted "a complete list of all the grants to various schools in the province, separate and public, with the increases or decreases." He at least had the courtesy, two years ago, to recognize the difficulty and say, "I don't want that today, but if you would give me an assurance that you will send that to me." And the hon. minister of education said, "Yes, I can assure the member from Shaunavon that they will be forthcoming."

So in response to the member from Quill Lakes, I gave you my assurance last night that as soon as they are put together and the information was completed, I can assure you you will have all the details that I have access to.

Mr. Koskie: — Let us be a little bit more specific, because when you say "as soon as they are put together" has a very broad time frame, as I recall last year, because that was the agreement we made last year. You indicated first that you couldn't provide it, and we commenced to go down the list and you were able to provide it, and we could have spent several hours extracting that information from you.

We made an agreement at that time, Madam Minister, that you would provide it to the opposition as soon as possible. And I think if you look at the record, Madam Minister, you waited well on till it was after the House had adjourned, and in fact I had to write and remind you of the commitment that you undertook. Those are the facts and can't be disputed.

Now you ask us to, trust me, trust me; I will provide them as soon as possible. Can the minister be more precise as to what time frame we're working within? You indicated that you have already sent all of the information out to the boards, that they're processing and there may be some changes that you have indicated. In what time frame would you expect that we might, in fact, receive the information? Will it be . . . Well, I leave it at that. Can you give us the general time frame?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I believe it's been indicated to the House that he had to remind me to send the information to him, and that it was after the House.

An Hon. Member: — What?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — It was. Well, Mr. Chairman, on June 1, 1984, there is a letter to the member from Quill Lakes constituency, re grant estimates.

During a discussion of Department of Education estimates, it was indicated that grant estimates for the year '83 and '84 would be provided to you when the final

preparations were made. Please find attached the grant estimates as requested.

June the 1st and I believe this House was still sitting.

I would also like it noted, Mr. Chairman, and last night I discussed in particular with the Leader of the Opposition, how the changes take place over a period of time. The information that was sent on June 1 to the member from Quill Lakes was the foundation grant estimate as of May the 15, 1984. And that was delivered to you two weeks after we had what we considered to be the final figures.

Mr. Koskie: — Madam Minister, when will you be able to, within what time frame can we expect this year to receive the information which we have been asking for? Can you be specific? We ask information in respect to ministers' travel allowances for two and three years, and we haven't received them. Why should we have confidence that they aren't hiding information? Obviously what you're doing is trying to wait until the heat is off, and not provide the information to us.

Surely you can indicate to us when, in fact, within what framework. Can you provide it to us by about May the 15th? Can you provide it by May the 20th? When do you expect to have the finalization with the school boards? Or is it going to take all summer?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well first of all, Mr. Chairman, I cannot give the member a date for boards, of finalization, because that changes depending on the problems that they're having, particularly if it's getting assessment information or they're into the reassessment.

Obviously last year it was not finalized until May 15th and my guess is you would find some changes that took place over the following months from May 15th onward as far into November and December, that changed some factors. And then it's made up on the following grant.

To say to the member that I could give him assurances that all the final information would be in by May the 1st, or May the 15th, or June the 1, would not be honest with him, because I don't know that at this time. If he would understand the financing of education, the assessment when the mill rates are set, he would have a better understanding of timing.

Mr. Shillington: — Madam Minister, one of my constituents made an interesting suggestion to me. At first I thought it ludicrous, but when I thought about it, I thought perhaps it goes to the heart of the matter why we must have the preliminary grants.

Madam Minister, it was suggested to me that there is no way that we will know, until the *Public Accounts* come out, what the increase to the school boards is until we see those grants. There is nothing to prevent this government — and indeed it has made a practice out of underspending — there's nothing to prevent this government from putting a figure of 5.6 per cent in the budget, and yet giving the municipalities a good deal less than that, giving the schools a good deal less than that.

Madam Minister, when the suggestion was first made to me that you might be intentionally underspending your budget, I thought, not even this government would be that dishonest. And then I thought about the figures which you read out to the Leader of the Opposition yesterday. As he pointed out, none of those increases came to 5 per cent. I suggest to you, Madam Minister, that my constituent who made the suggestion may well be right.

Unless we see the grants to the individual school boards, we have no way of knowing whether or not you intend to spend all the money in the budget. If you don't spend all the money in the budget, it is the easiest thing in the world to announce 5.6 per cent, and, in fact, give a good deal less.

So I suggest to you, Madam Minister, that in light of your past practice of underspending your operating budget (as you did last year), and in light of the practice which this government has made of underspending budgets elsewhere, there is really nothing that we can do to ensure that, in fact, the municipalities are getting 5.6 per cent, unless you're prepared to give this to us.

Madam Minister, I say that as long as you continue to stonewall, you simply fuel speculation that the 5.6 per cent that you put in the budget is a bogus figure.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we went over this last night also, particularly the difference in the percentage increase on per pupil, and why it is not the same as 5.7.

As I recall, the Leader of the Opposition understood it very perfectly. But if the member from Regina Centre is ever going to get that far he's going to have to do, first of all, some homework so that he can understand the formula.

Last night I explained to the Leader of the Opposition that by keeping the computational mill rate at the very same level, we, in effect, picked up the local level's increase. If you had moved the CMR up 2 per cent, it would have increased that portion of it. We didn't do that. The province is picking up basically the entire expenditure this year.

As a consequence, I would suggest that the member from Regina Centre pay attention when school boards bring down their mill rates, because he will find that many of them will be at zero, and there will be some that will have a decrease, and there will be some that will have a slight increase.

Mr. Shillington: — Madam Minister, I say to you that no one who hasn't got the assistance of the officials in the Department of Education can adequately grapple with the formula as it applies to 117 different school units.

But, Madam Minister, I can read *Public Accounts*, and I have just had an opportunity to work out your estimates and your expenditures for the '83-84 year. Madam Minister might be interested to know that you underspent the operating budget by 9.67 per cent in that year.

Madam Minister, if you do that again, far from giving the school boards a 5.6 per cent increase, they'll get a decrease, assuming that you spend everything in the '84-85 taxation year.

I say to you, Madam Minister, that in light of your past practice of underspending in the operating budget, there is no way we have any way of knowing what increase the school boards are getting, unless you give us those figures.

You have no excuse for not giving us those figures. You have them readily available. You have had 24 hours to compile them, a job that would take a competent secretary about a half an hour. I suggest, Madam Minister, that in light of your past practice of underspending in the operating budget, there is no way we have any way of knowing what increase the school boards are getting, unless you give us those figures.

You have no excuse for not giving us those figures. You have them readily available. You have had 24 hours to compile them, a job that would take a competent secretary about a half an hour. I suggest, Madam Minister, you quit stonewalling and give us the figures.

(2000)

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, let's respond to the allegation of deliberately underspending and not giving boards their operating grants, and in effect fudging the figures that one puts out.

In terms of any under expenditure that took place in the category of operating grants, there's basically two main factors for that, and I would suggest that it has probably happened in other years too. First of all, if the member is sincerely interested, capital school construction projects did not develop as anticipated, resulting in an underutilization of the allocated funds for the down payment recognition in the excess of the four mills, which was a line in the formula.

We also, in terms of the under expenditure, we had some negotiations of the tuition fee dispute with the Department of Indian Affairs, and the allocation for the probable interest expenditures incurred by the Northern Lights School Division were not required, because of what we considered to be successful negotiations.

Mr. Shillington: — Madam Minister, if you're clean, and if you intending to spend 5.6 per cent, then I can't understand why you won't give us the figures. They're readily available. You have not been able to put forth a scintilla of an argument that you can't get them ready. You obviously can get them ready. There's only 117 figures, not a difficult job to put on a single piece of paper.

You had them last year. when you had perhaps a little more naiveté about the process. I suggest, Madam Minister, that if you're sincere and you're planning to spend the money, then give us the figures.

If you're not prepared to give us the figures, then I say you have no intention of spending the money, and a 5.6 per cent increase is a complete sham.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, as I said yesterday and last night, I am fully prepared to give figures to the opposition, when we have them finalized and compiled into a package for the opposition to deal with.

You know, if the member from Regina Centre wants to talk about the bad news in terms of the Education budget, maybe it's time that we once again went over the good news. If he would like me to read in . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, if he suggests that letters from the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, is smoke and mirrors, then I suggest that perhaps he really doesn't know what he's talking about.

You know, the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, as I had told them last night, we had consultations with organizations, board chairmans, and the directors of education before budget. On the night of the budget, we dealt with specifics in the budget. When budget finally came down, and boards had been informed through their regional directors of their increase, SSTA did their homework in seeing exactly what impact and effect that that was having on school boards. They were not unhappy with the news that they were receiving from the various boards of education.

I can only repeat once again what the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation is saying:

Thank you for your efforts to secure education as a corner-stone for the future. This is a major event in Canadian education this decade, and in my estimation will be the turning point to secure the future for our young. You have accomplished much. Please pass on our thanks to all your colleagues. The Federation will do all in its power to face the challenges which lie ahead, as we make Saskatchewan education the best in North America.

Well, Mr. Chairman, making it the best in North America doesn't happen without a little help from government funding and the public. And that's what's gone into education this year. No more, no less.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, just a few questions.

The minister will be aware that since at least 1974, and I suspect a good deal prior to that, the pupil-teacher ratio, student-teacher ratio, has either decreased or remained constant, but has not increased in any year — until 1984, when the process was reversed, and we saw a small increase in the number of students per teacher. Are you able to say whether or not you expect the student-teacher ratio to decrease, increase, or remain constant, as a result of this budget?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I believe the Leader of the Opposition mentioned that it was last year that it went up. Did I hear you correctly?

An Hon. Member: — Yes, '84.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well it didn't go up in '84. Like, you deal with the PTR a year behind. Like, you won't know until next year what the 1985 PTR was, or the pupil-teacher ratio.

There's two factors when you look at the PTR. First of all, I can use strictly full-time teachers, and in 1983, province wide the PTR was 17.1. In 1984 it was 16.9; it went down. The most common way of factoring it out is to use the equivalent, the full-time equivalent. In '83 it was 17.3, and in 1984 it was 17.1.

Now if I look at the two Saskatoon systems last year, for example, you saw a reduction of the number of teachers through early retirement in the Saskatoon public, but you saw an increase of 20 plus — I might be out a few numbers — for the Saskatoon catholic school division. I would suspect, given some of the enrolments that some of them are facing, and for instance, the Saskatoon public board already announcing the hiring of 30 teachers, that you will probably see a slight decrease, particularly in the urban areas where the PTR is often higher than what it is in rural Saskatchewan.

I might add, for 1984 we also had, besides having more teachers in the province, we have approximately 660 more students.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Your figures do not conform with mine, but I will not challenge that. I will simply accept what you have said. I want to ask a number of questions now, brief questions. I trust, dealing with the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association annual convention resolutions, and these are ones directed by the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association to the Government of Saskatchewan or its agencies.

And one is: "Be it resolved that this convention as the Government of Saskatchewan to reinstate the prohibition against the advertising of alcoholic beverages."

I ask you whether you have urged that course of action on your colleagues as requested by the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, and have you any indication that your colleagues will accept this recommendation from the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I have not dealt with all the resolutions that SSTA has put forth to me. I will be dealing with those shortly, before summer break comes. And when I do I will be discussing particular resolutions as they affect ministers, and then from there to caucus and to cabinet.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, do I take your answer to be that with respect to the specific resolution dealing with the advertising of alcoholic beverages on radio and television, you have not dealt with that matter?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I have not, once again, dealt with their resolutions for this year.

I had had, over the last couple of years, several discussions with various ministers, and caucus and cabinet, as I told the member from Assiniboia the other night.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, I refer to another resolution: "Be it resolved that the convention ask the Government of Saskatchewan to pay grants to school divisions quarterly in advance in order to remove the necessity of school board borrowing."

Can you advise whether you have had an opportunity to turn your mind to that matter, which clearly is relevant when we're discussing school financing, since it will obviously cut down the interest costs?

Have you urged this on your colleagues, more particularly your colleague the Minister of Finance, and are you able to give a report to the committee on the position of the government with respect to this proposal?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — You're quite right, it's quite relevant when it comes to school financing and the budgeting that school boards are required to do, including for many of them the borrowing of money, just to meet the payroll. I'm well aware of that. It's been going on for many, many years.

As I stated earlier, I have not dealt with their package of resolutions individually. However, I can indicate to you that I have full intentions of looking at that whole issue in terms of grant pay-out and in discussion with the department and with SSTA, again, drafting something to give an indication of at least implications — cost implications, that type of thing — for government overall and not just only for Education, but certainly for them also.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you, Madam Minister, Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister. I know that would be very much appreciated, particularly as interest rates are still high, and accordingly the interest rate on temporary borrowing still represents a substantial drain on the financial resources of school divisions.

My next question deals with something which I think is very relevant to the discussion we have been having. And it is another resolution of the school trustees association: "Be it resolved that this convention ask the Government of Saskatchewan to increase the effect of the northern factor in the school grant formula."

And mention has been made by my colleague, the member for Athabasca, of the pressure on the operating costs of northern schools. You will be aware of many problems in financing that the Northern Lights School Division has, and many special problems that that division and possibly some other divisions have associated with the extra costs of northern education.

Are you able to indicate whether you have been able, in the school grant formula operating for this year which we are now discussing, to increase the effect of the northern factor in any way?

(2015)

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, we did not address specifically the northern factor. However, we did take a good look at some of the needs up there, and as I had indicated yesterday, upped the per pupil rate considerable to an increase of about 5.8 per cent on the per pupil.

There were some other things that we did that brought up the total sum, so that we felt, first of all, they would be able to address some of the deficit position they are in, plus still have room to improve on some of the areas that are necessary, for instance, the recognition of a director. And there was approximately \$55,000 extra. We kept the computational mill rate at the same southern rate, plus all of that came to about a 5.12 per cent increase overall on their grant. And over and above that, we put in \$425,000 for an increase on the account of the teacherage operations. So with that, it comes to about \$1.7 million, and that is an overall increase of 9.9 or 10 per cent.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Will you refresh my memory on whether or not grants and bursaries paid to people who are taking the SUNTEP program are covered by the Department of Education or the Department of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We pay SUNTEP operating grants, and bursaries come out of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you. I'll ask some questions in Advanced Education, then. I ask a question now to you, the minister in charge of women's matters — and I think probably this is the only place that I can direct it. Do you have another vote that you think is more appropriate?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, maybe we should hear the question first. Is it related to girls in school or . . .

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — No.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Oh well then, I would suggest that perhaps when the Women's Secretariat comes up for estimates.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Okay. Thank you, Madam Minister.

The question I now ask has to do with school grants and with a previous discussion, but I don't want to open up the previous dispute. As I understand your position, you are not prepared to make available the preliminary figures at this time, and I say that not in order to start an argument, but I think to conclude in my mind what your statements were.

What I am now asking is: in the school grants' figure, what other items are there over and above operating grants for school divisions? And when I say school divisions, I mean legally constituted school divisions with elected boards pursuant to voter elections.

Now, obviously that will be the huge bulk of it. Are there other figures in the school grant figures? Are there capital grants? Are there grants for, let us say, Luther College, or Campion College, or the Lutheran Bible College at Outlook, or some other educational institutions? Would you tell me what's there over and above operating grants for public school operated by publicly elected boards?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Included in the operation grants, Mr. Chairman, over and above what we normally call the elected school boards, it includes the developmental centres, the private high schools, College Mathieu, and the Northern Saskatchewan-Flin Flon Boundary Agreement.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, are you able to say what private high schools, other than College Mathieu which you have mentioned, received grants under the . . . I'm referring particularly to subvote 18, grants to schools — operating.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I have a total for the private high schools, which is \$1.6 million. We can write out to the best of our memory, if you want, the private high schools, the individual ones, and give it to you.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you, Madam Minister. You told me that there were the private high schools. What else is included? You spoke of the grants to the private high schools including College Mathieu. You spoke of the agreement between Flin Flon and Creighton, whatever it's called, the developmental centres. Now, who operates the developmental centres?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — There are 27 developmental centres in total. Twenty-two are run by school boards and five by the parent management boards.

Mr. Koskie: — I wonder if the minister could indicate how many school closures there were during the past year, if any.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I don't have specific information on the precise number of schools that were closed in 1984. However, I can take a rough guess that the total numbers could be around 15 — eight or nine, perhaps, of those coming from the large urban areas, and then a few in the rural areas. But I don't have the specific names of the schools nor the final number with me.

Mr. Koskie: — I wonder if the minister would undertake to provide a list of the schools that were closed, and the school division or location in which they were placed. If you don't have it tonight, would you undertake to do that?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes, I can do that.

Mr. Koskie: — In respect to the school system, Madam Minister, can you indicate whether or not there was an increase or decrease in the number of teachers during the past year?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The total change over '83 to '84 is a plus 193.

Mr. Koskie: — Can the minister indicate, in respect to the advertising budget of the department, the total amount? And can she provide the information as to who received any of the advertising, if indeed you had an advertising budget? The total global, and the information as to the allocation of the advertising budget.

(2030)

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The advertising cost with several projects, or advertising going to, for instance, the official minority language office; policy planning; such things as the child vision program; the decisions that was geared for adolescents and teenagers; advertising for speech therapists; we've had some done for public consultation on the school year day review committee; and the total came to \$34,088.64.

Mr. Koskie: — Can the minister indicate whether you had any contracts with consultants for work to be performed for the department, and if so, who they are, and the cost?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, could I ask the member to clarify what he's talking about in terms of consultants? Are you talking about teachers that are perhaps brought in from the field to do work with a particular curriculum area, or are you talking about other thing?

Mr. Koskie: — I'm thinking particularly, Madam Minister, in respect to consulting firms, rather than bringing in individuals.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I have a couple that I can think of that I'm assuming would fit into the category that the member is talking about. The native education branch, for example, does some contracting or consulting out, for instance, with Maria Campbell, who does some writing for Indian and Metis material.

We also have a contract with the Gabriel Dumont on a consulting basis, and if there are any others, I will have to make an effort to find out and have a look and let the member know — if this is the kind of consulting that he's talking about.

Mr. Koskie: — I'll accept that, Madam Minister, if you could check that out and just indicate what consulting firms or contracts that you have with various firms and the contractual price of them.

Just dealing in respect to the first subvote, Madam Minister, can you provide a list of all your personal staff and also the salary of your personal staff? Could you sent that over, please?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I will have that prepared and sent over to the member.

Mr. Koskie: — Will that be provided this evening?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Regina is quite right — not always. I gave the information one year off the top of my head. I do not have the salary information written, and I will ensure that it's sent over.

Mr. Koskie: — In respect, Madam . . . Mr. Chairman, could I have the floor?

Mr. Chairman: — The member for Quill Lakes has the floor and should continue.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

Can the minister indicate whether she has any special assistants, and whether she would provide us with the names of those special assistants?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I don't have any special assistant. I have what is classified as ministerial assistants. I have Mrs. Anne Valcov, Mr. David Spencer, and Miss Andrea Houten as ministerial assistants.

Mr. Koskie: — Do you have . . . Can you name any other . . . Do you have any other personal staff, like a media person, attached to your office? Are you saying that the three persons that you have mentioned — ministerial assistants, as you call them — is that the complete contingency of, total of your staff?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I have the secretarial staff, which consists of Mrs. Doris Boyle, Ivy Saunders, and Sandra Riffel.

Mr. Koskie: — And I wonder whether you could ask your deputy or any of the other members of that staff whether it might be possible to provide to the opposition the salaries of your personal staff. You have got to have it.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I do not have the information for the staff in my office, on their salaries. I just said the question before, I will send the information over . . .

An Hon. Member: — As soon as it is ready.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — As soon as it's ready, Mr. Chairman, as soon as it's ready.

Mr. Koskie: — Do you know what, Mr. Chairman? Last year we came into estimates, and each and every individual minister had a prepared statement, knowing that that was going to be a routine question. And now what the government has decided to do, Mr. Chairman, is to conceal the information as to the personal cost of running each of those offices.

Last year, Mr. Chairman, we got the list from the Minister of Health, and you will recall that it was over a quarter of a million dollars for personal staff in the Minister of Health's office. Other ministers had equally huge expenditures in respect to staff.

Here we have a minister which is indicating to the teachers across this province that they must have zero increases, that they must make sacrifices to give excellence. Here is a minister who will not even, on a public forum here tonight, come forward with the salaries of her staff.

Now if that isn't a cover-up, there was never a cover-up. Because no one here in this House will believe that that minister hasn't that information at her fingertips.

But I want to ask the minister further. You have been asking the teachers across the province to make great sacrifices for education. I wonder whether you have considered cutting back on your personal staff, and also to make your contribution. And more specifically, Madam Minister, what I'd like to ask you: could you indicate the total expenditure that the taxpayers had to pay last year in respect to your travel expenses as Minister of Education?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, in regards to the allegation of cover up, if it wasn't in . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. When you ask a question, she should be given time to answer it. So if we could have order, we will see what the answer is.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, it's very hard to conceive of a cover-up when the information is public. With order in councils, the opposition can go through them as they are put through. They're aware of that. There's no cover-up. I will send him the salaries of the staff in the Minister of Education's office as soon as I have them. They're not in my book. The member from Shaunavon wants to know who's going to believe me.

. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You keep telling yourself that. Mr. Chairman, I believe the question was on the travel allowance, if I have that correct. For 1983-84, my travel was \$33,412, in total.

Mr. Koskie: — Madam Minister, when one looks at the *Public Accounts* for 1983-84, it indicates that your travel allowance was \$33,412.63. What I want to point out to this House and to the teachers of Saskatchewan is that there's a double standard. Here is a government, and a minister who has in the executive administration increased her expenditures from 413,000 to \$499,870 — over a 20 per cent increase. Here is a minister that has a travel expense associated with her office of nearly \$34,000. Here is a minister that has ministerial assistants which are being paid a price which she is embarrassed to make public here tonight. And I want to say to you, Madam Minister, what you are doing is a double standard, just like this government has been doing since it took office. One standard for the government, on the taxpayers expense, and sacrifices to do the ordinary citizen and taxpayer of this province. And I want to ask, Madam Minister: do you think you're justified in over a 20 per cent increase in the executive administration, travel allowance or expenses of over almost \$34,000, three ministerial assistants which you are embarrassed to quote their salaries here in this House?

(2045)

I ask you whether you think you're playing fair with the teachers of this province when you live high on the hog, and at the same time you ask them, you ask them, to make sacrifices in order to give a quality of education?

Come clean with the people. Don't be a hypocrite. And indicate that if you're asking the educators of this province to make a sacrifice, that accordingly, you will. You're too cowardly to stand up in this House and to quote the salaries, the salaries, of your ministerial assistant, because you're embarrassed.

And I want to ask you, why do you think it's fair that you should, in fact, ride free on the taxpayer and spent any amount of money that you want, and at the same time ask the teachers of this province to make a sacrifice?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, if he's finished maybe we can deal with the questions instead of the rhetoric and the half-truths that so often come with the rhetoric across the way.

The member says, living high on the hog. I invite the member to try the hours in a day that is spent in dealing with educational problems. Not only the problems, but perhaps some of the good things that come out of it. For instance, when you go to speak to a teachers' convention, not just one, but perhaps several over the year, or when you go to open a school in Lone Rock,

Saskatchewan; or you visit the school staff at Vibank and Odessa; or you attend a board annual meeting at Francis, Saskatchewan; or you have lunch with the staff there. I would suggest that if the member opposite had of done such things, perhaps the system would be a little better off, and so would the member, for it.

Most of my travel is in-province, and I offer no apology for that in carrying out my responsibilities as Minister of Education. Absolutely no apologies for in-province travel.

Mr. Chairman, the break-down on my travel is as such that 32,000 of that was spent in-province. That also includes the fact that I live in my constituency, I put a lot of miles, and, yes, I have flown home several times.

Out-of-province travel, Mr. Chairman, is \$1,332. That includes my meetings that I attend, the council of ministers, that is usually held in Ottawa or Toronto. No more meetings than that, and no less, in terms of out-of-province travel.

I have absolutely no embarrassment in talking about the salary levels of my office staff, and I will give them to the member as quickly as possible.

Mr. Koskie: — What is your definition of “quickly as possible”?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, if the member would like tomorrow, it'll be tomorrow.

Mr. Shillington: — Madam Minister is right, that she's not embarrassed. I find this government impossible to embarrass. This government is impossible to embarrass.

Madam Minister, your travel expenses are almost a fourfold increase from the last minister of education in the former administration. Madam Minister, your travel expenses are nothing short of an outrage.

When you haven't got any money for salary increases for teachers, when you don't have sufficient money to feed the people on social welfare, when you must eliminate the fresh food subsidy in northern Saskatchewan, your travel expenses are an absolute outrage. Madam Minister, you're spending almost \$3,000 a month on travel, and that is just simply unnecessary at a time such as this when you are cutting back on everybody else.

I wonder, Madam Minister, if you don't see any merit in the principle that everyone should attempt to share in the mess that you've made. If you've made such a mess of government that you must cut back on virtually everything else, don't you think it makes some sense to have members of Executive Council show some restraint as well? Thirty-three thousand dollars, Madam Minister, is an outrage. It's nothing short of an outrage. As I say, I don't expect this government to be embarrassed. I have found it impossible to embarrass this government.

We had instances the other day when we raised the issue of an elected member doing business for the government — 355,000. Is there anybody embarrassed? No. It's part of the trough that the Conservatives believe the government consists of. The Minister of Education spends three times, almost four times as much as her predecessor, the last minister in the Blakeney administration spent. It has gone from \$9,000 to \$33,000, Madam Minister.

Well I suggest to you, Madam Minister, that you show a bit of restraint yourself when you're asking everyone else to do it.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, the member from Regina Centre refers to the last minister of the previous administration. You know, it would be interesting if we were to take their

accounting system and dissect it, if it could possible be done. My guess is that it was smoke and mirrors, and actually what it came down to was under the table accounting and the hiding of expenses.

You know, when you can take and charge a dollar per mile, per kilometre, to the minister's office . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. You are getting an answer. You will have to listen to it.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

An Hon. Member: — Such as it is.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, the answer is equal to the question. So the member can decide for himself what category he wants to put that in.

As I recall the accounting system under the last NDP minister of education, Mr. Doug McArthur, the charge was a dollar a mile to the minister's office, and anything over and above that was very neatly and tidily put into government services, which executive air came under. It never showed up as partly responsible for the total bill of the minister's expenses. I don't consider that being honest with the taxpayers' money, and I also consider it irresponsible in terms of laying out to the public what you have done and what you've spent. It's that simple.

The expenses that we lay out are honest in all their form. They're up front, and they're shown in one location, not hidden into a massive government department. I do not consider that to be irresponsible. I also indicated to you before and I will again, I offer no apologies for the travel for I do inside the province.

The member from Regina Centre says I shouldn't be out there travelling; I should be sitting in Regina. That isn't what government's all about if they're there to serve the people, based on the needs of the people. We don't need a centralized government that hides itself in the halls of this massive building and never sees outside the doors or outside of Regina. And I invite them to get outside of Regina and the halls of the Assembly a little more than they do.

In terms of what the member refers to as this mess, we are on Education, Education estimates. Sometimes I wonder when I hear reference made to several categories. But if he wants to get into messes, then he's leaving himself wide open for things that took place in the past.

I would rather dwell on the future and the positives that are going to happen other than the negatives that took place from '81 to '71.

Mr. Shillington: — Madam Minister, will you give me, will you break down the amount of travel expenses? To ask the question properly, I'm going to find the appropriate volume. Madam Minister, will you break down, will you give us a breakdown of the figure of \$33,412.63 as reported in *Public Accounts* for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1984? The breakdown I'm asking for, Madam Minister, is the total amount spent on . . . Here's the Deputy Premier giving her advice. Not to give it, that's what you're giving her.

Madam Minister, I will ask, Madam Minister, I would ask for the following breakdown: (a) the portion of that which is spent on air travel through CVA, which is spent on the CVA air travel; (b) the portion of that which is attributable to per diem allowances; (c) the portion of that which is attributable to hotel bills in the province; (d) is the portion of that attributable to out-of-province travel; and (e) is miscellaneous; so that we have a complete breakdown of the figure of 33,000.

You may not have that here this evening, Madam Minister. I ask you if you'll give us that so that we can just find out how much you're enriching yourself by.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, the member from Regina Centre knows that the breakdown in terms of the travel is laid out very clearly in *Public Accounts* for all to see. I don't have that information here. I can give an indication to the member. I have very few hotel bills in-province — very few. I am normally either back in Regina at night-time or I'm back in my constituency.

For the out-of-province travel, I already gave him the breakdown. I will give it again. Out of the 33,000 total, the in-province travel was \$32,080; out-of-province was 1,332; miscellaneous, I have no idea what miscellaneous is.

Mr. Shillington: — Will you break down the in-province travel between air travel, per diems, hotel bills, and a category which I call miscellaneous, but you may, if you wish, call it anything else? Will you give us the breakdown of that figure of 33,000 between per diems and air travel?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — As soon as we can pull all that out and put it together, we'll give it the member.

Mr. Shillington: — Will you further, Madam Minister, indicate with respect to the air travel, the number of trips and the location of the in-province trips — just dealing with the in-province trips — give us the number of trips and the location of those trips.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes, I will give that when I provide the other information.

Mr. Shillington: — One final question, then I'll leave the subject if it's answered affirmatively. Will you indicate, as well, from the records which Executive Council will have, who was a You may not know who the passengers were on the airplane. You will know who booked the trip. Will you tell us, as well, who booked those trips?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I will supply him with the information of any trips that I book.

Mr. Petersen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I've been listening very closely to some of the questions and comments, and I don't see really how they work into education. But I'd like to ask a question on Education, if I may.

In my constituency, the school division of Wadena received 119,000 on the Education Development fund, and I'd like to ask the minister to elaborate on that fund and how it may help out in our school system with regards to computer literacy and so on and so forth.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Well, Mr. Chairman, I hear some comments from the opposition as to why the member even knows what's in the Educational Development Fund. If the opposition members would get in touch with their school boards within their constituency, the information would probably be as quickly delivered as what I can do. They have that right to that information at the school board level. That's usually public knowledge. A simple phone call would probably bring them up to date.

The program initiatives, or the Educational Development Fund, as it pertains to Wadena, will basically operate within the categories laid out — the learning resources, the efficiency improvement areas, and program improvement areas, which is specifically to do with improvement of educational opportunities, and to provide some opportunities that were not there before.

(2100)

I'm not aware of all the programs that Wadena has within its school division, but, for example, they may not have a program for the gifted, and the development fund will allow them to purchase some resource materials for the gifted; to do in-service for their teachers, which is a very major component of any program going into the system.

Wadena, being a small, rural area, will perhaps lack some career and guidance counselling services, and that is one area that school boards must begin to address if our grade 12 students are going to be able to compete coming out of the school system.

Wadena may very well, for example, look at some efficiency measures. For instance, it's a rural board, so they spend a very large sum on transportation. They may want to have a look at the conversion of their buses, which can be costly on the up-front. They could look at the maintenance improvement of their buildings, perhaps energy conservation, that type of thing. That, in essence, are some of the improvements that they could get into.

They can also attach the whole area of library resource centres, more materials into the library, perhaps even the upgrading of the library physical facility itself.

Mr. Koskie: — I would like to ask the minister: since members of her caucus have been informed in respect to what the school divisions have received in respect to the development fund, whether she can provide us a list of all the funding under the development fund that will be presented to the individual boards throughout Saskatchewan? Can you provide us with that full list?

Obviously you indicate, Madam Minister, that if we went and phoned every board in Saskatchewan, we could find out. Now the purpose of estimates is, just in case you don't happen to know, is that it's a forum where the opposition can come and ask the minister for information. But you can't simply keep the information and give it to your caucus members without giving it to the opposition. Now you've refused to give the operating grants . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . which you, which you, well, are prepared and could give us. Can you, then, give us a list of all the school divisions, and the total amount of allocation of funds from the development fund to those boards.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, Order. Allow the minister to answer the question.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I indicated to the member from Quill Lakes last night that in providing the full information on grants that I would also include the specific information on the Educational Development Fund, division by division.

Mr. Chairman: — Order, Order.

Mr. Koskie: — Point of order, Mr. Chairman, we are asking the minister questions, and we have adjacent to us the member from Saskatoon South who constantly interrupts and makes it impossible . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . impossible . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order! The member from . . . Order! Order! Order! Order! I would ask the members when I am trying to hear a point of order from one of your own members if they would be kind enough to be quiet so that I can hear his point of order.

Mr. Koskie: — As I was saying, Mr. Chairman, we have been asking the Minister of Education a number of questions, and when we are attempting to listen to the answers we are constantly being interfered with by the member from Saskatoon South, Mr. Myers, and he is constantly chirping here, and we are not able to carry on . . .

An Hon. Member: — He never speaks in the Assembly.

Mr. Koskie: — He never speaks in the Assembly, and he is constantly — and perhaps has been sent over here to interfere with the process of carrying on the estimates.

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order! I've heard out of order remarks from both sides of the House all evening, and I would ask members on both sides of the House if they kept a little decorum, we could all hear better. And now the Minister of Education was answering a question.

An Hon. Member: — She's forgotten the questions.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, I haven't forgotten the question. It's about the fourth time I've heard it in the last 36 hours. The question that the member had was: would I supply them with information on what school divisions would have access to out of the Educational Development Fund? And yes, I will supply them that information, along with the other information they want on operating grants, division by division, and the various categories.

It's rather interesting to note in going through these proceedings tonight one of the areas that the public seems to feel that the Educational Development Fund could be put to uses in the area of school improvement and discipline, and perhaps one starting place would be the discipline within the House and across the floor when it comes to improvement for our children.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister would again indicate since — when are we likely to be able to receive this information? When it suits you?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I gave my assurances that as soon as we can have it prepared, as close to the finalization of all the information, including the mill rate levels, that we would have the information to the member.

I also indicated to him that last year the finalization, after some adjustments of the setting of the mill rate, came in at May the 15th. The information was sent to the member on June 1. That is not a great length of time from May the 15th to June the 1.

We will try and ensure that the same type of thing happens when the finalization comes in, and after some minor adjustments, that it is immediately sent to the opposition.

Mr. Koskie: — And does that apply to the allocation in respect to the development fund too? That's what I was asking you about. You were back onto the grant, operating grants, as I understand it.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I'm sorry that he didn't understand that. Yes, I will supply, division by division, what boards can have access through the Educational Development Fund.

Mr. Koskie: — Madam Minister, do you have that calculated at this time?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Once again, Mr. Chairman, yes, we have done a rough calculation of that, and, as I explained, the three components in the Educational Development Fund last night, that at least one of those are tied specifically to the finance formula, which means that it's subject to the changes and assessment and that type of thing. The other two categories, the learning resource centres and the efficiency improvement areas, are tied to a strictly per pupil enrolment.

Mr. Koskie: — Then your rough calculation, I take it, Madam Minister, has been delivered to all the boards in the province?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The boards, Mr. Chairman, were informed of some very preliminary

figures, and they were also given an indication that the department would be back to do some finalization and discussion with them on the Educational Development Fund.

Mr. Koskie: — Madam Minister, do you think it might be of interest to the opposition to have a copy of the preliminary information, or the rough calculation that you have given to the board, so that we would have an opportunity to make a preliminary assessment? And when you finalize it, fine and dandy.

But don't you think it's fair? Why would you not be able to provide that information either until you're good and ready to?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Once again, Mr. Chairman, I will give them the information as soon as we have it together and the finalization has taken place, and all those other factors are considered.

If the member from Quill Lakes would like to do a rough estimate — for instance, the town of Lanigan — I was in Lanigan Friday night speaking to about 250 women, and he would take the student enrolment of that school, and he would be able to figure out, based on the information that I gave him yesterday or last evening, what Lanigan School would get based on the per student out of the two categories. The third category is tied to the finance formula.

I'll state once again, the finalization is not complete because of assessment and the setting of the mill rates.

Mr. Koskie: — Madam Minister, I think it has been best said by my colleague, the member from Regina Centre. One can only draw one conclusion . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Saskatoon South, who never speaks in this House and who has no respect among his own colleagues, is again chattering and will no longer be there after the next election. So, Mr. Chairman, if I can have the House, the order in the House, in order to speak? Do I have the floor?

Mr. Chairman: — Order. The member from Quill Lakes.

Mr. Koskie: — I think it was best summarized last night, Madam Minister, that what you have done here is totally indicated your incompetence, or your incompetence of your staff, or your deception, or, in fact, this government's arrogance and cover-up of the facts.

We've asked in respect to obtaining the operating grants, and you said, well, I don't have those prepared and I'll send them over when I feel like it. We asked you in respect to the allocation of the funds under the development fund, and you indicate, well go figure it out for yourself because these are only estimates and I don't have that information. We asked you a simple question: whether you could give the salaries of your ministerial assistants, and you said, oh gosh me, I don't have that either . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . We got another one over across the way,. Mr. Chairman — one of those humorous ones that won't be back next time, from Saltcoats.

What I'm saying, Mr. Chairman, here a minister came into this House for estimates, and any of the significant areas which we wanted information — which would, in fact, provide to the opposition, and consequently we could deliver the facts to the public — on any of the issues which we felt convenient for this government to cover up, to hide, this minister has done.

I indicated that this minister — there's various reasons for the lack of answers that we've had here tonight. All I can say is that she was in one portfolio and had to be moved from Social Services. And I would think that it would do a service to the public — and I think the time is coming rapidly that there will be a need for another shift.

We had a shift in manpower, in Advanced Education in manpower. And I would suggest, Madam

Minister — on your performance here today and for the last two and one-half days — if this information had come forward, we could have completed the estimates. We could have been on into another estimate.

But you have intentionally, I say, wanted to retain the information until this House is out of session. And I think that that type of conduct is less than becoming of a minister of education.

And I ask you once again, Madam Minister, why have you taken the position in some of the very vital areas of concealing the facts to the opposition? What is the overall plan and strategy that you have? Is it the direction from the Deputy Premier, who has indicated that none of the ministers' travel expenses will be disclosed, and we've been asking that for several years? Is this the continuation of the arrogance of this government that will not, in fact, allow the information in estimates to be provided to the opposition?

(2115)

What is the philosophy behind this unusual conduct by a minister of the Crown who has the responsibility to come into this House fully prepared? And if anyone would believe that she doesn't know, for instance, the salaries of her ministerial assistants, it's beyond belief that she wouldn't know it and have it here tonight. It's beyond belief that she wouldn't believe that the opposition would want a list of the operating grants. And it's beyond belief that the other significant fund, the \$10 million in the development fund, that if she has, indeed, made the allocation, that you wouldn't provide that to the opposition.

So all I can say, Madam Minister, is that your performance is less than comforting to the people of Saskatchewan and to the teachers because of the way in which you have attempted to conceal all of the information.

I think that as an opposition, Mr. Chairman, we basically have two options. The one option is, as we tried last night, to adjourn, ask the committee to rise until the minister comes back with having been briefed; or, alternatively, to allow the estimates to slide through, because we have no other options. This minister had a day in which to come forward with information, and she has obviously refused the request.

And we gave her several options. And we said we'll deal with all of the rest of the estimates if you leave item one open, in order that we can get to the basic facts of discussing this budget, and that is the major portion of the funding which is the operating grants, \$317 million.

I want to say, Madam Minister, in closing, I am disappointed in your performance. I find it rather disheartening that you have taken the attitude of other ministers, and the position of this government, to be secretive. We had hoped that you would be open and that you would be very proud of one of the corner-stones of your Minister of Finance's great five-year plan for Saskatchewan. And I thought that you would expose and provide this information to us. I could see you hiding it last year, because you have been starving the school boards and the education system for three years, and this year was supposed to be the turn around.

And so I say to you, Madam Minister, we are disappointed that you will not, in fact, provide that information, and accordingly, Mr. Chairman, the full purpose — intent of the estimates has been defeated by the inability of the minister to provide the information to the opposition which she indeed is, I submit, obligated to provide.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, let's deal with what's in question. Is it the area of confidence? Is it the area of commitment? Maybe what is in question is even the issue of traditions of the House. Perhaps what is in question is that fact that this government has brought up the provincial share of the operating grant to 54 per cent from 51. Perhaps what is in question is the NDP are wondering if it is really wise to spend a 10 per cent increase on education and

students. Perhaps the 10 per cent should be going in to buy another potash mine, another uranium mine. Perhaps we should build a brand new office building for government, increase the number of staff, the bureaucracy, with a 10 per cent increase in that area.

Is that really what's in question? I'm not too sure, after listening to the wide territory from left, to right, to centre field, and you name it, that has been raised in terms of the estimates on education. I have not heard any debate on the benefit of putting money into programs for the gifted. I have not heard any debate on moneys going in to programs for the blind and the deaf, nothing. Not one. I have not even heard any debate from the opposition . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order! Order! The member from Quill Lakes brought a point of order tonight because he couldn't be heard in the House. So I would ask him, now, to be quiet so the minister can be heard. The Minister of Education.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Several things have come forth during the estimates; much of it rhetoric, and none of it really what education is all about — and that's children, students, and the future of the province.

The future of this province is not the building of another potash mine, or a uranium mine, or a government building. It's nothing like that. The future is simply putting in an education system that allows children to be free thinkers, think for themselves, plus have a commitment towards society. All children from right across the spectrum, including the gifted. We haven't talked about any of that in estimates during this Education estimates. And somebody says why? That's a good question. Maybe that's the question that should be in debate. How come that hasn't been raised.

We haven't really debated the fundamental principle of 5.7 per cent increase bring picked up by the government this year on the operational grants and what that does for school division. We have not debated the \$8 million that is going into debt retirement, so that debt no longer eats up operating and takes programs away from the students as it did under the NDP administration.; We have not really debated the issue of this province and its people putting a 10 per cent increase into education — double, double what the other provinces in Canada have done this year. We haven't debated that.

So I ask the member from Quill Lakes: you know, what is really in question? And I would suggest that what is in question is the very thing that they don't want to talk about. First of all, they don't consider it a priority. And secondly, because they know the public supports it, they don't want to talk about it. They simply don't want to talk about it.

If it's a question of confidence, I will read another letter from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation:

On behalf of the .Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, I wish to express our sincere thank-you for your participation in our recent annual council. I would also like to state that the federation is pleased with the government's indication that education is a priority for the province . . .

An Hon. Member: — I got the same letter. Do you want me to read mine?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — It's a different letter, Mr. Chairman.

. . . and an investment in the future of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chairman: — . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order, order. Allow the minister to make her comment.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: —

We recognize the importance of your decision to support this priority statement with the financial resources necessary to maintain and expand the educational services in the province. We commend you for the allocation of additional educational funds for '85-86 and the future.

Further, Mr. Chairman, they state:

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A special word of appreciation must go to you personally for your continuing dedication to education in this province. Your efforts in support of good things for the young people in our schools is certainly to be recognized.

So what's in question? None of the things that the member from Quill Lakes has raised — not one of those things. Mr. Chairman, what is in question is that the people of this province are willing to support an increase in funding to the education system from kindergarten to grade 12, and the NDP aren't. It's that simple.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — The function of estimates is not to enter into a philosophical debate about the fundamental of education. Even less, Madam Minister, is a function of the estimates for the minister to give the opposition patronizing, platitudinous lectures about how they ought to conduct themselves.

Madam Minister, I have never seen a worse performance by a minister than what you've given us over the last three days. And I say to the government House Leader that, if every minister comes as poorly prepared as this minister did, these estimates are going to take a damn long time.

This opposition is not prepared to vote hundreds of millions of dollars on the strength of her asking us to trust her, virtually, what she did. There's no way this opposition can make a decision about whether or not the money ought to be voted when she's going to give us all the information afterwards. Virtually all the information relevant to these deliberations is coming afterwards. That, Madam Minister, is not an acceptable way for a minister to behave.

Madam Minister, I wonder if you've spent any time at all preparing for those estimates? Did you get any briefing at all beforehand? Because you don't appear to know the time of day.

An Hon. Member: — She was flying.

Mr. Shillington: — Probably true. She's too busy flitting around from one corner of the province to the other, trying to make up for old mistakes.

Madam Minister, Madam Minister, I say again, that the function of these estimates is for us to make a decision as to whether or not the sums which you requisition should be voted. There is no way we can do that when you give us all the information afterwards.

The function of these estimates is not for you to deliver supercilious, silly lectures about what the philosophy of education is. This is not part of the process of estimates. The function of these estimates is for you to give us information, upon which we can determine whether or not the money ought to be spent. These silly lectures you have been treating us to are just that, just silly, Madam Minister.

If you'd have come with the information, these estimates would have been over a long time ago.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, if estimates are going to take a long time, I can't think of a better subject for this government to talk about for a long time than education, particularly when it's . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Let's talk about funding. That's what estimates are about. Members say he can't deal with them.

Well, let me go back to what I stated at the beginning of the meeting. He leads one to believe that the details are forthcoming. He's not voting on details.

He is voting on a block of money that is to be allocated on operational grants — unconditional — to school boards. That's what we're talking about, operating grants.

I indicated to them, when they lead this House and the public to believe that that never happens, and I will state once again, April 25, 1983, when the member from Shaunavon said:

Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could send to me a complete list of all the grants to various schools in the province, separate and public, with the increases or decreases.

He also went on to say, "I don't want them today," and the member, the minister of the day, the member from Regina Wascana, said, yes, I will assure the member from Shaunavon that I will send them over.

Now that's two years ago. Now I can go back to a few years further than that. 1979, April 10, April 10, and a member of the opposition had requested the minister of the day, who just happens to be in opposition now, the member from Regina Centre, for a list of the grants and mill rates.

And the minister indicated, I've made note of it and will send them to you at a later date. Now what is so unusual? We are talking about voting for a block of money, a block of money.

If we want to go over the highlights again to refresh their memories on precisely what we're talking about, I can do that. We are looking at increased grant funding in total to school divisions of almost 10 per. cent and, Mr. Chairman, that includes the Educational Development Fund.

If you take the other percentages, 5.7 per cent on the operating grant, plus about a 1.3 on the debt retirement which is \$8 million, that makes up your approximate 10 per cent.

We have \$11.7 million allocated for the new school capital projects that were announced the other day. That also includes renovation projects. That, I might add, has a total value of approximately \$40 million.

We have additional funds totalling approximately \$800,000. It's been allocated for initiatives arising out of *Directions* for items like the gifted, and other such programs; learning resource centre development and basic skills evaluation; teacher in-service initiatives; that type of thing.

(2130)

As I stated before, and I'll say it again, we have increased that support for the gifted education projects and initiatives; we've increased support for native education funding, Mr. Chairman; it includes a 6 per cent increase in funding for SUNTEP; we have a 4 per cent increase in funding for NORTEP.

We have additional funds amounting to about \$50,000 for the alternative school development,

and we have additional funding for the native curriculum development.

We have also increased our support for the French language development, Mr. Chairman; \$100,000 for the instructional resource and curriculum development, and we have funding to provide for a 24 per cent increase in student enrolment in designated French programs. That's what we're talking about tonight, some of the initiatives.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I would just like to ask the minister a couple of questions. And first of all I would like to say to her that the purpose of the committee of finance, as it's called, is to analyze the spending estimates of every department. And if you think about that for a moment — if you think about that — it is the spending that the government is doing.

The Minister of Finance collects the taxes, various other members of the cabinet spend the money. And what the role of this committee is, is to scrutinize, as best we can, the spending priorities of your government and the amounts spent in different areas.

And if you look under the grants to schools — operating, line 18, or item 18, you find \$317 million, and our job is to analyze and scrutinize where that money is going to, and how much is being spent.

The Minister of Finance, I'm sure, will not argue that when he was in opposition, that was his role — was to argue and to see whether or not the spending priorities were right. And that's what we're here for.

And what I'm interested in knowing is under item 18, the school grants — what that amount will be for, let's say, the Shaunavon School Division. And I'm curious to know, in my area, what that amount is. And I would like you to tell me now because I'm sure that you have that list in one of your briefing books after the discussion that took place yesterday, what the grants for the Shaunavon School Division will be for this year.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I don't have that information with me tonight, and I will get it to the member as soon as we can.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Madam Minister, when I asked you in 1983 a similar question, and I said that we could provide it, or you would provide it the following day or the day after, that was at a time when the tradition of the Assembly was that you could trust ministers. Now say the member from Rosemont, the member from Rosemont last year, . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . the member from Rosemont last year — we had an agreement in the House, and the next day the list was on my desk, and I give him credit for that. Every group in the province — the list was on my desk — of groups that the Social Service department funded.

Now you, Madam Minister, take quite a different approach to agreements that are made in this House. And since 1983 we have changed our approach with you because you are not to be trusted because you don't give the information the next day or the week after; you wait till the Legislative Assembly has adjourned, which is what you did last year. You waited until June 1, which is the day we left here, so there was no opportunity in question period or anywhere to scrutinize where your spending is.

And I simply don't believe when you announce to the people of Saskatchewan that your spending priorities are over 5 per cent in this area. I don't believe it. And I'll tell you why I don't believe it. Because last year the Minister of Health rose in this House and said he was going to spend \$4 million on nursing home construction, and when the *Public Accounts* were released we found that he had spent \$2.4 million, or 40 per cent less than what he had announced. That's why the people of this province don't believe this government any more. They trusted you once, and I'll tell you they won't trust you again.

And you, Madam Minister, are the perfect example of why the people of this province will not believe what your people say, at the time of the next election. And I will ask you one more time whether or not you will give me the information on the Shaunavon School Division because I know very well that some of the 12 employees you have sitting with you will have in their brief-case that list of school divisions and the grants that they are getting.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I have indicated, and I'll do it again. we do not have the information with us. I have given you all the reasons. Listen to the answer. Listen to the answer if you didn't hear it before because it's the same as before. They are subject to change. The preliminary figures were given out. Last year we sent the . . . we received the finalization on May the 15th — the finalization of figures. The mill rates were set, and then there were some that were subject to change for whatever reason on assessment, reassessment, wrong figures. Sometimes there's an error in the department; sometimes there's a mistake with the information that the board has submitted.

I've gone over all that. And yet you do not believe that. Well I can't fix that for you, because that's the way the education grants work. It's been that way every year for a long time. That hasn't changed. And yet you seem to think that somebody sits with a brief-case in this assembly withholding information from you when I, . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right, maybe you should get on your feet and make those allegations.

Mr. Chairman, that information will be sent to the opposition, all the details with it. I gave a commitment including the Educational Development Fund, and how that is allotted, and the access that boards can do with the fund, and the amounts based on the per student, plus the financial formula. When the grants on the operating are finalized, then that information will be sent over to the opposition, no different than any other year.

I appreciate the quickness, is what the Minister of Social Service was able to give you your NGO grants. With all due respect, Mr. Member from Shaunavon, I would suggest that the finance formula and the operating grants in education are somewhat more complicated.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I beg with the minister because in Social Services you should know, Madam Minister, that the formulas are much more complicated because there is no formula. Each group is dealt with on a brief and an estimate that is sent in by each group. And you deal with them individually. There's no overall formula. And I want to say as well, that in Social Services the minister sent me a preliminary list to which additions or deletions were added later. And what we want is your preliminary estimate on what the grants are going to be to the school divisions. And then at the appropriate time when you have the final one completed, we would like that.

And last year in the House at this time, you began to give us the list. You went this division, this one, this one; to say that you don't give them out, and you have never given them out, is not true. It's simply not true because last year you were giving them out. And what has changed? Why this year will you not give out the preliminary grants to the school divisions?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, number one, with reference to last year and what was given out, if the member will read back into *Hansard*, he will also know the difficulty that we had in putting some of that information together. None of that information we have tonight.

First of all, budget was later than what we were into last year. Boards were given an extension for the setting of their mill rate and the pre-consultation in terms of the percentage increase was given to boards only about a week before. Boards have been late in putting into their final budgets. There's nothing more than that. I'm sorry to disappoint the member from Shaunavon.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Madam Minister, you have said yesterday and today that you

have sent out this list to the school division. You say that you've sent them out a list of the grants that they can expect to be getting, to which additions or deletions will be made. Then you stand here, 30 seconds ago, and say you don't have the list ready.

Now either you have it to send out to the school divisions, or you don't. either you did send it, or you didn't. And if you sent it to them a week ago, then we would like it tonight. Because you must have had a list at that time, and you must have it tonight, and we would very much appreciate to get it from you.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, as I indicated yesterday — school boards, the chairmans, the secretary-treasurer, director, met with the regional directors the day after budget, and then they were given an indication of what those grant figures were and what they would be receiving based on, based on, Mr. Chairman, a very preliminary figure.

I have also indicated to the opposition that daily changes occur with many of those budgets for all the reasons that I have given them. And several of their members know that, but several can't seem to get that through their head that that takes place. It even takes place, Mr. Chairman, for sometimes weeks and months after the mill rate is set, for one reason or another.

We are dealing, at this point in time, with some very preliminary — and I gave my full assurances that even on preliminary information as it goes back to the opposition — will contain all the necessary information, but that I was not going to deliver to them half information.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order! Order! Order!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, have you sent, in writing, preliminary figures to the Regina Public School Board of what their grant entitlement will be?

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Regina board is no different than the other boards. They received an estimate, very preliminary, a computer printout, not a specific letter as to the finalization. After the finalization occurs, you will probably remember there is the necessary order in councils and that type of thing.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, will you supply to me, before these estimates, your estimates are concluded, the material you sent to the Regina Public School Board?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I will provide the opposition with the information compiled in the same format as last year, so that they have a good indication of the whys and the why-nots on the various information — the percentage increase — as soon as we have it.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, I'm sorry I didn't make myself clear. I was not asking you to reiterate that story that you will send us information — who knows? — some day, maybe. I was asking a very specific question.

You sent material to the Regina Public School Board. The students and parents of that board I represent in part. They are a public body. You sent them information, I ask you whether you will provide me with a copy of the material you sent to them.

You may label it as you wish — as preliminary, first draft — as you wish. I am simply asking whether you will send to me, before these estimates are through, the information you provided to the Regina Public School Board.

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Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I can't give a guarantee on the time. I have no idea when estimates are going to be finished and when we can pull together this information.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, you have sent the material, you told me, to the Regina Public School Board. May I ask this? Since you are forcing us to ask questions which are incredibly precise, do you in your files have a copy of the material you sent to the Regina Public School Board, either in written form or in electronic form?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, once again I can only restate what has happened in this House before in previous years.

I can go through all the discussion on preliminary figures and why preliminary figures are often not released, the discussion that take place between government and boards in coming to the finalization of their grant. I could place a phone call to the Regina Board of Education tomorrow to see if they've had any changes since the preliminary that they haven't consulted with on the department. They're not into the finalization yet. I can go through all that for the Leader of the Opposition if that's what he wishes.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, I wish that you would answer the question. It was a rather simple question. Do you have a copy of the material you sent to the Regina Public School Board, either in print form or in electronic form?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I don't have that here, and I don't have that in my office. There is probably a copy within the department. But I also indicated that I was not going to send information across that didn't contain everything that it should, and if it wasn't up to date. I don't know if the Regina grants have been brought up to date yet, but I will certainly check and find out.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, I asked whether you had the material. I take it you are now conceding that it's in the files of the Department of Education.

Madam Minister, are you suggesting that you don't keep copies of the material you send out? And if you're asking me to believe that, I think you're asking me to believe a good deal.

Now, I am simply asking now — and I don't want to get a long lecture on whether or not it is complete or incomplete. It is a fairly simple question — will you send to me the material you have sent to the Regina Public School Board? Will you provide it to me? You have a copy in your file and, if you will not provide it to me, simply say no. And if you will provide it to me, simply say yes.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, Mr. Chairman, I won't send that. As indicated, I would send the information when it was finalized and up to date. I don't know if the first print out has been finalized or up to date, so I'm not going to make a commitment to send that particular copy.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman and Madam Minister, will you send me, then, the material you have sent to the Regina Public School Board as of yesterday, let us say? Therefore I will know it's up to date as of yesterday.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I can't give the Leader of the Opposition something that was sent yesterday when we didn't send something yesterday.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman and Madam Minister, I am sorry I failed once again to make myself clear. Will you send to me material which you have sent to the Regina Public School

Board up to yesterday, whether or not anything was sent yesterday, up to the date of yesterday?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, in the final analysis, if it is that information that is the final document, yes, then he can have it, and all the facts that pertain to it. But if it isn't up to date then he will get an updated version and not the original version.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, if it is up to date as of yesterday, the fact that it may be changed by next week is not relevant to the discussion in this committee today. And what I am asking you is, will you provide me with the information which you have provided to the Regina Public School Board, and I ask now the Regina Separate School Board, up to the time that we are discussing their material in this House? The fact that it may change next week or next month is no excuse for you denying to the committee the information which you now have; and I ask you again: are you continuing to deny to the House the information you now have, as current as possible, with respect to the Regina Public School Board and the Regina Separate School Board, some of whose electors and some of whose students I represent? Are you continuing to deny that information to me and to the House?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I am not denying any information to this House. I have given assurances that that information will be forthcoming to the opposition in its entirety. In fact, I do believe last night, if one were to go back and check the record, that I had indicated I would include, before the opposition even asked for it, the Educational Development Fund. That will be forthcoming to them. There's nothing unusual about that.

I would like to state to the Leader of the Opposition that what is in question is the operating grants in total. If he feels that he wants to bring in question what one board is receiving versus another, then I suggest that what he really wants to do is debate the very fundamental principle of equity that is built into that factor.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, it is reasonable and proper for members of the legislature to ask the break-down of figures which are in the budget. Indeed, that is the norm — far from being abnormal, it is the norm. The largest single vote, subvote in your vote is \$317 million. It is broken down into probably 150 or 200 items, and those, on the average, therefore, are over \$1 million per item and are not trivial.

I am simply asking for a partial break-down, a partial break-down of the figure, which you are denying on the grounds that it may change somewhat with respect to future calculations. I have noted, with care, that you can label information you give me with, saying that it is accurate up to a given date, or that it is preliminary, or any other way to indicate that changes may take place.

You say, because changes may take place, and, as you very candidly admit, some weeks or some months hence, that you, therefore, have the right to deny the committee the information until some weeks or some months transpire and you have decided on the final figures.

Now that, I suggest, is — and if you can do it, every other minister can do it, and it can be done with respect to every subvote. And I suggest that that makes a mockery of the committee. It is surely incumbent upon the Minister of education to give her best information as to what is going out to a board like the Regina Public School Board. Acknowledge that it may change. She is saying she will not say whether it's 10 million, 15 million, 20 million. She will not say whether they all add up to 317 million or 517, or any other figure. She will, in fact, not given any information by way of break-down of the subvote. And I say to you that that is not the case in the past. She is instancing something that happened in 1979, and she did it in a manner which is not appropriate.

She said that because someone asked for mill rates, which obviously cannot be given until after April, you cannot give grant figures. Now that is surely nonsense. And the minister knows it's nonsense. I invite her to read again what she quoted from *Hansard* of 1979. It was not a request for grant figures. It was a request for grant figures plus mill rates, which everybody knows can't

be done at this time.

What we are asking for now is not mill rates, but the grant figures that you, Madam Minister, propose to pay. And you are saying, no, you won't give them. You say you won't give them, notwithstanding the fact that you obviously have them because you've sent them out to every school board, and that you well know. You say you won't give them because they may change. They may change because some future calculations may be made. That, Madam Minister, is not good enough as a reason for denying to the committee how you propose to spend \$317 million of public money.

You, Madam Minister, and I, Madam Minister, are elected as a primary part of our duty to enquire into how public money is spent. That's what we are doing. We are asking proper questions. You are denying the answers, and, Madam Minister, you do not do credit to the office of Minister of Education when you . . . that's right, you do not do credit to the office of Minister of Education when you decline to give information on how \$300 million is spent.

And members may chuckle. Members may think that this whole process of sitting in the legislature is simply to give some support to a cabinet which has the only and sole responsibility to govern. Then I want to tell you that's not my view of the legislature. My view of the legislature is that every member, every member, has an obligation to ask questions, every member has an obligation to do what he was elected to do. And one of the questions he is supposed to ask — and one of the questions the member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake might well ask, but I'm sure he will not because he already has that information, but I do not, with respect to my constituency — the question that he might ask is how much is his board getting, as I am asking, how much is my board getting?

And you are saying you will not give it, and I ask you again, Madam Minister, on what grounds do you refuse to give the information — however preliminary it may be — the information which you now have, which is going to boards, which we, as MLA's are elected to represent? What justification do you have for denying that information to this committee so that we may discuss it?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, for a lot of years I listened to a lot of rhetoric in this province, and at one point in time made a very deliberate decision based on what the public, and particularly what young people, say about the political system. Two things: it lacks honesty, and it knows nothing about integrity. Tonight from the opposition is a perfect example.

He says why can't I give the information? I have listed the reasons why the information on per board is not available.

If I look at my estimate book, Mr. Chairman, I don't see Regina Board of Education. I don't see Saskatoon Board of Education. I see Executive Admin., vote 1; I see number 13, the School for the Deaf; item number 14, Northern Education, and the figures that correspond with that.

Now we all know that there is a factor that makes up the final figure in the estimate book. For instance, on the operating grants, Mr. Chairman, the line is operating grants, and I believe that it is \$317 million, grants to schools, operating.

What is debatable within this total figure, based on this book that we are supposed to be going through tonight, is how that money's going to be allocated. The formula.

We haven't debated the principles of equity and fairness, or the ability to pay, or the need of the formula.

He's wanted to talk about his own constituency. Well, surely to goodness the formula is over and above the petty partisan politics that a politician may want to get into with his own school board.

There isn't a line in here to debate each school division. But in terms of that \$317 million going into operating grants on schools, we should be talking about the formula, the per student factor, and all that that comes with it.

When I have the information compiled into a package for the opposition on the operating grants, it will be given to the opposition, and they will be as close as possible to the final figures.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:03 p.m.