

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

April 25, 1985

EVENING SITTING

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. members, I wonder if I could get leave of the Assembly to introduce some guests, please. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, some guests seated in the west gallery tonight. They are some members from the Saskatchewan Pork Producers Marketing Board, the elected hog board in the province. And they are — I'll ask them to stand — Garth Larson, who is the chairman; Bill Neudorf, who is the vice-chairman; Dick Wright, who is the director; Wayne Vermetted who is the director; and Jim Morris, just coming in.

I would point out to the members that this industry is a very valuable industry in Saskatchewan. It's going through a bit of what some might call a hog war today. They're very much a group of movers and shakers out there in the farm community, and I would ask all members of the legislature to join with me in welcoming them to the Assembly tonight.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

ADVANCED EDUCATION AND MANPOWER

Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 5

Item 1 (continued)

MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Minister, just before supper we were discussing one aspect of the extravagance of your department at a time when there was major underfunding of the educational system. And I alluded to, as I call, the Chinese holiday by the former minister of Advanced Education, along with the MLA for Redberry, along with a ministerial assistant, at a total cost of five of the six that went of \$25,000. And I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, you thought it was all right that a back-bencher should go on a holiday with the taxpayers footing the bill, even though we are running up massive deficits in this province, but that's all right. It's the Tories having a good time rather than attending to the shop.

But what I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, are you satisfied that this here taxpayers-sponsored Tory holiday, whether the \$25,000 justified the results?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Well I'll try and make it short, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I don't really look upon that as a holiday. As a matter of fact, this . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order. You've asked the question. Please let him answer.

AN HON. MEMBER: — I wasn't saying a word.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Then continue to not say a word when the Chair is addressing the matter, please.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I was saying, I don't look upon that exchange as a holiday. I think it was a serious undertaking, and if I'm not mistaken, part of this exchange was initiated, at least the student exchange at the universities, by the previous government. And I would just remind the members opposite that it was at the invitation of the two provinces of Jilin and Shandong that the minister . . . It was at their invitation that he went to China in exchange, and as a result of that exchange in which the university participated and was

very anxious for the government to participate as well, we see that we are having a return of eight scholars from China this coming year, and it amounts to cultural exchange which, in effect, will result, I'm sure, in some economic advantages for this country. And China, I think, has been earmarked as potentially an excellent market area for the products we have here in Saskatchewan. So you know, is it worthwhile? Very, very definitely, I think it was worthwhile.

MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Chairman, I fully appreciate that the Chinese certainly may have a market for some of our products, and now, what I was wondering, Mr. Minister, was this delegation over selling some of our products? And if so, why would they send the former minister of Advanced Education and manpower to fulfil that job?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Well Mr. Chairman, I don't think it's a black or white situation. I think that the minister was sent because he was the one who was invited by the Chinese. And he was invited primarily because of the cultural component involved in the exchange. But at the same time, having said that, the Chinese, when they had visited here, indicated an interest in agricultural things and in Crown corporation matters and so therefore the make-up of the contingent that went over to China was in keeping with what the Chinese had indicated their interests were.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well I note in the background that you have written here is that the Chinese were — the Chinese province — were going to send in exchange four scholars to Saskatchewan, to audit the university and technical institute programs. In view of the list of people that went over, have you any views in respect to a feeling that maybe the Chinese were short-changed, because they are intending to send four scholars over, and I wonder whether you feel that they were short-changed?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, I'm sure that the hon. member didn't hear what I said, but I thought that I indicated that there were going to be eight, eight students come back. So eight for six, we're winners.

MR. KOSKIE: — Now that the minister has indicated that it was a worthwhile junket, I wonder whether he has received a report since it was on the taxpayers funding and, in particular I'd like to know whether you could file a report of the journey, and the benefit to the people of Saskatchewan, from the back-bencher from the constituency of Redberry. I wonder if you could be in the position to give all of us in the House an opportunity to read the report and setting out the benefits that this ambassador, the back-bencher from Redberry, was able to feed back to your department as a benefit of this here taxpayers' holiday. Could you file a report?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think it would be fair to ask for a report on the benefits of the total trip and the total delegation, and we'd be prepared to provide that at our earliest opportunity, and make that available to the member.

MR. KOSKIE: — I accept that, Mr. Minister, and I was just wondering: have you in your possession, at this time, that report? Have you received a report from the member from Redberry who took this trip to China? Have you mentioned that yet?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, no, I have not received that. And I was thinking in terms of a total report.

MR. KOSKIE: — I don't want to belabour this here Chinese holiday, but from whom do you expect to receive this comprehensive report?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — I would expect to receive that report through my deputy minister, who was one of the members accompanying the minister, and, as well, through intergovernmental affairs.

MR. KOSKIE: — The only reason that I raise this is to emphasize priorities of spending because I have indicated to you, Mr. Minister, our concern, and certainly the concern of students and faculty in respect to the past three years of performance in so far as funding of the university.

And at a critical time, when universities so desperately need it — money even to repair a roof in the administration building on the campus, and even to buy buckets to collect the water that ran through the unrepaired roof — at that time the minister and your office, and the predecessor, authorized an expenditure of 25,000 for a holiday.

But if you look at the priorities further, you find in 1983-84 in *Public Accounts*, we see that the one area that you had no problem in so far as expenditures. We look at executive administration subvote was overspent by 17 per cent or \$100,000 for the minister's personal staff expenses and bureaucrats.

If you look at some of the other areas in respect to last year's performance, we find that the student aid was underspent by 10 per cent, that the capital grants to the universities were underspent by 14 per cent. And what I am asking you, Mr. Minister: how do you justify expenditures of the natures that I raise concern with? That is, that taxpayers' trip to China at 25, and, if you add in the others it'll be more than that.

And then when you've got in the executive administration subvote overspent by \$100,000, and you find capital grants to the universities were underspent by 14 per cent — \$600,000 — how do you justify those as priorities in a time when the student enrolment at the universities was increasing, at a time when more funding needed to be provided?

Why those? Why that type of priority, Mr. Minister?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, in regard to the expenditures that the hon. member was referring to, it would seem to me that that is a matter for Public Accounts, since it is expenditures in '83-84, for the Public Accounts Committee. However he did allude to, at the same time, to make a point that we were underfunding the universities. He also . . . So I will speak about that in a minute.

But he also alluded to the leaking roof. Well let me remind the hon. member that there are a lot of roofs that leak. I personally never worked in a school where the roof did not leak, where we didn't have to get buckets and pails, for some reason — I don't know whether it's an architectural problem, a mechanical problem, or a design problem.

I also know this: that as I recall, the way that the university building or buildings were designed somehow were, somehow brought on leaking roofs. And the year after that particular building that he alluded to was in existence, they had buckets out, and they're the same buckets that were out there a year afterwards. So I don't 'know why you're blaming a poor nice guy like me for having those buckets out there. That isn't fair for goodness' sakes.

Honestly, you know, I want to say that my critic, I think, is a very responsible and a very . . . (inaudible) . . . critic, but sometimes he gets carried away. You know, I just think that we could make more headway as far as the estimates are concerned if we just dealt straight across the table. So I'll meet you over there.

(1915)

In regard to university underfunding, I just want to establish this point: you can point fingers all you want. The universities have been sitting and waiting, and hoping and praying, for what we introduced in our budget this year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. CURRIE: — I'm not saying . . . I know you'll have difficulty in believing this. I'm not saying this to gain political points. I'm saying this because I honestly believe this with my heart and my soul because my background has been education. And I believe that what we did was not something to gain political points.

What we did was absolutely essential for this province, but it was absolutely essential in order to pave the way for what should happen in the rest of this country, and that is to make a commitment to higher education, such as we have done; to put into the hands of these people who are mature, good, thinking people, and leaders in the area of the intellectual exercises, put into their hands the means whereby they can sit down and plan programs, because most of their programs extend over a period of 4 or 5 years, and some more than that.

And they're committed in so far as students are concerned; they're committed in so far as contacts are concerned. There's no way on earth that they can sit there holding their breath waiting for the next year's budget to come along so that they have to decide whether they can continue with that program or throw the thing out, you see?

So honestly, what we have done — you go and ask the professors; you go and ask the administrators; you go and ask the students — and I kid you not, they're on our side 100 per cent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KOSKIE: — Your last statement is a matter of opinion. And all I can say is, if you're convinced of that, then call a by-election over in Regina North East and let's have a test.

But you didn't quite answer my question, the question being . . . And make it a little shorter and answer the question, because you kind of get up and give the same old lingo all the time. You know, like coming from your heart, you know.

But what I'm asking is, in a time of underfunding — which I think you and I can agree that in the last three years the universities were underfunded. Let's just see if we can get a common base and go from there.

It is my feeling that, relative to the needs and the growing enrolment that we have in the university student body, there was a need for much more funding than what was coming forward from the government. I just wonder if we can agree on that aspect, whether you were . . .

HON. MR. CURRIE: — No, no, Mr. Chairman, I'm not satisfied. I agree that the universities had a short-term and a long-term crisis. I agree on that. So we're certainly in agreement.

But I want to point out the reason for that, for the existence of that. And all you have to do is sit down and talk with the university people. And I consulted with them a great deal, because I kid you not, we did a lot of soul-searching in order to make a commitment such as we have made in this budget with regard to post-secondary education, and in particular to the universities.

And the problem that arose, in effect, arose as a result of the fact that the operational budgets of the universities were eroded over a period of time. And during the time that your government was in power, it was projected that the university enrolments would decline. That did not happen. On the contrary, they escalated at a very, very unusual rate. And purposely from what I was told, purposely that operational base budget was kept low, too low. And that's the situation that existed when we came into government. What we did, I think, was about as responsible as any government could have done. And that was that we increased over a period of three years something like 30 per cent — 17 per cent the first year, 8 per cent the second year, both those years the highest in Canada, and a third year something like 5 per cent which was at least as good as any other province. At a time when British Columbia was cutting year after year by 5 per

cent, when Alberta was at zero per cent, when Manitoba was at 3 per cent. And on and on it goes.

MR. KOSKIE: — What you have indicated is partly your doing and partly not your doing. Now you indicated that there was 17 per cent in your first budget. And I'm going to tell you, Mr. Speaker, there wasn't 17 per cent because the Tory party put that 17 per cent there. There was 17 per cent there because when we left office, we left and gave to the people of this province a budget.

And I don't think, I don't think that you will deny that what we left there was a budget which in fact, Mr. Minister, had put into the education and universities a 17 per cent increase. Will you acknowledge that?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Well I want to thank the hon. member for that information. He is partly right and partly not right. So we're kind of tit for tat on this last exchange.

Partly right, that is right. Partly right in that the NDP government did have in their March budget an increase of 14 to 17 per cent, somewhere in there. I don't remember it offhand. Okay, all right. However, that budget was never actually put into being, into effect. That budget was introduced and then the election was called.

Now in the meantime, back home on the ranch, there was a change of government. And so when we came into government, the first thing that we had to do was to determine what our priorities were, and to determine how much money we were going to spend on this, on highways, and on health, and on education. And when we took a look at the predicted, when we took a look at the revenues, we saw a horror picture. Therefore we had to make some very very hard decisions. Were we going to leave that in effect or not?

Now we recognized, and the people out there — including the people in the universities, and the students, particularly — recognized that it was an election promise, and it was done on that basis, because an election was called, and here we're going to, you know, give somebody a whole bunch of money because they'd been underfunded for this many years before. So we had to make that decision at that time, and we did make that decision, and we were the people who had to take it out of the budget and put it into being; not your government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KOSKIE: — Well I'm glad that the minister is honest enough to give us credit where credit is due, and for writing one of the . . . The only progressive budget that the Minister of Finance brought in is the one that he copied from Ed Tchorzewski.

But I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, if you could, in fact . . . I wonder if I could have a little order, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to come back to the question of credibility through, Mr. Minister, what I was alluding to is if one looks at the past performance — and let me just give you a few examples: and I raise and I don't want to stress it, but I don't think it was a priority to spend 25,000 going to China; and then if you look at the executive administration subvote, overspent by 17 per cent or 100,000. If you look at the capital grants to the universities, underspent by 14 per cent or \$600,000.

And so what I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, why should the people of Saskatchewan believe you or believe the government — not you personally, I'm not attacking you personally — but why should they believe what this government is going to do, when in the past, even when the budget in your own words was not sufficiently high to meet the needs — and you explained that in some detail — why should the people believe that now that you indicate that you're changing your direction and that you're going to increase funding, that you are in fact really

going to come through with it rather than having these other priorities, which I refer to in the time of crisis at the universities were extravagant expenditures?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, in regard to the 14 per cent underexpenditure that was alluded to, I can assure the hon. member that this was spent, but it was spent in another department's appropriation. And this was at the time of the deleting of the universities commissions. But I can assure the hon. member that it was spent.

MR. KOSKIE: — What about executive administration? Do you acknowledge that it was overspent by \$100,000 in 1983-84?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, it is charged to the administration when the department takes on new programs, and that's where the money was spent in that instance.

MR. KOSKIE: — I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, in respect to the budget itself: are you aware of the total government expenditure increase in overall spending in the budget? Are you aware of the percentage of increase in the total government expenditure for overall government expenditure? Do you know what percentage it is? Increase?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, no, I'm afraid that I don't know what the total percentage increase for government spending is, but I do know what it is for the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower in total. And that's an increase of 8.2 per cent.

MR. KOSKIE: — If one looks at the total government expenditure, Mr. Minister, if you look at the increase in the expenditures, there's about 5.7 per cent increase. And if you take a look at the . . . to get a total of Advanced Education expenditures, we look at the Consolidated Fund, the Heritage Fund, the Special Projects Fund, and you take a look at 1984-85, we will find that in the Consolidated Fund there's something like . . . well not something, but \$257 million. That's in '84-85. In the Special Projects Funds, there was \$8 million, for a total of \$265 million.

(1930)

In the 1985-86 budget you find in the Consolidated Fund, \$260 million. You find out of the Heritage Fund an additional \$7 million, for a total of \$267 million.

If you compare those two figures — that is, 1985-86 and the '84-85 — you get for '84-85, as I said, \$265 million, and for '85-86, \$267 million. In other words, a \$2 million increase in total expenditures which is about a plus 0.8 per cent.

But to be perfectly fair in calculating that, in adding up the various expenditures, you will note that there are two items that have been transferred to job funds from the 1984-85 budget of approximately \$10 million. And in total, in my calculations, that would leave a 4.7 per cent overall increase in the Advanced Education and Manpower budget.

So what I'm indicating to you, that while you have indicated in your budget, Mr. Minister, some additional funds for universities' operating grants and for capital grants, and you have the special fund, university development fund — you have additional moneys from that, and that is fine and dandy. But the fact is that if you look at the comparison of expenditures, that it's only a 4.7 per cent increase overall as compared to the total expenditure of the government of 5.7 per cent.

And so what I'm saying is: what has really happened in your budget is that as you alluded to at the beginning of your comments, that if you look through it, that which you had the thrust for, as you said, in the technical institutes and so on, now if you look at this budget, what you have done is essentially starve the technical institutes and in a way transferred that over to the universities, because if you look at the technical institutes, and each and every individual budget is down substantially, and we'll come to those in the item by item. But I don't think you can deny

that there has been a substantial decrease in respect to the funding of the Wascana, the Kelsey, and the other institutes.

And so what I'm saying is, what you've done is, in the initial period there was some thrust, and I give you credit for it, towards the technical institutes, but now what you apparently are doing is to starve the technical institutes to take your heat off from the university community. And I think that what we're doing is playing, technically, some games with the public. And what I would like to do is ask you; what are your justifications for a fairly substantial cut in the technical institutes and their budgetary expenditures?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, could I deal first of all with the total budget that the hon. member alluded to? I think you got the figure coming up to \$267, but I would refer the hon. member to the section under Employment Development Agency where he will find an additional \$20.2 million for programs that are run and delivered by our department. And we as a department are responsible for these. We staff these programs, and that is part of our total budget. And some of that was in last year's budget, if you take a look at last year's budget. So in effect the total budget is \$287.2 million which is an increase of 8.2 per cent.

Now in regard to the financing or the funding of the technical institutes, and I suppose we'll get to that when we deal with that subvote, but in general terms, we have increased the funding, the total funding for technical institutes by some \$4 million, to amount to a total increase for spending on technical education or technical institutes of 7 per cent. You have missed out on the amount that's allocated for the Prince Albert technical institute, under capital.

MR. KOSKIE: — You can't really start adding, Mr. Minister, from the Employment Development Agency, because you're administering it and still get the credit under the employment agency that you're spending X number of dollars. I mean you can't have a double counting and that's what you apparently are doing. I want to come to the university development fund and I would like first of all to ask the minister, the amount committed here is \$125 million. It says:

As its contribution to this effort, the province will commit \$125 million over the next five years. The 1985-86 commitment of \$15 million to be provided in two ways:

\$6.6 million will be allocated to the universities' base operating grant, representing a 5 per cent increase; and

\$8.4 million will be earmarked within the University Renewal and Development Fund for new projects.

And I guess as a preliminary, I just wonder where you arrived at the \$125 million. In your planning of arriving at that amount, how did you come up with that figure?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure what the point of the question was, and so I hesitate to answer. You mean an explanation of the breakdown of how that \$125 million was spent? Is that what the member is asking?

MR. KOSKIE: — No. I'm just interested to know how you arrived at the figure \$125 million.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I suppose it is arrived at through a combination of many things: through consultation with the universities; through determining through our department, working with the universities, what their real needs are, and trying to establish at least a ball park figure of approximately how much money would be able to meet, adequately meet, those needs over a period of five years. Those were the kinds of things that we had to think through. And given the fact that the resources are not unlimited, so that we picked a figure that we felt was reasonable, that the universities could live with and could look after their short-term and their long-term needs, and we arrived at the figure of \$125 million as the renewal

and development fund.

MR. KOSKIE: — This year, as I indicated to you and as you are aware of, Mr. Minister, out of the 15 million out of that fund, you've allocated 6.6, as I say, to operating grants, and 8.4 million earmarked to the University Renewal and Development Fund, it says for new projects.

What I want is a clarification as to what is the \$8.4 million specifically going to be allocated to. How does the university, in fact, qualify to in fact receive that funding of 8.4 million? How will it be allocated vis-à-vis the two universities? Have you worked out any of the arrangements, or the terms, or the criteria, first for qualifying, secondly so far as allocation?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, no, we have not worked out the process whereby we will make the allocation of funds for that \$8.4 million. What we have done has been to meet to discuss the pros and cons of doing it by formula, as opposed to doing it by what is really in the best interest totally in the province of Saskatchewan.

But we have not really had the opportunity as yet to enter into a discussion that would specifically outline the process that we will be using. So that is something that will be happening within the very near future.

MR. KOSKIE: — You indicated that in the development of the University Renewal and Development Fund that you had considerable discussions with the universities. I'm surprised to hear that you've had ongoing discussions with them in light of the comments that were emanating from these institutions prior to the coming down of the budget by the Minister of Finance.

The University of Regina, there was indications that they may have to close down the old campus, and they may have to delete some of the programs. There was talk about having to close the university for two weeks and laying off all of staff. I find it so difficult to believe that there was this wonderful consultation going on, and at the same time such a deep concern by students, by the faculty, and by the presidents of the university.

Can you indicate when this process began and the nature of the meetings that you had in formulating the development fund?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, shortly after I was appointed to this portfolio, or after I became the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, I did have the opportunity— as I recall this was 1st or 2nd of February, somewhere around that period of time — I did have the opportunity of meeting with the Board of Governors of the University of Regina. Following that, I met with the president, and following that I met with the president and his administrative staff on several occasions; went through virtually the same kind of a process with the University of Saskatchewan.

And that consultation process was going on right up and during the time of budget finalization, and it continued right up until the time that the budget was printed.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well can you be explicit? Were the terminology of developing a five-year plan used in your discussion with the university?

And are you saying that this was developed after you became the minister in February of this year, and all that consultation of developing this five-year plan took place from February up until the time that the budget was brought down? Is that what you're saying?

(1945)

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Well if you're referring to the budget generally, there was much talk

about futuristic planning in the budget generally. From the point of view of my particular department, all I can speak about is what I was involved with.

And quite frankly, it was something that came out of our discussions that we mutually agreed upon the advantages that could accrue from forward planning, from having the opportunity of a degree of certainty. And this seemed to be the one thing above all other things that the university people sought.

And so it became from my own point of view, it became a very high priority in attempting to attain. And so I am pleased to say that my colleagues supported that concept and went with it, and the Minister of Finance incorporated it into his budget.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well I look on the capital side. The universities have requested projects in excess of \$200 million including a new college of agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan.

I would be interested to note or ask the minister when you expect that you will be able to give a commitment and the commencement of a new agricultural college at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, as the member knows, discussions have been going on about the college of agriculture, the desirability and the necessity for having a college of agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan for some 20 years, and we have been having discussions with the university sector and with some of the agricultural people with regard to this same issue.

The fact that we do have a renewal and development fund is not going to hurt the chances for the college of agriculture to become a reality, and it will become . . . The renewal and development fund will become, I suppose, an important component in bringing that into fruition. But there are more. It's a broader issue because of the amount of the expenditure for the college of agriculture. It will be a broader issue than just that. So that we are at the present time exploring all of the possibilities for the raising of money and bringing about the existence of a college of agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan as soon as we possibly can.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well nothing has changed then. You're carrying on consultation, and the university at Saskatoon, the University of Saskatchewan, have this as a high priority, and they would have thought that they would, indeed, get a commitment now that you have put together a five-year plan. Are you saying that you have put together a five-year plan and that you do not, in fact, have within that the development of the College of Agriculture at the campus in Saskatoon?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Well as I said, we have not as yet decided upon the process that we're going to use in dealing with the renewal and development fund, so that I think that we would have to make that decision first, that is set up the consultative process that we will be using.

As far as the College of Agriculture is concerned, it certainly will be one of the major priorities. It has been established by the University of Saskatchewan as the top priority — perhaps not the top priority right now, because they do have a crisis situation in so far as their Administration Building is concerned, but beyond that I think it's fair to say that the University of Saskatchewan has officially declared that the College of Agriculture is number one priority.

I would be very anxious for us to work out the mechanics and to have some action instead of words in the very near future.

MR. KOSKIE: — That is precisely what I'm urging you to tell us tonight, that you will give us some action rather than words. And all I'm getting — words.

You know in respect to the College of Agriculture, the university at Saskatoon. The administration, the president has made a commitment, went out and raised, as you know, something like \$120,000 from private donations. He's collected from private donors in order to set up and do an analysis and a design of the college.

The university has, I think, gone the extra mile in indicating the need and also the commitment of raising that that private funding. I'm wondering whether this government has other designs similar to, say, Alberta, where if they're going to get a college of agriculture in Saskatoon, that part of the bargaining that you're going to place upon the university is that they will have to indeed sell off some of their property. That is a major concern to the university. And it happened in the university in Edmonton, and now they have a desperate need and it was a wrong decision. I mean if you go back and look at it.

And I want to tell you, Mr. Minister, this department that you're running are indeed playing around with that very proposition, that you are going to in fact demand that the University of Saskatchewan in order to help fund the College of Agriculture are going to dispose of some of its property.

And what I'm asking you, can you here today indicate that in the approving of the agricultural college at Saskatoon that you will not demand or extract out of the university a commitment of the disposition and sale of part of their property?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, I want to assure the hon. member that indeed we are not playing around with the universities. We're dealing with the universities very, very seriously, and in trust and good faith. As far as the land sales are concerned, that would be a decision that the university would make, and we would respect the right for the university to make that decision.

We would invite, challenge — whatever you wish — the universities to participate in this renewal program.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Share.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — You bet. You bet. And they're anxious . . . As I was saying, Mr. Chairman, we would invite and even challenge the universities to participate in the rehabilitation and the rejuvenation of the university sector by doing whatever they can through the private sector, through whatever projects they want to undertake in order to match dollars and/or to add to the renewal fund.

This I would see as being beneficial to the universities and beneficial to the people of this province. It's not an unknown thing. It's done all throughout Canada and the United States.

But in reply to your concern — that we're going to impose something upon the universities that the universities don't want in regard to the sale of their land — no, I don't think that that is a concern at all.

MR. KOSKIE: — I know that you can't go to the university, I know you can't go to the university, Mr. Minister, and demand, because you can't force anyone who has title to property to sell. But what you have been alluding to, and as I say, it has been followed in Alberta at the regret of the university, is that the government comes forward — and that's the essential funding base for universities and always has been, is the government.

And what you can do is say that the building is going to cost X number of dollars, and you can have it but you're going to have to raise X number of dollars. And it leaves the university in the position of having to refuse it, or accept it and raise the balance of the money.

And there's nothing wrong. As I said, the university has given its commitment, have raised

120,000 bucks. That's not a large money, but it's certainly an effort.

But what you can do is put the financial squeeze on the university by limiting the contribution and the commitment of the province to the extent that you can squeeze them into the position. And I'm telling you that's what was done in Alberta, in the university at Edmonton. And to their regret, they've sold off property which now is not to their advantage. It's a regrettable action.

And what I say is, it would be certainly regrettable if this government is indeed heading in that direction: to impose restrictions of funding and then have essentially forced the university into position of having to dispose of some of their property in order to meet their part of the financial commitment.

And I hope that you could give your assurance that, as in the past, the funding of capital projects on the university campuses, that the government has always come through in an adequate degree of funding and has not forced universities into such a position. I hope you can give a commitment to the University of Saskatchewan that you will not force them into the position of having to dispose of property.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, the inference that there might be some coercion is entirely wrong, because that's contrary to the very spirit in which this whole plan was designed. It's planned on the basis of government and the universities working together to do that which is in the best interests of this province.

As far as the Alberta model is concerned, I can say thank you very much for the caution. We'll take a look at what did take place there and be guided by it.

MR. KOSKIE: — Just in respect to the restoration of the Administration Building at the University of Saskatchewan, that of course, as we alluded to earlier, is certainly a priority. And is funds provided for in this year's budget, allocation of funds to do the renovations of the Administration Building?

(2000)

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, really, I suppose, I could say that there are two solutions: one is to fix the Administration Building; another is to provide adequate space for the administration. And that is under negotiation at the present time. And that's where the renewal development fund would enter the picture.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, the minister will know that there has been for a good period of time a fairly fixed method of financing capital projects at the University of Saskatchewan and at the University of Regina.

Is the minister telling us that the method of financing major capital projects of those two institutions which has prevailed for 20, 30, perhaps more years, is now changed, and that the university is going to be required to find a given proportion of the cost of major capital projects?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, no, I don't think I said that. I don't think, at least if I did, I didn't intend to say that. I don't think anything has changed as far as the whole process is concerned between the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower and the universities, in regard to drawing up what their capital requirements are.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, then do I understand you to say, and you'll be familiar with the, say the engineering building which has just been completed, or the biology building, I guess, which is not quite completed at the University of Saskatchewan — geology building. I'm sorry, at the University of Saskatchewan.

Now we know how that was financed. It was an agreement was reached between the government, by your government by the way, and the university as to what the capital cost would be on the particular plans you're using, since you called for new tenders. And it was financed on the basis of the government putting up that kind of money.

And the university was not given a commitment to raise any portion of that money. And you tell me nothing has changed. Now is that the way you're approaching the next major project, be it the major renovation of the Administration Building or the college of agriculture? Is that the way we're going to finance the next project?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, the financing of capital for universities over the past number of years has been quite diversified. That is, in several instances private capital has been raised, so that, in effect, there is no change from what has happened in the past.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I don't want to get into a long argument as to what has happened in the past because we can obviously point to the past as a long time. That's why I said the geology building. You will know how the geology building was financed. Your government did it. Now are you going to finance the next major project on the same basis, or on a different basis than the geology building was financed?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Well I think in fairness, Mr. Chairman, that we will arrive at that answer in consultation with the universities. We do have a renewal and development fund, something that is there that was not there before. This is not a disadvantage. This is above and beyond operating and capital funding that we would ordinarily be providing. This is above and beyond operating and capital funding that we would ordinarily be providing. So that, although we're only talking this year, in particular, about \$8.4 million — that is the residue from the 15 million. Next year, and each year thereafter, there would be something like 21 to \$22 million, above and beyond the ongoing base operating and base capital budgets that would ensue over the next four years, beyond this year.

So that there would be a fairly sizeable amount of money for renovation and capital construction and what not. So the universities, in the consultations that I've had with them to date, have been quite enthusiastic about participating and getting involved in seeing what they could do in order to raise money in addition to this, in order to enhance and to hasten the total renewal of the universities.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I'm sorry I'm not making myself clear. I hear the story of the fund, and of course we'd be delighted if it all came to pass. But I am asking you very specifically, you know, you know how the geology building was financed. And if you like another one, you'll know how the engineering building was financed immediately before it.

Now is the proposal for a different method of financing, or is it for the same method of financing? And if it's for a different method of financing, what is the obligation of the university in that different method of financing?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think that what the Leader of the Opposition is inferring is that there is no private money in the geology building. And I think that's in error, because there is.

So you know, I don't . . . I think that's what he was, the point he was trying to make, and therefore asking me a question based upon an error in what his assumption was.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I am now dealing with the base capital, not with the furnishings, not with the equipment, but with the base building. Would you then refresh my memory as to how much private capital is in the base building of the geology building? Not in the furnishings, not in the equipment, but in the base building.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, in what the department authorizes, it actually authorizes the total project. And that includes such things as equipment as well as capital construction, so that it's the total project. And there is capital, or private capital in that project.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, the question was fairly simple. Do you know how much the geology building cost as a building, and again, separate and apart from the furnishings, and do you know who paid that money?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, the figure is approximately seventeen and three-quarter million dollars, and it was paid for out of the Heritage Fund for the capital.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — And is it proposed . . . And here no one is quarrelling with the university running a project to gain some furnishings for, let's say, the College of Agriculture. But what I'm really asking is, is it going to be a condition of the government agreeing to, let's say, a new college of agriculture, at a cost of \$60 million, \$70 million if you prefer, is it a condition that the university raise a given portion of that money?

And to your knowledge, has the university engaged consultants in order to assist them to raise this given portion?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, for the first question: no, it has not been a condition; and for the second question: yes, the University of Saskatchewan has hired a consulting group to do a study on seeing how to go about raising money for the College of Agriculture. And that was undertaken by the University of Saskatchewan.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I think my colleague from Quill Lakes has undoubtedly made the point that, while we obviously have no quarrel with the university raising funds from the private sector, we would very much wish your government to give the university assurance that it can proceed with at least some major capital projects. And the two which appear to be on top of the priority heap appear to be the renovation of the Administration Building and the college of agriculture, in one sequence or another, depending on when you're talking with them.

And I would urge upon you that approval be given for the university's first priority. Clearly, planning should be going on now because the geology building must be very nearly completed, and you will want to go on with the next project, I would think, in an orderly sequence.

Some of the questions I asked are of particular relevance, of course, to the University of Regina, which would have much less capacity to raise any funds from the private sector than the University of Saskatchewan.

Could you give me your government's understanding of what the first priority capital project of the University of Regina is? Substantial capital project — I'm not talking about renovating a heating plant or the like, but substantial capital project.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Well Mr. Chairman, I'd hesitate to answer that particular question, because the University of Regina has been doing a study for some time, and what they have been looking at is the whole College Avenue campus, and so I think that we would have to depend upon the direction that they would give in regard to priorities that they would establish.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I'm sorry again that I didn't make myself clear. I didn't ask what you would have to depend upon. I would assume that you would be guided to a considerable extent by what the University of Regina had advised you.

My question was: what is the understanding of your government? What have you been advised up to date as to the top priority of the University of Regina with respect to major capital projects?

(2015)

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Well, Mr. Chairman, in all honesty, I don't know what the priority is. And I think that the establishment of this renewal and development fund will assist the University of Regina administration to clarify what their priorities are.

Up to now they've been sitting and waiting, hoping that they would get some assistance to maybe patch up Darke Hall. And then they were wondering whether they could do something with regard to Regina campus. And then the fifth floor of the Education Building enters the picture and then there's whether they should, or they shouldn't, locate the fine arts building on campus. And all those things they've been discussing, but they've been . . . They really haven't been able to seriously come to grips with it, because they've been thinking in terms of play money, of dream money, because that's not a realistic thing for them to plan.

I think that now that they see that there is the possibility of having money allocated over a period of five years, in a five-year plan they will be able to put together something that makes a lot of sense as far as fiscal responsibility is concerned.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I'm puzzled by that answer. The University of Saskatchewan has presumably been able to embark upon, in the same time frame, capital projects which are going to take two or three or four more — two or three or four years to complete, as the engineering did and geology building did, or, prior to that, dentistry buildings and the like. And it was, I think, with some confidence predicted that once you started the foundation of a building, money would be there to complete the building.

And doubtless the University of Regina would have no less faith in the Government of Saskatchewan, whatever its political stripe, than the University of Saskatchewan.

Now we don't need a five-year plan; we presumably haven't needed a five-year plan to proceed with a great number of projects in the past. You're telling me that the University of Regina didn't have a capital program that they urged upon your government, and that you are not able to tell me what the first priority was?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Well Mr. Chairman, in the last three years they've asked for Darke Hall, the fifth floor of the Education Building, College Avenue campus, so it's really hard for me to say, to put words into their mouths. I would have to say, if I was to hazard a guess, that they might choose the Darke Hall as the first priority, but that's strictly a guess on my part.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I want to talk about Darke Hall and then the College Avenue campus. They have obviously urged the renovation of Darke Hall upon you because it is closed for the first time in, I suppose, your lifetime and mine, and what I'm asking is whether or not your government is now prepared to give authority to proceed with necessary renovations. Is your government now prepared to give authority to proceed with necessary renovations of Darke Hall so that that facility may be put back into service?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, in fairness to the consultative process that we are setting up with the two universities at the present time, I would choose not to pre-empt the administration of the University of Regina, and give them the opportunity to say specifically, this is what we have in mind as our first priority, and this is what we have in mind as a fifth priority way down the line here.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, you've been pre-empting it for two or three years by saying no. the building, after all, is closed. It wasn't closed when you first assumed this post — I don't mean this time, but the time before. It is closed now. Something has happened. The university didn't close it willingly. You have allowed it to be closed, or indeed forced its closure, depending on one's choice of words, by not providing the funds to put it back

into service. You are now saying that you wish to consult with the university — notwithstanding your admission that you've been asked many times — before you would agree that if asked again you would agree to the renovation of Darke Hall. You were just saying nothing happens without further consultation notwithstanding the three years of fruitless consultation they have experienced with your government in the last three years.

In effect, that's what you're saying is it not? These people have asked you for two or three years for money for Darke Hall. You have said no, no, no. You are now saying you are willing to consult but you're not willing to say yes to any project.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, in connection with Darke Hall, it was assessed by the University of Regina in September of 1984 as a second level capital budget priority. Now I'm a little reluctant to get into Darke Hall again with the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, because the last time we had a discussion about this I got into some serious difficulty at home. It seems to me when the Leader of the Opposition was insisting that it was my fault as minister that nothing was being done for Darke Hall, I tried to establish the point that that building had been there one awfully long time because my wife had come in all the way from Francis, Saskatchewan to take singing lessons there, and she used to tell me stories, you know, horror stories, about the walls moving back and forth and everything like that. And I think I remember at the time saying something about, and she's no spring chicken. And I still have marks on my back from the time that I got home. When I walked into the house and said to her in kind of a joking manner, where's my supper, she indicated that I should try the deep-freeze.

I am very serious when I say that it's very nice for the Leader of the Opposition to stand up and all of a sudden say that magic should happen, when all those years when there was plenty of money available, plenty of resources available, very little, if anything, was done to bring about restoration and rehabilitation of those buildings that really were in sad shape.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I'm sure we're all touched by the recounting of that domestic scene.

But I emphasize that, notwithstanding these interesting stories about how the walls waved in past eons of time, the facts are that there were additions to Darke Hall approved by structural engineers during the intervening periods, and presumably there would not have been additions had the building not been reasonably structurally sound.

At any rate, whatever stories you can conjure up from the past, the facts are that Darke Hall was busy and in use until your government came on the scene and sometime thereafter.

But if you don't want to discuss Darke hall, will you talk about the Regina Avenue campus, and tell us what broad options are being considered? Presumably there are three broad options: (1) the demolition of the existing buildings either to be replaced or not — perhaps I should say the demolition of the existing buildings, period; (2) the demolition of the existing buildings and their restructuring in something of their present mode in order to preserve a simulated heritage value; or (3) the substantial renovation of those buildings preserving their exterior core.

There may well be other options, but I mention those three. Has the government and the university — and I know you've been consulting on this for two or three years along with, because I have talked with members of the board including the current senator — have you arrived at any sort of conclusion as to which option ought to be pursued?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, in reply to that question, no, we have not. We will be entering into very serious discussions concerning that. And I think that the means are there now in order for something to take place over a period of a few years. It's realistic for us to come to grips with the resolution of those problems or decisions.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm puzzled as to what's happened between now and year ago that has changed in any way your ability to grapple with these things. Once again, there has been no absences of five-year commitments by governments of Saskatchewan in the past. Community capital funds, through municipal people, were set up on five-year bases. No reason why, if you like that mode, you couldn't have done it for the university. But I take it you're in effect, telling me that nothing has been resolved with respect to Regina Avenue campus.

I want to turn to a very different subject, Mr. Minister. And this has to do with bursaries, and bursaries for the SUNTEP program.

I think, Mr. Minister, you will be aware that at least it is reported that there have been changes in the bursary program for SUNTEP. And I'm speaking of not very recent changes, but some months ago. And there has been a change from bursaries, which were totally forgivable, to a combination of bursaries and repayable loans; and that this has had the effect of, at least in the opinion of some, changing the character of students who are undertaking that program from older students, who would not wish to undertake a major loan commitment for fear they would fail the course, to younger students, who are perhaps more willing to undertake major loan commitments.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Is this a speech?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — I beg your pardon? Sorry, I thought the member for Weyburn was contributing.

I am saying, Mr. Minister, you have changed the bursary program. In the opinion of many it has changed the character of the students who are applying, particularly their age. Would you care to comment on that? Would you care to comment on what changes you have made in the bursary program for SUNTEP students?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, there has been a new special incentive bursary established.

It hasn't changed the character of the program, that under the new program all students will be treated the same on a needs based assessment, so that SUNTEP students could be eligible for Canada student loan, or the Saskatchewan student bursary, and for them a special incentive bursary above and beyond the Canada student loan and the Saskatchewan student loan.

(2030)

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I'm referring to some public comments attributed to Professor Alan Ryan of the University of Saskatchewan, and some also attributed to Professor Howard Birnie of the University of Saskatchewan, who I take it are associated with the operation of the SUNTEP program.

And I understand, Mr. Minister, that the current, or at this time — several months ago — the bursary arrangements for SUNTEP were different than those for NORTEP, in that SUNTEP students were, I take it, required to take out a greater component in loans of their total, their total financial assistance, then was true of the NORTEP students.

Birnie and Ryan say fewer and fewer older and more experienced natives will now seek to become teachers for fear of losing money they could ill afford to lose. "We found this a very sad development," and on and on.

I'm not anchoring my remarks upon necessarily Birnie's or Ryan's opinions. I'm asking you whether something has changed which affects the financial pattern applicable to students who

are taking the SUNTEP program. And this is some months ago now that I'm referring to.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Well Mr. Chairman, the main difference between the NORTEP and the SUNTEP program, as far as assistance is concerned, is that the NORTEP program is an employer-related program in that the students in NORTEP are being trained specifically to teach in the Northern Lights School Division, and they get training allowances with a work-back agreement involved; whereas the SUNTEP students are not under that agreement.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, the effect, I think, is that the NORTEP program at this stage of the game can be said to be a greater confirmed success than the SUNTEP program. I think the NORTEP program, I think the jury is in. It is a successful program.

The SUNTEP program, I think the jury is out. We don't know whether it's a successful program, because the number of students, successful students, who have been placed is not, perhaps, sufficient to confirm that. I'm not suggesting that depends only on the financing; it's a newer program and, as you say, there are many more employers, and it's harder to make judgements.

But have you given any consideration to giving to SUNTEP students a different, a package which would involve more bursary money and less loan money, so as to attract mature students whose working life will be less? And I've seen lots of NORTEP graduates clearly in their 50s at the graduation. Have you given any consideration to changing the package to more bursary money and less loan money in order to attract those sorts of students to the SUNTEP program, because I think it is clear that they have been successful graduates of the NORTEP program?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Well -Mr. Chairman, to answer that question specifically: every year we do give consideration to the changes that we should effect in the criteria for the student loan program; and in regard to the SUNTEP program, we are going to be . . . Our scholarship, loans and bursary committee, which will be meeting in June of this year, will be receiving a hearing from AMNSIS regarding this particular issue, and so it will be considered at that time by the scholarship, loans and bursary committee, and that committee will be making its recommendations to me following that hearing.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I may say that I have been approached by a fair number of the SUNTEP students at Saskatoon, saying that many of them are having real difficulty of financing their continuation of the course and again I say what I said to the Minister of Education, that I think it is exceedingly important that we get into some of the major inner city schools. And I instance the number in my constituency: people of native origin who have some knowledge of native culture. And I don't know where we're going to get them other than through the SUNTEP program.

And I would very much urge you and your colleague, the Minister of Education — and I realize it's a shared responsibility — to take the appropriate steps to see that there are graduates. That will be your department; and her department, to see that there are ways to get them into the schools system. Because, at least in my judgement, we don't have all that much time to get people into the school system if we are going to improve the retention rate of native students in elementary and secondary schools.

I will then change the subject, but not far, to the bursary program, the general bursary program for all students. And the students at the universities assert that the amount of money that you are paying out now — or paid out, let us say, in the fiscal year ending March 31st, 1985 — was probably no more than the amount of money you paid out in bursaries for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 1984.

Indeed, they, I believe, assert that it was actual decrease in the amount of dollars paid out as bursaries, even though there are many more students at the universities, and even though a considerably higher proportion of the students are seeking financial assistance.

Would you comment on how much you spent in the immediate past year on bursaries, how it compares to the year prior to that, and how it compares to what you have in your budget for the year we are now in?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, yes, I have the bursary figures for 1983-84; \$4.488 million, roughly. For 1984-85, \$6.035 million without the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That amount has not been determined yet because the scholarship, bursary, and loans committee has to advise me about the amount. I expect that it certainly won't be lower than that.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, what the students urge upon me that there has been a change in the Canada student loans limit from . . . Is it 1,800 to 3,200? Just a minute. At any rate, a substantial increase in the Canada student loans limit; that there has been a modest increase in the bursaries limit from 1,800 to 2,050 — you can correct my figures. I don't have them in front of me. And that in effect you are requiring the students to take out their full available loan before they can apply for a bursary, and that perhaps there's no change there. But in effect, it means that the student has to borrow a good deal more money and is eligible for less bursary money than was the previous pattern.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, if I could break this down on the amount that is allotted per week, a student receives \$65.50 per week on loan first, then the bursary cuts in, and they receive \$65.50 per week in bursary, and then it is \$30.50 in loan. And then if a student qualifies for special incentive, they receive \$105 in special incentive bursary after that.

(2045)

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, in 1984 the federal government boosted the Canada student loan program from 1,800 to 3,300 — and I now have some figures before me — and you changed the bursary program from 1,800 to \$2,060. Is it not true that the effect of those changes, the fact that you did not track, you did not increase the bursary in an equivalent amount to the loans, means that students find themselves borrowing more and getting less from bursaries than was previously the case?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, I think the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is referring to the 1983-84 . . . what happened in 1983-84 with regard to loan and bursary. And at that time, the federal government increased the amount of loan per week from 56.25 to \$100. And we increased the bursary amount, at that time, from \$56.25 to \$62.50, but we . . . the total money to students was greater. In the following year we dropped — that is last year — we dropped the cutting point for the bursary.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister. May I ask one other question on bursaries, and that has to do with the parents' assets problem, and particularly where the parent is . . . I will use the farmer example, because that's the one that's most often used.

The issue I raise is, clearly, if a parent's assets are substantial, the child or the student, the legal child, is disentitled to a bursary or part thereof, and, as I understand the cut-off, when a student's parents have net assets of more than \$200,000, the student is no longer eligible for full bursary, and there's a taper.

Many students tell me that their parents have, at least in the eyes of the department, assets of \$200,000 or more, but their parents do not have any income to speak of. They are farmers who at least nominally have valuable farms. There's only two things wrong with the value of their farms; they're not producing any income, and they do not have any substantial resale value — or any value as security for loans. And that's the key. How do you generate some cash for the student? There is no income coming off the farm over and above what the parents need for living. None of the lending agencies are anxious to lend any more money on the farm.

Have you looked at that situation? I know it's one that is not new, but it has become much more acute in the last couple or three years when farm incomes have, to the knowledge of all of us, dropped dramatically.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, I share the Hon. Leader of the Opposition's concern. It is a problem, and we are presently looking at the situation. We have given consideration to making some changes with regard to net assets and the . . . this is one of the things that will be looked at by the scholarship bursary and loans committee, and they will be making their recommendations.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, thank you. And I would urge that the committee look at this at least on some temporary basis, if not on a more permanent basis, with some degree of urgency, because I think there are a lot of students out there who are having difficulty getting money from their parents even though their parents have, at least on the books, substantial assets.

MR. KOSKIE: — In respect, Mr. Minister, to the *Partnership for Progress* working together, and I refer you to page 13. And this is the next five years, and it says "the government seeks an agreement that teachers and professors will hold the line on salary increases" and it goes on. Is it the intention of the Department of Advanced Education to enforce, and not only seek, but to impose a freeze for the five years in respect to the university professor salaries?

I went through this with the Minister of Education in respect to teachers. The reason I am concerned here is that in the presentation of your budget, I fear that we may be in fact heading for that great educational experiment of British Columbia under Bill Bennett. There, of course, another right wing government has decimated the collective bargaining in respect to teachers and in respect to the university faculty. That has some significance.

And when I talk to teachers, and when I talk to professors, they are concerned why they would be spelled out in this document rather than, if we are indeed advancing education as you purport to do in your document and in this document, why then would it be the position of the government and the Minister of Finance to set out that teachers and university professors are the ones who are going to have their salaries frozen?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, the comment in the booklet was not intended to indicate that the professors would bear the brunt of improving education. The renewal and development program fund was set up for the purpose of renewing, and rejuvenating, and improving quality, and establishing excellence in the universities, to allow the universities to ensure that they could come up with first-class operation. That was the purpose of the renewal and development fund. It was not intended to be an amount of money that would be turned over to raise faculty salaries.

As far as their part is concerned, the faculty at the universities should be treated in the same way as any other occupational group would be treated — just as fairly. And by that I mean that the process of negotiation between the faculty and the university administration and the board of governors would be the vehicle through which their salary adjustments would happen.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well there has been a long tradition, Mr. Minister, that that is the process. And the strange part is what I think you're doing is signalling to teachers and to the university professors that, indeed, they are going to hold the line. Because that is precisely what you say.

You don't say . . . You say an agreement that teachers and professors will hold the line on salary increases. That doesn't say that they will have their normal collective bargaining process. It says they will hold the line.

One other aspect in what I want to deal with, Mr. Deputy Chairman, of concern: and that is the deletion of a number of permanent staff positions abolished throughout the department as a

result of the budget. And if my calculations are correct, Mr. Minister, there are some 34 — total of 34 — positions abolished in Advanced Education and Manpower, and I wonder how you justify the decrease of some 34 positions at a time that you're indicating that this grand plan is going into being and the furthering of the educational system.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — I'm wrong.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Well, slightly. The number that we work at is 27.5. I think it's in the blue book at 27.5. And these positions are all vacancies and no one, no one will lose a job.

MR. KOSKIE: — Were these . . . We won't argue about the number. I have 34; I have the list here. But be that what it may be, but were not these previously permanent positions?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, these were vacant positions. They were not filled. And it was determined, in our wisdom, that these positions were not needed.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well the concern that I have is that I look at a number of them, and there are 13 different staff deletions. And out of those 13, all are instructors in technical institutes, either at Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, La Ronge — and I don't review each individual one — but out of those 13, they are instructors in the technical institutes.

And I'm wondering if, as you're indicating that there is increasing enrolment and increasing spaces, why, how you are able to delete some 13 or 14 permanent positions of instructors.

(2100)

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, to clarify this situation: this is a job classification. These people are not actually instructors who instruct students. They're not class-room instructors. These people fall into the category of being co-ordinators and consultants.

And with an organization that is as large as our organization — some 12 to 1,300 people — it's not unusual to have fluctuations up and down for 1 to 2 per cent at any time of the year.

MR. KOSKIE: — I want, Mr. Chairman, just to draw to the attention of the minister, as I did before — and I think we can wind down then, Mr. Minister — and that in my concern in respect to the funding of the institutes. And I can do that either at individual subvotes, or I can do it in a general way, and we can go much faster.

So, with your permission — if that's all right just to have a general discussion in the funding of the institutes — then we can move faster. That's the minister's agreement. Is that fine, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Proceed.

MR. KOSKIE: — As I indicated, Mr. Minister, I am concerned in respect to the funding of the institutes. And if I look at the Wascana Institute, the estimated '84-85 was 17.464 million, and that's down to 16.353 million. That's over a million dollars in cut in the Wascana Institute. If I go to the Kelsey Institute, it's down from 18.1 million to 17.3 million. If I go the Moose Jaw Technical Institute, it's down from 13.4 to 12.7.

And then, when you stand up and say that you aren't robbing Peter to pay Paul, and that's what is happening — you indicated in your opening remarks that you had a thrust, that you were increasing the fundings, and now what we have is the major cuts in the institute funding.

Now you're going to say that you've increased it, but what you're doing is putting on stream the

Institute of Applied Arts and Science in Prince Albert, and obviously, if you're going to put it on stream, you're going to have to put extra money into it.

But if you look at those that are operating, Mr. Minister, I think you will agree that there is nearly well over a million dollars cut in the Wascana Institute. There's almost a million dollars in the Kelsey Institute; Moose Jaw technical institute, from 13.4 down to 12.7. How can you say that you are continuing the proper funding of the institutes when all you can collectively say that you got more money because you're bringing on to base the institute at Prince Albert? And that's the only one that increases, and that is in respect to other expenses — from 1.9 million to 4.2.

But how do you justify such massive cuts in the other institutes, if, as you said before, you are having increasing enrolment, you're increasing the classes being offered — what justification? I think what you're doing here is fiddling the dice, loading the dice. I think you're fiddling around with the public, because what you have done is really taken \$3 or \$4 million out of the three major institutes and cut it back over what it was last year.

Can you just outline the justification of the cutting of the major funding of those three institutes?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, I'd be pleased to try to outline the justification for the reduction in those particular instances.

First of all, let me say that Kelsey Institute, over the period of the last three years, has received a 33 per cent increase. Saskatchewan, a 33 per cent increase. Kelsey, over the last three years, has received a 33 per cent increase. STI, over the last three years, has received a 21.4 per cent increase. Wascana . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . just a minute, I'll get to the question right away. Wascana Institute, over the last three years, has received an increase of 92.1 per cent.

Now having said that, I will try to answer that question. I think it's a fair question. The reason that each one of those has moved downward, the total cost has been in each case, has been because last year in '84-85 there was the purchase of, one time purchase of equipment that was necessary in order to introduce programs.

In everyone of those three institutes, that is right. And that accounts for the additional, that accounts for the decline in the amount of money that we need in order to operate the same programs in those institutes.

MR. KOSKIE: — I want to ask the Minister, in respect to SUNTEP students, we have been advised that funding for those students over a summer period has apparently been cutback to a 12-week period from 17 weeks.

I'm advised that students have been funded for 52 weeks, broken up into three divisions of 17 weeks each. And under the current cut-back now in place for the summer term, I'm advised that the bursary has been reduced back from 4225 a month from 305.

There are some 300 students that have been affected by this change. And I wonder if the Minister can explain this cut-back in funding as alluded to here.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, in reply to that question — as I mentioned to the Leader of the Opposition, the funding has remained the same. Most of these Dumont courses, and that's what we're talking about, are 12 weeks in length, and we provide bursary for the full 12 weeks that the students are in attendance. If the courses were longer, they would get more bursary. This is a federal criteria, these are federal criteria, and so what we have done has been to lobby the federal government to try to get them to drop the minimum course length from 12 to eight weeks for these types of courses. And we will continue to lobby the federal government in this regard.

MR. KOSKIE: — No, I think it flew by the minister. I want to make sure that the minister has the concern that has been raised with me. If I just might review it once more, just so that if students who are concerned and have brought this forward to me, so that they can contact your office at least to clarify it.

As I said, we've been advised that the funding for students over the summer period has been cut back, 12 week period from 17 weeks — that's what they're saying. Traditionally, they say students have been funded for 52 weeks, broken up into three divisions of 17 weeks each. Under the cut-backs now in place for the summer term, this particular person is saying his bursary has been reduced to \$225 a month from \$305. Advance education and Manpower has not explained this cut-back in the funding period. And they indicate also that there would be some 300 students affected.

I leave that with you, Mr. Minister. You have answered it and maybe that is the answer. But I want to, on behalf of the students who are concerned, so that you have it and that they can contact your office for clarification, unless you want to add anything more.

(2115)

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, I'd be pleased to address that particular issue, and/or the concern of particular students involved.

MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Minister, I'm just concerned in one other area, and then we can pretty well roll and get into Agriculture. And that is in respect to community colleges. You also alluded to the fact that the number of people enrolled and taking classes, and the number of classes offered again certainly were increasing. And again I am rather surprised, because what has happened is that the funding to community colleges has, in fact, dropped over \$115,000. Not a large amount out of the total budget of \$7.78 million, but surely, if there's an expansion in the community colleges — the enrolment and the number of people applying for courses — that there would be an increase in funding, rather than a decrease. And I wonder if the minister could explain that.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, in regard to the community colleges, the grant is just one portion of their revenue.

The community colleges run, deliver programs that happen under the Saskatchewan Skills Development Program; that's one. And last year it was somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$5 million worth of programs administered by the community colleges in Saskatchewan. And another example is that they run the Saskatchewan skills extension programs.

So that through these programs, they access additional administrative money in which to operate their institutes. And as a result of that they really have an increase, because the total would come to \$30,794,190.

MR. KOSKIE: — I wonder if the minister has — does the minister have any personal staff, assistants? And could you send over a list of their positions and the salaries?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'd sent that over.

MR. KOSKIE: — I was wondering, when I looked at executive administration — and I thought you were clean. But I find tucked away in the Department of Telephones a Ron Mitchell, \$52,752; Connie Lambert, \$29,340; Judy Bergen, \$25,176; total for those three hidden away in Telephones, which is no portfolio, \$107,268.

But it's not finished yet, not finished yet.

I look at Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, and we find Jim Petersen, \$3,740 a month or \$44,880.

In addition to the above, Lorraine Moffitt is \$2,445 per month, is currently on loan from the Department of Parks and Renewable Resources, and she's being paid by Parks and Renewable Resources, who in turn are being reimbursed by the Advanced Education and Manpower during this period of arrangement.

Now that is quite a staff, who got \$107,000, got another \$44,000, and then we got this one that's on loan from the Department of Parks and Renewable Resources at over, almost \$2,500, so that has to be over \$160,000 — \$170,000.

And I wonder whether the minister would indicate whether he thinks that that's fair that the taxpayers are paying that kind of money — \$170,000 — for your executive assistants and political hacks when the funding to the educational system is being deprived.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, just for the record I would want to make it clear that we're talking about three secretaries here.

We're talking about two secretaries that I've had since I was a minister, and that is Connie Lambert and Judy Bergen.

As far as the third secretary is concerned, she's in my office at the present time, has been for a couple of months until she can be relocated. And at the present time we're negotiating with regard to relocating at least one from our office, one of our secretarial staff. So you know, two people, two secretaries, in effect is what I've had, period.

As responsibilities, I have the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, Science and Technology, Telephones (which I'll admit is not much of a work-load), the Saskatchewan Research Council, the Provincial Archives, and a number of things that I have forgotten to mention.

So I really have two executive assistants, or ministerial assistants, and I have only had one ministerial assistant over the past 16 or 17 months, up until about a month ago. So if that's extravagant, then I don't know; you better look around.

MR. KOSKIE: — In respect to the executive administration, I wonder if the minister would provide me — you don't have to do it now — but just the personnel in the executive administration: their names, position, and salary.

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Yes, we'll send that over.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 25 agreed to.

Vote 5 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

ADVANCED EDUCATION AND MANPOWER

University Renewal and Development fund — Vote 63

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 63 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1985-86
CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE
ADVANCED EDUCATION AND MANPOWER

Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 5

Items 1 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 5 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1984-85
CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE
ADVANCED EDUCATION AND MANPOWER

Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 5

Items 1 and 2 agreed to.

Vote 5 agreed to.

SASKATCHEWAN HERITAGE FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE
ADVANCED EDUCATION AND MANPOWER

Provincial Development Expenditure — Vote 5

Items 1 and 2 agreed to.

Vote 5 agreed to.

SPECIAL PROJECTS FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE
ADVANCED EDUCATION AND MANPOWER

Capital Expenditure — Nil Vote

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the officials who gave me support for the estimates for the Advanced Education and Manpower, and to thank my honourable critic for some very, very fine questioning. And I look forward to seeing him again when we get into another portfolio.

MR. KOSKIE: — I join the minister and offer thanks to the staff, and also in the abbreviated manner in which the minister always addresses the questions which I ask.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:38 p.m.