

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Tusa: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you, and to other members of the legislature, a group of 20 students from Southey elementary school. They are sitting in the Speaker's gallery. I had the pleasure of meeting with them briefly at about 1:15, and they had a tour of the buildings, and they will now sit in for most of question period before going back to Southey, a community about 35 to 40 miles north of Regina.

I trust that they will enjoy question period, and I ask all hon. members to welcome them in the usual manner.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

American Duty on Steel Products

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Premier. Mr. Acting Premier, it appears that once again the United States government has proven that it backs free trade only as a one-way street. The international trade commission has imposed duties, so it is reported today, in varying amounts up to 41 per cent on a number of steel products for the oil and gas industry sold in the United States by Canada companies.

One of the companies which it would appear will be hardest hit by the decision will be Ipsco in Regina. I ask you, sir, have you been in touch with Ipsco today about this decision, and what action does your government plan to take as a result of this latest slap in the face by the United States administration?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I have not been in touch with Ipsco today. And what action are we taking? The premiers and the Prime Minister are meeting this very day, as the Leader of the Opposition knows. One of the items on the agenda, Mr. Speaker, is the whole question of trade with the United States. And as it relates to the question coming from the seat of the member for Shaunavon who started this anyway, Mr. Speaker, trade between Canada and the United States is the largest single bilateral trade number in the world. And there are protectionist pressures coming on politicians on both sides of the border.

My understanding is, Mr. Speaker, that there are over 300 pieces of protectionist legislation before the Congress in the United States. And if you think, Mr. Speaker, that we gain anything by not getting to the table and convincing them, Mr. Speaker, that we must have access to one another's markets; convincing them, Mr. Speaker, that trade is vital to the economic health of both of our countries, well, Mr. Speaker, I think we make a terrible mistake.

I, in no way, shape, or form appreciate nor endorse the protectionist measures taken by United States. The

premiers in Swan River last Thursday, Mr. Speaker, took the view that all protectionist measures must have a moratorium put on them on both sides of the border, Mr. Speaker, in order that these negotiations and discussions can be carried out in good faith.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Deputy Premier. As the Premier will know, this is an actin by the International Trade Commission and not as a result of any new legislation, but the application of existing legislation. I ask you, Mr. Acting Premier; are you satisfied with the performance of the federal government in its dealings with the U.S. government in getting existing legislation applied in this very discriminatory way against Canadian products?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know what influence . . . As I understand this body, it's a quasi-judicial body, and we can present our arguments and they pass judgement. Obviously they have passed judgement, and we don't have to like what they've done, and I fully expect that the premiers from right across the country, including the Prime Minister, will express that displeasure to the United States and the administration there with all of the vigour they can muster.

I think it's not acceptable to Canadians. I think in the hearts of Americans, if they really looked at it, they would find that it wasn't acceptable to them either.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In February the Premier stated his views on bilateral trade relations in the following way:

The best thing for somebody like me to stay close to that Washington politician, keep giving him a hug, and say, look it, we're really on the same side.

Are you still, Mr. Deputy Premier, convinced that that type of approach is the best way to get appropriate trade relations between Canada and the United States, or will you urge the Mulroney government to stand up for Canada and bargain on a level playing field instead of this method of hugging politicians in Washington.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of confidence in that ability of our federal government and our provincial premiers to bargain, and bargain tough — and bargain tough they must. But I'll tell you this, Mr. Speaker, that I will bet that hugging a Washington politician will be far more effective than burning an American flag.

Some Hon. Members: — — Hear, hear!

Lack of Commitment to Reforestation

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the Acting Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources and it has to do with this government's lack of commitment to reforestation.

At a time of high unemployment in the North, can the Minister explain why his government has reduced the

activity of its four provincial nurseries? This not only means a reduction in reforestation, which threatens the long-term future of northern forest, but it also means fewer jobs for Northerners today. Can the minister explain why reforestation work has been given such a low priority?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I guess in the absence of the minister and the acting minister I will act, and I will take notice of the question.

Mr. Thompson: — Supplementary to the Deputy Premier. He's take notice of that question. I would like him also . . . to ask a supplementary, and he can take notice of that too.

But go back to, by way of information, Mr. Minister, the member from Meadow Lake who indicated that this government would be planting 14 million trees . . .

An Hon. Member: More trees were planted than you ever planted in a single year . . .

Mr. Thompson: — That's right. The member from Meadow Lake . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order! There's enough conversation on both sides of the House that it's impossible for the member to get his question off.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the member for Meadow Lake was minister, he indicated that 14 million trees would be planted by your government. Mr. Minister, by way of supplementary, I think that the minister should read your own department's annual reports. Those annual reports show that the four provincial nurseries have steadily produced fewer trees for reforestation in each of the past three years. In fact, last year the four provincial nurseries produced fewer trees than in 1980-81 when there were only two nurseries in the province.

Can the Deputy Premier tell this Assembly how many trees the provincial nurseries have been asked to prepare for reforestation work this year, and how many jobs will be created as a result, compared to the previous years?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, obviously I'll have to go to the department and get the numbers. But I caution all members to take what has been put before us as gospel. This is the member, Mr. Speaker, that a week ago or 10 days ago stood up in this House and said that Weyerhaeuser would be bringing their trees here in the province of Saskatchewan for reforestation purposes.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — The Deputy Premier seems sceptical of information coming from this side of the House. May I refer the Deputy Premier to a memo dated April 24, and it's from the head of the provincial forest nurseries, Mr. Thompson, and he talks about the implications of the budget cut. He says that it will mean that the provincial nurseries will have run out of money by the end of July and will have to let staff go. He states further, and I quote:

Simpson Timber will not get their 500,000 trees for fall planting; we will be out of money. The nurseries will not be able to lift stock for winter storage; all nursery stock will be put in jeopardy if no staff are available to irrigate . . . etc.

Mr. Deputy Premier, in the light of these comments by your own staff — and I would call them facts — will you now admit that your government is cutting back on reforestation work in the North, and cutting back on northern jobs in the process; and will your government change its policies and provide enough money for adequate reforestation and, in the course of so doing, provide jobs for Northerners?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, once again I admit to nothing of the sort. I would simply say to the hon. member that I will take notice of the question, and perhaps in the future if you would give me a copy of these brown envelopes that are leaked to you, I could come to the House a little better prepared.

Net Population Migration in Saskatchewan

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to address a question to the Acting Premier. It has to do, and by way of background, with Statistics Canada, which reported already that Saskatchewan had the worst net migration record in Canada last year where 6,000 more people moved out of the province than moved in in 1985.

But I wonder, Mr. Minister, can you indicate whether you're aware of the worsening condition in 1986. I wonder, are you aware that the figures prepared by your own bureau of statistics show that during the first four months of 1986— and the minister may not believe his own records, but here they are — 4,347 moved into Saskatchewan while 9,983 moved out, for a net loss of 5,636 residents who have left the province in the first four months?

Are you aware of these statistics, and can you outline to the Assembly and the people of the province what you're going to be doing to see whether or not we can get job creation going? And we've already indicated two areas, one in the area of steel production, and one in the area of reforestation, where you've failed miserably. Will you now make a commitment to allow families to stay in the province?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I will compare the last four years to the previous 11 any time, day or night, in any way, shape, or form. Our population growth in the last four years has been significant and, Mr. Speaker, I expect that over the next few months it will be significant once again.

One of the problems that we have, Mr. Speaker, is the doom and gloomers that sit opposite, who say that they will chase the bacon plant out, who say that they will cancel the Weyerhaeuser dealer, who will scrap the ammonia plant, who will chase Phillips Cables out of the province, who will close Canapharm in Wolseley, and all of these other projects that we have . . . and the power station at Shand, Mr. Speaker, Rafferty . . .

I could go on and on. And I think I don't have to because of the people — the people of Saskatchewan are aware of these. The communities that are touched by these projects, they don't believe this doom and gloom stuff that members opposite like to just wallow in constantly. I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that our numbers will stack up against theirs any day of the week.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Supplement to the minister. And by way of background, you may try to end some of the doom and gloom by talking to Ipsco, who is looking at losing hundreds of jobs as a result of the inactivity of your Prime Minister in dealing with the United States.

But my question to you, Mr. Minister: is the government aware that its own figures show nearly three times as many families are leaving Saskatchewan today as are moving in. And I want to indicate that between January and April nearly 2,000 families moved out of Saskatchewan while only 700 moved in, Mr. Speaker. Can you explain that loss to Saskatchewan of about 1,300 families in the first four months of 1986?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I don't take the hon. member's numbers as gospel. I will do my research, Mr. Speaker, and I'll respond to that member next day in question period.

But since he raised the question of Ipsco and how are we going to explain this to the employees of Ipsco, the employees of Ipsco . . . Well we're not very happy at all with the countervail measures that were taken in United States relative to tubular steels. The employees of Ipsco know full well that it was that particular party that closed down the oil patch in Saskatchewan. It was our party that gave the employees of Ipsco employment for the last three and four years, Mr. Speaker. And they know that, and they understand that, and they understand the protectionist pressures that are coming in the United States.

And, Mr. Speaker, the employees of Ipsco are very hopeful that we will resolve those problems with United States, not like members sitting opposite who hope we fail so that Saskatchewan, and particularly this government of Saskatchewan, and the Mulroney government in Ottawa, will get a black eye out of these negotiations. Everybody but members opposite are hoping for success, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Supplementary to the Acting Premier. After all that bellowing, I wonder whether you would stand on your record and today convince your Premier, Premier Devine, to call an election, which would provide whether or not you're full of baloney, or whether you're serious about what you're saying.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I don't think that I have to convince our Premier of anything. He's a very, very bright, articulate, sound judgement, and when it's time for the election, it will be called. And you will not be back. Mr. Speaker, that member from Shaunavon will not be back.

Sale of SaskTel Cable Distribution System

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Minister of Finance, the minister responsible for SaskTel, and it deals with your plans, Mr. Minister, to sell off a major public asset, SaskTel's cable television distribution system. Can the minister confirm that one of the private cable operators, Image Cable Systems of Yorkton, has filed a court action to try to prevent this sale, and can you give the Assembly your assurance that SaskTel will delay attempts to sell off this important public asset until the court action has been dealt with?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — As I indicated when questioning came about the other day as to the possibility of the sale, that there was a likelihood of a court action, and that matters were in abeyance pending that court action.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Last week, Mr. Minister, you claimed that the proposed sale of SaskTel's television distribution system would not result in poorer service or higher cable charges to subscribers. The statement of claim filed by Image Cable Systems says the exact opposite, and I want to quote:

SaskTel's vacating its contractual obligations in favour of a private corporation will automatically and necessarily reduce the quality of service to Image Cable subscribers to an unacceptable level while at the same time increasing the costs thereof.

Mr. Minister, as you know, Image Cable serves 50 rural communities in Saskatchewan. It says that there will be poorer service and higher charges.

In the light of this document, Mr. Minister, does the minister care to explain his comments last week when he claimed that the sales would not result in poorer service or higher charges?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Certainly, Mr. Speaker. Obviously the corporate plaintiff has made some allegations that are often made in a statement of claim, because approximately a week before, quite frankly we thought we had a deal. The issue is the amount to be paid for the facilities, and I suggest that it is merely part of the statement of claim that if an acceptable amount would be made, that they would be quite happy to acquire the facilities.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister inform the House, can he confirm, for example, that as of November of '85 — the last figures I have — SaskTel's cable television distribution system was available to 226,000 Saskatchewan households in more than 70 communities, and that the 141,000 households — and that's 62 per cent of all those in the province — were already cable subscribers? In other words, will you confirm that SaskTel's system is fast becoming a service available to a large majority of Saskatchewan people, and can you explain why this basic service should not be part of a telephone mandate and should be sold to private operators?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well, several factors, the main one of the course being the cost to the taxpayer. In 1981 the system

lost 2 million; in 1982 it made a profit of 500,000; 1983 it lost 7 million; 1984, 1.9 million; and 1985, 17.7.

Now the interesting fact of the losses — and we have been extremely conservative in the losses that we have given on the cable system — that's not taking into account the spare capacity of the coaxial distribution system. In fact, if we took into account the full cost of those cable systems, you can add an additional \$5 million a year losses on the cable television system, which mean that that system last year would, in fact, lose about \$6.7 million; 1984 about nearly \$7 million. All we did was calculate the actual capacity used as opposed to the total capacity of the cable.

So I suggest that the question to be asked, and should be asked by the hon. members opposite: how much of the subsidy should go to those using the television cable system? We believe that it can be done by the private operators. We also believe that the quality of service can well be monitored by the CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission), as it does in other jurisdictions.

So it's an annual loss to the people, and the subsidy is being paid by all taxpayers. I frankly don't think that's fair.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, you have been asked on previous occasions to table the documents which established the loss. You refuse to do so; instead, you read off figures. I suggest, Mr. Minister, you're not prepared to table those documents because the documents don't back up your claim.

Documents SaskTel filed with PURC show that in 1982 the cable television distribution system provided SaskTel with net revenues of 6.4 million, and a small profit at that figure. I have an internal document here which SaskTel has not filed with PURC, but which shows that those revenues jumped from 6.4 million in '82 to 7.8 million in '83 to 9.5 million in '84, and to an estimated 11 million in 1985. That represents a 72 per cent increase in just three years.

Mr. Minister, how can you suggest that the system is losing money for Saskatchewan taxpayers when revenues have increased by 72 per cent in three years?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — It is only the NDP that equate revenues with profits. It's only the NDP that equate revenues with profits. They don't take away and deduct from revenues the costs of operation, the expenditures, the expenses.

I've indicated on numerous occasions that the losses have been substantial on the cable television distribution system; that in 1983, for example, if we put the full capacity in, the loss would be nearly 6 million; that if we put the full capacity in 1984, it would be nearly \$7 million; and we put the full capacity of the coaxial cable in in 1985, it would be approximately \$6.7 million loss, Mr. Speaker.

Again, only the NDP — only the NDP — can argue that revenues are the factor. You can have very high revenues and still have losses, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker. And the coaxial cable which . . . and one should, I might add

caution, take the minister's statement as to what was filed with PURC with a great deal of lack of credibility for the very simple fact that, of course, the coaxial cable distribution is not one of the systems that comes under PURC in the first place. So SaskTel themselves are expressing a great deal of doubt about the numbers, and they're still looking, trying to find the information that the hon. members opposite use.

So sure, you can talk about revenues all you want. The fact is that it's a money-losing proposition. It's losing a substantial amount of money, and it's requiring the taxpayers to subsidize those getting cable television, Mr. Speaker. I don't think . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. It's impossible to operate with the amount of noise that we're having in this Chamber.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, new question. Mr. Minister, the only known fact that we're sure of is that you won't give us the documents. That's all we're sure of.

Mr. Minister, let's just think for a minute about what you are asking the Saskatchewan people to believe. You're asking them to believe that SaskTel's cable television distribution system is a big money loser and that it may require \$17 million over the next few years to upgrade the system. Mr. Minister, if the system is such a money loser, then why are the private cable operators so anxious to buy it?

Image Cable, which is based in rural Saskatchewan, obviously feels this is a bad deal for them and their rural subscribers. But the cable companies in Saskatoon and Regina have been pushing for a sale. If the system is such a money loser, why do they want to buy it so badly, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well obviously they can buy it for several reasons, either tax losses . . . Secondly, I don't think that they will have to put in the capacity that SaskTel has put in which is now requiring a 52 per cent excess capacity. It may well be that they can install the cable far less costly than SaskTel. But certainly they've indicated they are prepared to buy. They'll obviously be buying a capital asset as well at a depreciated value.

So having said all of that, there are numerous reasons for them wanting to buy. But the cost of refurbishing, or the figures that I've given from the estimates of SaskTel, we come back again. I mean, there is a big difference when you have the NDP, who aren't concerned about expenses . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The NDP are only concerned about the revenues. They aren't the least bit concerned about expenses. They aren't the least bit concerned about the cost of operating the various services, Mr. Speaker. This is being subsidized by all of the taxpayers. For a certain number, those that are on the coaxial cable system, Mr. Speaker, the subsidy is a heavy one. This is a good business deal and a good deal for the people of Saskatchewan.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of Pages

Mr. Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I would like to announce to the Assembly that we have two new pages, really two pages who have served with us before and are back to serve again. We have Shawna Levee and Pam Quinnett.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lane that Bill No. 41 — **An Act respecting Stock Savings Plan Tax Credits** be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Tusa	Sandberg
Birkbeck	Currie
McLeod	Martens
Andrew	Smith (Moose Jaw South)
Berntson	Hodgins
Lane	McLaren
Taylor	Parker
Duncan	Johnson
Pickering	Rybchuk
Schmidt	Caswell
Folk	Meagher
Smith (Swift Current)	Muller

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. There's to be no talking while the vote is being taken.

Myers	Glauser
Hepworth	Zazelenchuk
Dutchak	Gerich

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. I'm going to ask the member for Regina Centre to apologize to the Chamber for not listening to the instructions from the Chair.

Mr. Shillington: — I apologize. I didn't realize it was that loud, Mr. Speaker.

Dirks	Sveinson
Embury	Hampton

— 34

Nays

Blakeney	Lingenfelter
Tchorzewski	Shillington
Thompson	

— 5

Bill read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole at the next sitting.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Education
Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 8

Item 1 (Continued)

Mrs. Caswell: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . If the member from Regina North East is finished complaining that the member on her feet the last day is still on her feet, I'll continue.

The last time in estimates we were discussing the social studies curriculum, and I was voicing a concern of the lack of education and hard facts and a trend towards psychological games. But I would like to finish off the concerns about social studies by asking you: what is the rationale for a change in the social studies curriculum? I think this is very important, especially since it's going the direction, according to the memos from the Department of Education, is that it's eventually expanding from grade 1 to grade 12.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I believe we had the question last week, perhaps in a different form. The process of curriculum, regardless of the subject area, is a ongoing, constantly an ongoing review, and it doesn't matter what grade. The social studies several years ago . . . If I can recall, I believe it was perhaps the late '70s when the issues first started to arise, particularly by school-boards and parents, about much of the material for young adolescents being uninteresting, perhaps not relevant to what was taking place in the world, and was there a process to look at and to consult with those that are affected most? That happened.

I believe that the task force completed its work in approximately 1982 or 1983. What came out of the consultations, Mr. Chairman, was that social studies should be looked at from grade 7 through to grade 12, that that was the area particularly sensitive to students and what they were going through at that age or that period in their lives. The question of relevant material kept coming up time and time again — from teachers, from parents, and also from students.

I don't know if that in particular answers the member from Saskatoon Westmount's question. I would hope that it does. It arose basically from several concerns from educators and from parents and students, and has gone the process of public consultation. It has also gone an extremely intensive period of what I consider to be pilot projects with several changes being made along the way. And we are not finished making those changes, nor will we be, because the curriculum process does in fact remain in a constant review. And as it needs updating, then that will take place.

One of the severest criticisms of the writing of curriculum has been that the material is not looked at in a constant manner, nor is it updated as quickly as what it can be. And

therefore I think it is felt with in the educational community that we do in fact get a little bit behind in terms of the curriculum and the slowness of the process.

Mrs. Caswell: — Having gone through a period of education myself where relevance was everything, I tend to think that we have to be very leery when we talk about relevance, because perhaps a grade 7 student or a grade 8 student may not know what is relevant and, if they did, they wouldn't need to go to school and be guided and directed.

But to quote from a university professor again:

The proposed curriculum appears almost deliberately to omit or at least to downplay some of the major cultural forces that have brought western culture to where it is today. It appears to over-emphasize aboriginal cultures that have had little or no influence on the evolution of western man.

Now of course what he's talking about is western civilization; not that aboriginal cultures have no impact on the people they are involved, and so on. And he talks about the necessity of school and social studies to be a way of communicating the values of western civilization.

It goes on to say that he's very concerned that there is a particular philosophy in the social studies curriculum that is dangerous, or at least, if not dangerous, is not necessarily shared by all people of Saskatchewan, and that is that all values are relative, that there are no absolutes except the absolute. There are no absolutes. And a social studies curriculum he doesn't think should be this ethically neutral.

And so what I think is the constant concern we're finding in the criticisms of social studies is that there seems to be imposing a particular relativistic philosophy in the education. I guess that's not necessarily a question, but a statement.

(1445)

A major concern that people are concerned about is what I've talked about, is this philosophy. And I tend to think that we all know there are competing and conflicting philosophies in society, and all parents do not agree. And most certainly all parents would not necessarily agree in my views, nor in any view of a bureaucrat in the Department of Education. So it's incumbent upon the public school system, which is to serve everyone, to have a view that, you know, how should I say, be silent, where society cannot have a general . . . a consensus.

And in this book, *Toward the Year 2000* — I'll just show it to you so you know exactly what I'm talking about — curriculum and instruction review, we find a very dangerous use, I would say, of the Department of Education. Before 1982 many of us were monitoring the changes in the Department of Education, and we're very concerned that they seem to be imposing an agenda of their own. And it talks about in this book how there is a group of futurists met in 1980, and from the works begun in 1980 is based on the philosophy we have in this

curriculum. And it is a philosophy of what is called futurism.

And I have to explain that there are many parents who have come to me and they were . . . my ladies were coming to me and explaining, well, in the new curriculum they're talking about the Aquarian conspiracy, Alvin Toffler's "New Wave," one-world citizenry, as core . . . basic to our education. And I couldn't understand what they were talking about, and I said, well that may or may not be right. But you know, I think that's too far-fetched for me to stand up and say that, because they would think I was extrapolating too much from the printed word. And then it got through my thick skull that what these ladies were talking about was not some obscure publication of a criticism, but the actual pamphlet where they are talking about the philosophy in education is based on futurism.

And it's based on the idea, for example . . . And I know I'm not asking questions but making comments. And I think that is as germane as the . . . And the Leader of the Opposition is always telling us, is it's talking about how that we must train people to fit into, to be citizens of the world, and consistently I go to citizenship courts. I meet families from Poland, and from Vietnam, from totalitarian countries who come here, and they are so proud to change their citizenship of a totalitarian country that's been ruined by communism to one of freedom.

And it very much disturbs me to think that we are talking in a publication, coming from the Department of Education, that we are training people to be the citizens of the world, because first of all that's a legal non-entity. We're citizens of Canada, and it's a . . . And the one-world philosophy that we should have as one-world government is, indeed, a philosophy that's out there, but it is not one that is shared by a great many people. Many of us think that our education should enhance sovereignty of Canada and not to impose a would-be philosophy and course of utopianism.

And so I . . . You know, I guess the question is that: are you aware of the philosophical basis of the kind of things that are coming from the Department of Education when they talk about the futurist role.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think first of all we better clarify what the book is. Some time ago — and I've already alluded to it — there was a review done entitled Curriculum and Instruction Review. Out of that came a report entitled Directions, and before they got to that point of the Directions document, there was a very massive public consultation period that education went through, and it included something like 165,000 people solicited for their opinion. And their opinions, as they outlined them, make up this book, plus three others, and they're outlined in this, Mr. Chairman. What They Said is another book; Saskatchewan Education is another; Saskatchewan Children; *Toward the Year 2000*, which is the one that the member from Saskatoon Westmount is talking about; and one entitled School Improvement, along with the one I've already mentioned, which is entitled Directions.

It is not an outline of the department philosophy. This

booklet is based on opinions of people and what it did; it examine what people had to say. If, in fact, you were looking at the future, some of the changes that you would say, and it says:

Toward the Year 2000 examines the predictions of futurists as to how education should change in order to better prepared students for the future.

You know, as to whether the school system should be into teaching one philosophy or another, I would suggest that perhaps the role of the school is to teach children how to think and not what to think, that with a good, sound base of knowledge students will be able to eventually master on their own, with the right support coming along with it.

How this relates — and to come back to social studies — I would ask the member perhaps take a look at the objectives of the social studies. And when we're talking about Canada and a few other things, you know, some of the knowledge objectives, the student will know facts about people, palaces, and events in time and space, interpret situations in the historical past and present and try to apply them to the future. We've always done that in social studies. When I was a child in school, it was called history, and we did that then. Appreciate Canada's past and present — that's historical, plus dealing with today and perhaps what you can see into the future.

So I would simply ask that member remember that the document Toward the Year 2000 is one based on people's opinions and in looking at the future, and it comes out of a very lengthy period of curriculum review.

Mrs. Caswell: — People submitted concerns to the Department of Education about the direction it should go. And I think one of the things that people were concerned about (a) is they wanted moral absolutes taught. Now that doesn't mean that the Presbyterians said they wanted the Shorter Catechism taught, but they wanted those things that are common to civilized man.

And secondly, what concerned me most about this Toward the Year 2000 is the philosophy. And the very debatable and very controversial philosophy that it supports is so very consistent in the social studies curriculum when it consistently talks about making students understand the necessity of a one-world philosophy of interdependence and so on.

I think there's a very big difference between appreciating other cultures and other societies, and propagandizing students in such a way that they believe the solutions can only come about by one-world government. And I certainly agree with you that we shouldn't teach people what to think, but how to think. And the way to do that has always been consistently to give them fundamentals and some basic skills, such as in language, in reading, in arithmetic . . .

Excuse me while I just pause while the member from Regina North East doesn't know he's going to have his own turn.

And these basic subjects were such they gave us tools that we could decide whether we wanted to read Karl Marx or

Gandhi or the New Testament or all three. But that required teachers who were supported by the Department of Education and by the school board to teach definable academic skills. And this is the most alarming statement in the summary:

. . . "The Kind of Schools We Need," says the following of the back to the basics movement:

" . . (is) the idea that schools should go back to the basics, when the basics mean the three Rs, is really a symptom of wanting too little rather than too much from schools. Reading, writing, and arithmetic have no virtue in and of themselves. They are skills and, as skills, are educationally empty."

And I tend to think that, if we are not teaching academic skills in our school, then the only thing left for our schools is a baby-sitting service and a means in which to shape the child through propaganda.

So I would like to ask your opinion, the necessity of the three Rs in our schools.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, Saskatchewan, unlike some provinces, has never totally swung from one side of the spectrum to the other when it comes to basics in education. It's been relatively well-balanced. The basics are as important, if not more so, than they were ever before.

But I would also suggest that the schools are at a point in time when the basics, the three Rs, so to speak, are perhaps broadened. And I use technology or computer literacy as a very good example that will eventually become a basic within the school system in order that our children will be able to cope with the world as they will be living in it down the road.

Mrs. Caswell: — Yes, I have no quarrel with computer knowledge being brought into the schools. But I do have a quarrel that we cannot make children think — as you said, you want children to know how to think — and that you can't think with a computer. The expression is: garbage in, garbage out.

So we may be technologists, but we are not full human beings without a full understanding of language, communication skills in writing, and in spelling, and in grammar, and some of those things that are not necessarily glamorous all the time, but necessary.

Clearly, when we discuss the third world, we say that if we give them literacy, they're on the road to freedom. And we must not deny our students in Saskatchewan the freedom of a well-founded in the basics, so that they can express themselves through the written word.

And I see here in reports all over — here's from The Western Report — that the proposed core curriculum will be reducing the amount of emphasis on English about by half, which is a direction that most education reforms are going in the opposite direction. They have abandoned what we called the feely — if I may use, you know, the terms we used in education — the "feely-deely"

approach or the "belly-button-gazing" philosophy, and back to the basics. And they're abandoning this approach to make school relevant and psychological and philosophy . . .

But we want . . . I'm very concerned that . . . I want to know, why does the core curriculum think it should decrease the amount of English skills, and what is your view on that?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I thought it was fairly evident, my views on the basic skills. Goals of education for Saskatchewan were reviewed and redone in 1984, and it was the first time in 20 years that they had been updated. And the first goal is basic skills, the very first. That's the priority: to read, write, and commute — to communicate ideas through written and spoken language and mathematical symbols, to process information, and to acquire information through observing, listening, reading, and experience. My apologies if I hadn't made that evident before today.

Mrs. Caswell: — One problem we have with basics is that some people can have a very different idea about basics than other people. For example, some people think basics is peace education, which others call it surrender-lobby propaganda. Other people think global education is basic, which other people call it it's the religious philosophy of one world government and is a philosophy that's coming from America and is consistently being fought there.

So when we talk about basics, I think it's very incumbent we always have to ask whether it's a minister of education, a teacher, or administrator, what do you mean by the basics? And I think this is . . . when I read here, and this is from Nick Russell . . . I'm not sure where this was printed, but I think it was published recently.

But the bottom line for the few intrepid souls who have fought their way through the bafflegab of provincial reports (and I'm quoting) titled . . . Progress policy proposals seem to be that English would be reduced by 40 per cent for the first nine grades and 50 per cent in the final three classes.

(1500)

Now do you agree with that statement that according to the core curriculum, English would be reduced by 40 per cent for the first nine grades and 50 per cent in the final three classes?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, some time ago the report on core curriculum was released to the public, and public consultation had been set up around the province. I had made it very clear at that time that we had not taken a position on it and that we were interested in what the public has to say. And on June 20th we will be compiling the results and having a look at them, along with trustees and teachers and the home and school association, on what the public have to say about the proposals of the core curriculum.

I have stated, Mr. Chairman, and quite clearly, that whatever is done with core curriculum in the end will be

done with the view to strengthening the basics and not weakening them. Obviously I, like a lot of other people, don't agree with everything that is written in the report. I have a few concerns on a few of the recommendations. However, at this point in time I am open for public opinion on it. And I might add, Mr. Chairman, that many of the public have taken advantage of the opportunity to express their opinions on it.

Mrs. Caswell: — I still want to know: is this reporter correct in saying that according to the proposed core curriculum that English would be reduced by 40 per cent for the first nine grades and 50 per cent in the final three classes? I'm not asking your views, but is that a correct statement concerning the core curriculum as proposed by your department?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, without having the core curriculum report in front of me — and that's what I would prefer to have to ensure that I accurately reflect what it said and how it said it — I believe they are suggesting that the basic skills or language is important enough that it should be paid attention to and taught in every subject area. If, in fact, that were to happen, the report proposes that you could see a reduction of a specific amount of time on language arts or English or French, if it was in a francophone school. Now the 40 per cent I'm not sure. I would have to sit down with the core curriculum proposal and make sure that my calculations and figures were correct on it.

Mrs. Caswell: — I certainly appreciate that. I think that in social studies or science or whatever you're taking, that you still should spell correctly and your sentences should still be sentences. But I have noticed, both as a student and a teacher, the necessity of learning English as a skill. There is still a place to know what a conjunction is, etc., etc., so we can understand the written word and thus maintain our freedom as individuals and as a country.

I'm just quoting from the Western Report again, by William Howard, chairman of the University of Regina English department. He's talking about:

Current high school graduates "are not competent in the language, " . . . "They can't write an English sentence." Dr. Howard notes that 30 per cent of first-year students routinely fail the university's mandatory course in introductory English, something he blames on deteriorating standards in the secondary schools. Reducing English instruction even further, he adds, is "a frightening proposition".

I think consistently I hear this, that at university we're seeing a lowering of English standards. And if this is the case at university, I'm sure it is at other jobs and other places where students go after grade 12 for a job or for technical training. Given this kind of criticism from Mr. Howard, will you continue to support this idea that English does not need to be taught as a subject per se, as much?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I have never taken a supportive stand on it, and I'm not sure where the member gets that when she says, will I continue to

support. I have stated I have some concerns; I do not agree with everything in there. However, I am serious about public consultation, and any final decision that I may have to take will not be taken until that public consultation is completed.

Mrs. Caswell: — I certainly apologize if I made it sound as if the core curriculum had your imprimatur on it. But I tend to think that we always have this difficulty. If we have happen to be government, and it says Department of Education, then we are blamed for it, or we are thanked for it, and this is one of the things that we're very concerned about. And I'm also very concerned, as I said, especially as we're the . . . I don't want to get in the debate about private schools today, but we're talking about standards in the private schools, and private schools often teach citizenry and patriotism.

And when we see that a public school is not just discussing globalism as a philosophy, but as a goal, and I can pick up an American education news magazine and it's talking about what's wrong with globalism, what's wrong with global education; and I can see that this is a criticism totally fitting the program that we have in Saskatchewan, I question, one, if this is really a grass-roots Saskatchewan program, or are we just following a very debatable trend that's coming from America, and some American publishing companies will benefit if we follow their fad?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I have before me the social studies curriculum guide, and it's very good in terms of the teaching of citizenship: to recognize her or his responsibilities as a citizen of Canada; to compare rights, privileges, responsibilities; to understand that a balance has to be maintained between individual freedom and public; to know the basic political and legal structures that exist in Canada and know the conditions of such. And there's much more in terms of citizenship.

I do know from many parents and teachers that have responded and have taken the time and made the effort to write to me on the core curriculum, that some of the things that the member alludes to, like the teaching of citizenship, Canadian content versus American material, is very much an issue with many people. And I guess if there's one thing that I consistently hear teachers and parents saying, it is that there is, in fact, a dual responsibility there. And while there has been some in the school, there has to be more. But there's also a recognition that parents play a role in that area also.

Mrs. Caswell: — I'm aware of that section that you quoted in the social studies curriculum, and in itself it's not necessarily bad. But within the social studies curriculum, I stress there is a very . . . that it does put, I would say, Canada's sovereignty as second to the necessity for a one-world control. And when I see this reiterated in such things as *Toward the Year 2000*, that people are talking about national economic systems changing to more global economic systems; multiple options for people to make sure the future will have some basic changes in the way humans think and behave; various kinds of authoritarian restraints will be imposed on society. So these futurists are saying that it's inevitable, it's the right direction to go to have more and more

control over the individual and to have more and more control over the independent nations. And that's very frightening.

And I tend to think that in the debate about private schools and so-called public schools, which is probably a misnomer, is that we have to realize that if we are imposed to the growing trend in private schools, we must make our government financed schools minimal to the values that people hold dear in this country, one of which is national sovereignty, individual freedom of the family. And in all kinds of ways this is imposing a philosophy on students that is as much a religious philosophy as the most parochial private school. And that very much frightens me, and it frightens many people who want to see the public schools as viable.

I think of people in my riding who do not believe that the private school is an option for them. A neighbour of mine with eight children, who I see him walking from work after doing his hard day's work with a huge Bible going to some church service with his family in the week day, and to him this type of philosophy would be considered a total anathema to everything he believes in.

Now you say, well he may or may not be right. That's not a purpose of the Department of Education or this legislature, is not to decide theological views but to respect the religious freedom of families. And I think we have to be very careful of this kind of philosophy that's emphasized in this book.

I think the member from Regina North East has some questions, but that will be all for now for this session.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the minister has no response, I'll proceed. I really have to comment, and I'm tempted to ask the minister, either she doesn't attend caucus meetings or the member from Saskatoon doesn't attend caucus meetings where these questions could have been asked, but it is allowed in the legislature . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member from Moosomin really is out of line, Mr. Chairman . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. I think we should just get back to the business at hand, which is estimates. I think it should be noted that any member of the legislature has the right to ask questions. Let us now continue.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I agree, Mr. Chairman, any member does have the right to ask questions, and I accept that, but I thought that that comment maybe ought to be made.

Madam Minister, I made my statement here the other day when we began on a number of issues, so I will proceed directly to some specific questions. And I want to deal first with the question of the foundation grants formula. I have information, because that is the latest annual report, on the foundation grant formula per pupil rates for 1985. Can you tell the House and the committee, Madam Minister, what the rate will be for — and let's do them one at a time and then I think it will be easier to follow — for kindergarten for 1986 and then again for 1987? I notice they're also divided into two categories: major urban divisions and other school divisions. And I assume other

school divisions mean rural divisions, and smaller communities, and so on.

(1515)

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, the rates and . . . Does the member want kindergarten and then division 1?

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes, Madam Minister. It's divided on the basis of kindergarten, division 1 and 2, division 3, and division 4. If you have them all for both '86 and '87, you can handle them all at the same time.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well I have '86s, not '87s. Well it's for the year '87-87. Okay. This year kindergarten for urbans is 1,244; for rural kindergarten, 1,267. Division 1 and 2: urban, 2,415; for rural it's 2,454. Division 3: urban, 2,624; division 3 rural, 2,670. Division 4: urban, 2,979; for rural 3,028.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Since we're on formulas, I would like to ask you another question. I know that there is a rural pupil transportation rate that is established, and it was \$108, and I'm wondering whether it is being changed in the present budget and, if so, by how much?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, the transportation rates have been increased 2 per cent, on the average.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — What are the rates, please?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — One hundred and eleven.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Can you tell us, the committee, Madam Minister — I know that the increase in operating grants is at 4 or 5 per cent, 5 per cent — why you would not have a like increase in the transportation costs; those are costs that have gone up significantly, and there must be a rationale for it.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well there's a couple of very good reasons. First of all the price of gas hasn't been increasing at a very great rate. And in fact, to refresh the member's memory, it was this government that, in fact, removed the gas tax, and which, in fact, created some savings. However, the simple fact is that in 1986 we do not estimate that the price of gas will be that high.

I will also tell him that we have, through the educational development fund, a category for efficiency measures which many boards are in fact taking an opportunity to use. For instance when it comes to transportation, there are several that are converting their buses and have done that and will be able to run them at a lesser rate.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Minister, I hear your argument, and I will not argue it. I don't agree with it, obviously. Two per cent .. Surely the cost of transportation has increased in the last year by more than 2 per cent. I remind you that you removed the gas tax in 1982; surely you're not thinking that that's lowering the cost of operation every year since then; that's only a one-time reduction. I submit that the price of gasoline as it is now at the pumps, which it is in the city of Regina, is not the similar kind of price that it is everywhere else. So there

is as much as a 10 cent a litre difference across Saskatchewan. We will want to pursue that in another forum with another department at some point in time, so I don't want to get into that now.

I really don't think that that's a very strong argument for an increase of 2 per cent for transportation costs for school boards who have seen those costs, I suggest, increase of much more than that in the past year.

Can I ask . . . We'll remain on transportation grants for a moment. Can I ask: what kind of formula do you apply for funding urban school transportation, because you do have a program under which the department, I know, provides funding to urban school divisions. What kind of financial formula do you apply in this case?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I really don't think the transportation policy has changed a great deal since you were in and around education. However, there's high-cost, special education students within the urban centres and that is to a maximum of \$1,930 per pupil, per year. Then there is all other urban transportation expenditures up to a maximum \$353 per pupil, and the policy on who can qualify for transportation has not changed. If there is no school in the area, an urban board may choose to bus and get some help from the department; if there is no program pertaining to a particular — oh, it might be industrial arts or something like that; they can qualify under that. a second language is another one. And the four kilometres is still in legislation as it has been since 1978. I believe that's the . . oh, and special education.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Are these, minister . . . I appreciate that these are the numbers for this coming year. Is that an increase over last year, or is it remaining the same?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The first figure that I gave you — 1,900 — last year was 1,890. And the second one — the maximum of 353 for '86 — for 1985 was 346.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you. I have a copy of the urban transportation policy, so I won't ask you to repeat it in the House. But I'm wondering whether . . And I know you mentioned that there has been not any change, and I'm not sure whether you said there hasn't been any change to the policy or nothing substantial.

Has your department or yourself, minister, reviewed this policy recently to see whether there may be weaknesses in it and how it might be improved? Or is it just being maintained exactly as it has been for, say the last four years? We'll take that period of time.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We've had some discussions for some time on urban transportation. And you will be well aware of some of the special problems that especially large urbans face.

The regional directors were asked to review the policy, which they did so in February and March of this year, 1986. And they have recommended no change to the policy at this point in time. However, they have pointed out that the four kilometres is becoming a problem and that perhaps we will have to look at it, in consultation with the large urbans, and try and come up with some

kind of alternative solution for it.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I would encourage that, because I agree. I don't agree that there are no problems with it. I think that there are some things that need looking at.

I'll give you one example. Right now there may be . . . The longest distance, as I understand it, in Regina that the school system transports students is about eight-tenths of a mile. There are other situations where students are having to walk in excess of that.

And I'm not suggesting that students are unprepared to walk. But I'm saying that there are circumstances in which the department and yourself should be considering factors such as safety, factors such as the kind of traffic areas that students have to pass through.

And therefore I would like to know whether you are able, as the minister, under direction or under recommendation of your department, to make some discretionary judgements under this policy to allow for consideration of those things, because I don't think we should be ignoring safety factors when it comes to our young children — kindergarten children, or grade 8's, or whatever grade you have.

Are you able, Madam Minister, to apply some discretion in recognizing some of the costs that some school divisions in urbans might have that result from the problems of safety that parents and the school division, in fact, may be concerned with?

(1530)

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well yes, Mr. Chairman, we do have that flexibility, and safety hazards are a very key consideration when looking at the request from an urban board. I might also add that boards have their own policies on that, and in fact make their decisions based on such factors as traffic, potential hazard areas — a highway, as an example, that students may have to cross when there is no school in their immediate attendance area. So those factors do come into the play, and they come into play under board policy.

But yes, we do have the flexibility within the department to recognize some safety reasons or hazards that students may be dealing with.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well I'm glad of that. The reason I asked, Madam Minister, is because in the policy itself it doesn't state that — and I'm not suggesting it should, as long as I can be assured — unless I have missed it, but I just wanted to be assured that that discretionary factor is there.

I know you've had correspondence from a group of people who live in the Glencairn district in Regina, specifically relating to this kind of situation, where children have to walk really distances that are much in excess of what other children who are transported would have had to walk, even though they live in what is another area where another school is designated to be built. But they are having to walk greater distances than students who are actually being bussed — quite a bit greater

distances — and, indeed, are having to cross some extremely heavy traffic streets in the city.

And in the request that these families have made, they have been told that the policy of the department is what it is, and there was never any mention made of the discretionary factor. And I'm not suggesting you personally, Madam Minister; I'm just making a point of fact here and raising the concern.

I think it's important that some discretionary judgements be allowed to be made, and I am glad that you have given me that assurance because, as I said, you cannot have a cut-and-dried situation. you will always have some exceptional circumstances, and I think they need to be recognized.

I will therefore assure this committee of people that that discretionary power is there, so that when they next approach their school division they will be able to bring that to the division's attention, and the division can in turn make a request to the department so that these people can be satisfied that their concerns have been addressed.

Another question, Madam Minister: looking through the annual report, I noticed that in 1984 tax arrears for school divisions were \$31,244,925. In 1983 the tax arrears had been \$28,249,068. That's a bit of an increase in one year. I'm wondering: can you tell the committee what the tax arrears were for 1985?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, just for purposes of giving a figure today, it would be approximately 36, 37 million. And we would have to pull together two sets of figures, and we don't have one with us, and that would come from audited statements. So my figure for 1985 is incomplete at this point in time. But we would estimate it at 36,37.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you. I guess that tells us that since 1983 there has been a continuous increase in the amount of arrears. I suspect partly that might reflect the economic conditions, and I suspect it also may reflect in 1985, where actually there has been a fairly substantial increase in arrears, the fact that there are no longer property improvement grants provided — which were not only a relief for the property owner for property taxes for education that people who own homes paid, but also, from the point of view of school boards and municipalities, were an incentive for people to pay their taxes, and not only pay them but pay them early.

And if you're involved with a school division or a municipality, the early payment of taxes, I'm sure none of us would argue, is an asset, and the kind of situation that local government boards look forward to because it reduces their borrowing costs and other related kinds of costs.

So I think the point that needs to be made here is that, when you see a growing arrears in taxes, it must tell you that there is something not quite right economically, and I think also reflects on the matter of the removal of the property improvement grants.

And along with grants, Madam Minister, I want to turn to

the matter of capital project and money for capital grants. I note that there has, over the years, been some interesting numbers that have been provided in school capital.

In 1982 - 83 school construction grants, \$13.112 million, which is a 12.5 per cent increase over the previous year; in 1983 - 1984, \$13.640 million, which was a 4 per cent increase over the previous year. In 1984 - 85 it's difficult to calculate, because apparently there were some changes in calculations of funding, but it appears it was about 12.276 million, which was a reduction over the previous year. In 1985 - 86, 69 million, which is a 10.6 per cent increase; in 1986 -87 it looks like there is a reduction again — it's down to 58 million.

And I'm wondering why there is a reduction in the amount of school capital construction grants this year over last year, especially in light of the fact that there have been a lot of announcements made on various school capital projects, both by the department or yourself, Madam Minister, and by individual MLAs throughout Saskatchewan. Why is there a reduction in the amount of money?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, there is no reduction. It has been moved to the property management Crown, that figure, and I thought that was stated in your Estimates book; perhaps it's not. There is no reduction.

Just a point on the tax arrears. I would suggest to the member, before he draws any firm conclusion as to why, that he would have to take into consideration any kind of increases in new businesses, buildings on property, including homes. And with the growth in the population and in the small-business sector that we've had, I would suggest that that gain is not out of proportion — the ratio is not out of proportion with what was in place. So perhaps you should have a look at that aspect of it also.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I won't argue with that logic or illogic. It seems to me that if economic conditions are so prosperous that there is this tremendous growth which your government always talks about in business opportunity — and I could give you a list the length of my arm on the number of businesses in Regina that have closed in the last three years — but if everything is thriving, it shouldn't matter, Madam Minister; the tax arrears should not have grown, because prosperity leads to quicker payments of taxes. So I really don't know where your argument is coming from.

But I want to pursue this capital construction matter further, because I'm wondering . . . If, as you say, capital funding for schools has been now transferred to the property management corporation — and indeed it is on page 134 of the Estimates book — I see in that, I believe, \$50.4 million for Education in the property management corporation, Education capital.

Are you able to tell me, Madam Minister, how much of that is for technical schools capital, university capital, and the school divisions which we are considering here? If you split that \$50 million up among those three school components, then the reduction of capital money for the regular school system, and I mean division K to 12, then there has been a massive decrease in the amount of

funding.

Now I'm not stating that to be so, because I'm sure there has to be a reason why these numbers, as they are in the Estimates as presented by the Minister of Finance, are misleading, not only myself, but the public. There's got to be an explanation. Can you provide the explanation, Madam Minister, so we can clarify that?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I can only answer for what is in Education, and the amount \$11.7 million, and the remainder of that would probably be with Advanced Education.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you. 11.7 million, is that what you said? 11.7 million. That is a reduction . . . That is less than what was provided in 1983 - 84, because that was 13.6 million. In 1982 - 83, which 13.1 million, that is a very substantial amount of money less than was provided in those years. And I'm wondering, how can you justify that reduction with your array of capital project announcements?

(1545)

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, he neglected to tell you that it's the same level that it was at last year. You know, if you're going to tell figures, don't be so picky about which ones you're telling. You might as well tell them all.

It is not unusual to see the budgeted amount for down payments for school construction vary from year to year. Let me go to '71 - 72, was 4 million; and then '72 - 73 it dropped down to 3 million; and then went back up again to 4 in '74; and then in '74 - 75 it went to 6 million; and then 7, 11, and then it dropped down to 9; and then in 1978 -79 it was down to \$5 million. So it's not unusual to see it move up and down. In 1979 -80, for the member's benefit, it was \$7 million. We have consistently held it within that range from 13 million to 11 throughout the four-year period without any great fluctuation.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — The only thing consistent, Madam Minister, is the continuous decline in the amount of money you're providing in capital projects. And I appreciate the fact that they may vary, and I appreciate the fact that the cost of construction in 1986 -87 is considerably higher than it was in 1977 or 1978. You could have built a considerable amount more, probably, for \$7 million in 1978, then you can today for \$11.7 million because of inflation. I just want to make that point.

Your amount of funding in capital this year is 11.7. You say it was 11.7 last year; it was 12.2 in 1984 - 85. Yet this year the government has made more announcements, and if I'm wrong, I would appreciate if you'd provide me with a list of the capital projects that you have approved. But it seems to me you have announced more projects for 1986 -87 than you had in 1985 - 86. And so I'm asking: how can you justify the same level of money when, in fact, you are talking about more projects which should cost you more money? You can only conclude one of two things: that some of those projects are not real and they're simply announcements,

or that you don't have enough money in the budget to pay for them, and therefore your Minister of Finance is playing some games in order to try to keep his budget numbers less than what they actually are.

So would you please tell me how you can justify the same amount of funding this year as last year and yet announce what seems to me a large number of capital projects?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, that's really not very hard to figure out. Firstly, I would be happy to send the member . . . I will endeavour to run a copy off and get it back to him later this evening if I can. There were 42 major capital projects. And I don't recall the specific number last year. It might have been 38, in around there somewhere.

We have this year taken a look at some smaller projects that have been requested for many, many years. And some of them may be the simple addition of computer room, library resource room. We've also looked at providing some major roof repairs, and we've been doing the laminated beams that we've had some difficulties with. So instead of going with five or six or seven or eight major projects, we have looked at trying to renovate and put some additions on to schools where boards have had their requests in for a lot of years.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — In other words, the amount of capital construction that you're doing this year is not going to be as much as last year. If you allow for inflation, Madam Minister, the amount of capital funding you're going to do this year is going to be less than last year, after allowing for inflation.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, our unit costs this year are approximately the same as last year.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Are you saying that the costs have not increased — wage costs have not increased, material costs have not increase? I was to a lumber yard the other day, and I bought three separate items, and I can tell you that those costs have increased. Are you estimating your figures on the basis of no increase? No increase . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The dealer happens to be a friend of mine; I got a deal.

Are you saying that your calculations for capital costs and the grants you're providing allow for no increase in the costs of construction in any of the areas?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — That's not what I said at all, Mr. Chairman. The market-place, if the member doesn't know, is very competitive — has been for the last couple of years. And in fact a couple of years ago when the tenders were going out, boards were finding that they were coming in very reasonable, and some of them were under what they had actually estimated their projects were going to be worth.

While that has tightened up to a considerable degree, it is still extremely competitive. And the taxpayer gets the benefit of that, and the consumer, when the market-place in fact is competitive.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well if you talk to anybody in the

construction industry these days, Madam Minister, and tradespeople, they'll tell you some of them have not had any work for three years. So I won't argue with you that as a result of that there may be more competition just to survive.

But I guess the question then is: is that the kind of economy you want to have, where you have people who are unemployed in the trades field for two or three years at a time because they are unable to get a job, either because there isn't enough work in the province in the construction industry for them to get a job, or because there has been a bias for the hiring of contractors, to some extent — to a large extent, who come out of province, bring their old staff?

And Regina, in the city of Regina, you have a very prime example where, as far as I know — and you may correct me if I'm wrong — but since 1983 all school construction has been done by outside-of-province contractors, in the major sense. And if that's not the case, you can send over the information on that too. I would love to have a list of the different contractors who did any significant school construction work in Regina.

I think I heard you say that you would provide me with a list of all of the capital projects which your department has approved for this fiscal year, Madam Minister? Did I hear you say that? Can I have that today? And if you have it with you, can you have one of your staff go to our office or your office, run off that list for me so that I can take a look at it as we consider our estimates?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, firstly, the statement, another statement by the member from Regina North East is not true — that all major projects have gone out of province. That is simply not true, and I would be glad to give him the information that indicates that that is, in fact, not true.

The member asks me what kind of an economy I would like. Well I can only tell him that, if I had a choice between private and competitive versus socialistic rule, I'll take the first any day. I think consumers and the taxpayers are the only ones to benefit from that, and not the government that might be in power.

I want to clarify what list it is that he wants of construction projects. Does he want ones that are now under construction or does he want ones that are in this budget for the year '86 -87? Which are you asking for?

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I want . . . Well let's have both. Let's have the projects which obviously were approved last year and are now under construction, and also those that have been approved for this budget. Is that clear?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I just would have thought that you had the projects that were approved last year, because that information was sent to the critic of the day.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Minister, you're in the committee now. I'm asking you the question: will you provide that information to me later today or will you not?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I can provide the

'86-87 budget, which we are talking about today. I cannot provide the other; we would have to go back to the department.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Good. Tomorrow will be quite adequate. And I will await to receive that tomorrow, because that's obviously on record. And if you did indeed provide it to the committee last year, then all you will have to do is dig it out, and it'll be on file somewhere. So I will expect to get them tomorrow, and I will expect to get the '86-87 projects today.

Can I ask, Madam Minister, what procedure do you use for the approval of the allocation of your capital money for school capital projects? There must be a system by which you get school boards who make requests, and then in turn you approve the projects which you think are justifiable, or which you can afford this year, and you do not approve others. Can you outline to the House what the procedure is?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, we do have a criteria that the capital projects are put under, and it would be health and safety . . . That safety could cover things like beams; if your roof is in really poor shape, it would also come under that area; or if the building is particularly old and we have fire reports, that type of thing.

The next one is enrolment: if the school is simply too small for the number of students that are there. And the third one — then we get into what we call the program deficiencies. For the rural areas it is usually gymnasiums, industrial arts, home ec, computer, those kinds of spaces, and library resource centres.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm sorry, I guess I didn't make my question quite clear. What I'm asking for is the process; that might have been a better word. The school division decides it needs this project. They must then make a request to somebody, and then somebody must ultimately recommend to you, Madam Minister, which project should go ahead. that's what I'm looking for. What's the process, step by step?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — First of all, the board requests a project to the department. There is a department team that then goes out and evaluates, and then approvals issued to the project are in accordance with the priorities that I just went over with you. There were basically three. And of course the available funding comes into place. And then the board employs an architect and proceeds to construct the project.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Have you consistently and always followed this procedure, or do you, from time to time, make exceptions, for whatever reasons?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well the most recent that I can recall as an exception to this was when we had some, what I considered to be, severe safety problems with laminated beams, and we did not follow that procedure.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — You have not made exception in the case of new capital projects. I mean, that obviously is something that's easy to project over a period of time. You

have not made exceptions in the middle of a year for new capital projects.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure what the member is getting at, but let me try and guess. I would believe that he is referring to Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and perhaps Moose Jaw, and neighbourhood schools. Last year we gave approval for those city boards to go ahead and being planning for some projects. And I believe that that is going to have to take place, that eventually the department is going to have to get to the point where, such as the Department of Health has done in the construction of nursing homes, and that is look at an overall, five-year plan, so that boards can, in fact, plan well ahead for their capital projects. And I guess that was perhaps one step in getting to that point.

(1600)

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Madam Minister, you guess well, and so you should, because indeed you did make the exception, and you conveniently made it during the process of a by-election campaign. So in other words, what you on your own, or what you did because you were so instructed by your own Premier or by your Deputy Leader, decided that the expediency of politics was more important than the needs of students in the class-room. And I'm not suggesting that these schools which you announced were not schools that were not needed. Indeed they were desperately needed.

It's just the point is that you had an opportunity, because you were aware of the need when you prepared your 1985 - 1986 budget, you were quite aware of the need, yet you said those school divisions, no, we're not going to give you approval. Along comes the possibility of an election, or indeed it ultimately became a by-election, and all of a sudden you reconsidered. All I can say is, we should have more by-elections because then the needs of our school divisions and our children are going to be more adequately met.

Now, Madam Minister, can you give me a list of those schools which you gave approval for but did not provide any budgeting for in 1985 - 1986? That's those that you announced either in October or the early part of November. You must have that with you. You certainly would have known that I'd be asking about the year before. Can you send over the list of those school projects which were approved then?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I certainly wouldn't have guessed that we might be doing 1985 estimates. However, he's quite right in terms of that announcement and when it came. However, I would also suggest he not be so sensitive. I mean not everything stops for five months preceding a by-election.

I would also like the member to make a very clear note on it, and that is that the approval, though it comes in that year, comes out of the next year funding. There was Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Regina Public School Division, which was the school of Parkridge, I believe, and the Regina Roman Catholic board which was Maple Ridge.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — How many schools in Saskatoon

and how many in Moose Jaw? I'm aware of the ones in Regina.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — One in Saskatoon; one in Moose Jaw; two in Regina — one public and one with the separate school system. One is Parkridge and the other one is Maple Ridge in Regina.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Don't you think, Madam Minister, that if you'd have given the school boards the go ahead when you gave the announcement of capital projects for 1985 - 1986, they might well be under way now, and therefore we wouldn't have a situation of extreme overcrowding and indeed some talk of transporting, although I think that's now changed to some degree?

Wouldn't you agree that had you given the approval when you should have given it in the budget that was introduced in 1985 - 1986, instead of waiting for your politically opportune moment, once again ignoring the needs of our children and our teachers and our school divisions, that those schools would be much farther ahead in the process of getting ready for construction than they are today?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, no, I don't agree at all. That's like me standing in here and saying when that good member over there was minister of Education, he wouldn't give approval for the Johnson High School, even though there was substantial overcrowding. I mean, how silly can you be?

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Minister, I don't know why the minister has to get quite so snitty when we're asking direct questions, unless she feels that she's being pressed.

I remind the minister that maybe it's time that we put one falsehood of this government aside. Once again it showed the kind of things that this government is prepared to do in order to try to gain some political advantage. And I wish they would learn that playing games with the Saskatchewan public, whether it's games that affect our children in our schools or games that affect our workers who are trying to get jobs, is actually going the other way, and it's working against this political party opposite and this government, rather than working for them.

The high school in Glencairn in Regina East which was built — and it's good that it was — was approved by an NDP government in 1982 - 1983. It was mentioned in the budget. It was announced to the school division that the planning should proceed. The only thing that changed, Mr. Chairman, is that when this government got elected, they delayed it for a year. They delayed it for a year, and that school could have been built and it could have been opened at least one year earlier than it was except for the politicking of this government opposite. And obviously it didn't help very much because the member who was elected at that time decided to leave the legislature and leave those constituents unrepresented for seven months while the Premier tried to make up his mind whether to call an election or whether to call a by-election.

Madam Minister, I want to get to ask you a specific question. I'll wait until I have the minister's attention.

Madam Minister, can you tell me the new capital projects or major renovations which have been approved this year for each of the public school system in Regina and the Catholic school system in Regina?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The renovations are at Connaught in Regina, plus there is approximately a half a million dollars budgeted for relocatables for the Regina systems, and I do not have where the relocatables would be going.

Mr. Chairman, just a comment in terms of when approval is given. And dating back to '82, you know, in one aspect the member is right; approval was given in this year and that year, and I could continue to go back, which he didn't do. And that was starting from '76 on — '76, '77, '78, '79. And yet while the politician was out giving the approval, somehow it was never quite budgeted for in the department.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Minister, you get so carried away with trying to make the political argument, and I want to tell you that indeed the planning was budgeted for in the department for that high school, and that is the fact, and the record will show. Now having made your point, I wish you would answer the question. The question was this: can you give me a list of capital projects in the two school systems in Regina that you've approved in this budget — both major renovation and new projects? Have you somehow now forgotten about the new schools which you announced for the two school jurisdictions. I don't think you have. It must have been an oversight. But can you give me a list of those projects?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, it wasn't an oversight. Your question was specific in that you asked for major renovations and I gave that to you — Connaught.

An Hon. Member: And new construction.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well you've added that now. Yes, I will give that to you. The renovations we will deal with: Connaught, Regina public school system, approximately \$500,000 for relocatables for the Regina system; schools: Park Ridge, Regina Public School Division; Maple Ridge, Regina Roman Catholic; and that's it, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you. So what you have really done, Madam Minister, is taken what was announced last year and reannounced it again this year, and there is really no addition to the capital project array in the city of Regina in addition to or above what was announced last fall. You are introducing nothing new in this budget for capital construction in the city of Regina for schools.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, it was made very clear when the announcement came that the board was being given prior approval to being their planning so that they could then begin construction at an earlier point in time. It was stated then and there that those would have been the projects that would have come in the '86 - '87 budget.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I guess that's the point. And certainly, I'm sure that if I was a member of the school division, I would have been glad to get that advance notice. The point is: why would you not treat all other

school divisions in kind? We have a lot of school divisions in the province. Surely if you would stop playing your politics with education, you could have also indicated last fall to other school divisions what you were going to announce in this budget so that they could have started their planning. I mean, that's the worst kinds of games you can play. Selectively you will indicate some school divisions, and others you will say nothing. Now have it one way or the other, but don't treat those school divisions who elect responsible board members who try to plan for their children's education needs in different ways.

Now, Madam Minister, you mentioned a little while ago that there's a need in our school budgeting, for construction purposes, for some five-year plans. Well I know that you have had sent to you a letter from teachers who teach at the Bishop James Mahoney High School in Saskatoon. I don't know what your reply has been. But I think in their petition, because they also wrote me a letter outlining the problem, and indeed I then wrote to you, and yes you did indeed reply to my letter, in which you said nothing.

But what they have said is this, and I think this tells something about your long-range planning, or the lack of it. They said:

We are extremely concerned about the recent announcement by the Department of Education concerning capital grants allocated for the expansion of our school. (And this is Bishop James Mahoney High School.) . . .

Current and long-term student numbers indicate that twelve classrooms will be necessary. The eight-classroom addition approved will only serve short-term needs.

According to the Saskatoon Catholic School Boards' projections, when the eight-classroom addition is ready (fall of 1987) our projected enrolment will fill all available space. One year later, we will already be short of space . . .

Now wouldn't you admit, Madam Minister, that, if you were really implementing long-range planning, you would foresee the need here and approve an adequate expansion to the school so that you wouldn't have to have this period in between in which there is going to be a shortage of space?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the member from Regina North East talks about games, and so he should. He's been into one for as long as I've ever known the gentleman around the political arena. I would suggest any kind of concern that he shows for board members and the decision that they take is sadly late and is probably misplaced.

He asks why we don't give this to other divisions. Well, he's well aware of the problems facing the larger urban centres on neighbourhood schools. It isn't all that often that rural Saskatchewan gets an opportunity to build a new school — a whole new school. They do renovations; they often do additions; but they don't see a lot of new

schools, in total.

But that's not the case in urban Saskatchewan because of the unique problems that a city like Saskatoon and Regina faces. While they have some of their inner core schools closing, they still have a need for brand-new schools to be opening up in the subdivision, and those are what we call the neighbourhood schools. The pressure points that we have been facing in urban Saskatchewan were felt extremely strong last year in the schools that were given the approval to begin planning, and that they would then receive the moneys in 1986 - 87.

(1615)

As for Bishop Mahoney, the member is well aware — or should be, if he's not — that we have reached an agreement with the board for an addition. And while I appreciate the concern from the group of teachers from that particular school that came to me, they did receive a reply, and I'm sure that they understood it better than what the member from Regina North East has understood it.

However, the department does deal with the board in those matters, for it is the board that lays down how they're going to be built, where it's going to be built, and when and where they're going to have the additions, and that type of thing. So I don't think the member from Regina North East will find it unusual when I say that we have been dealing with the school board on it and in fact have reached an agreement.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Will you give an undertaking to the committee and to the school boards of Saskatchewan that this fall you will again indicate to . . . Well let's stay with urban school divisions because that's the one you seem to think only need to do forward planning. I disagree with that, but that's your position. Okay, will you indicate this fall to urban school boards the schools that they should be planning for the next year when the next budget is introduced?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I can only say that many of the boards have in fact been into long-term planning. And, you know, the member is planting words in my mouth again by saying that I said rural boards don't need to do the long-term planning. They do not have the pressure enrolments that urban Saskatchewan has, and their long-term planning can be done perhaps in an easier method than what the urbans find themselves in, particularly if their population is shifting from subdivision to subdivision or from down-town Regina to the outskirts. Their long-term planning is much more difficult.

The issue of long-term planning is still in discussion within the department and within several of the boards. The Saskatoon Catholic board in particular has outlined a five-year plan. I have met with them and we've had some discussions, plus they have been meeting with people in the department. But to this day, I do not have a firm direction in place that we will be able to go, and that will remain to be discussed with the likes of treasury board, Department of Finance, and the rest of government.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — In other words, your new policy of

announcing school capital project funding only lasted for a period of last year in the fall, and you're not proposing to continue it. Is that what I'm hearing you say?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, I didn't say that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Madam Minister, will you clarify then what you said?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I have simply stated to the member from Regina North East that we are not at a stage where we have one policy in place for long-term planning for all school boards, because we recognize the very unique differences in needs between urban Saskatchewan and rural. And right now on the issue of long-term planning we have been trying to work with the urban boards and within the department to come up with a plan that can be taken to government, to Finance and to government, and put into place. We have not got to that point yet where we are able to do that.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Minister, are you saying to the committee that boards have not done long-term planning until now? Are you saying that this is new to the school boards, and that it's only happening now, and that school boards have been so negligent that they have not done long-term planning in the past and have not had a projection of their capital needs over the next period of years?

If you're saying that, Madam Minister, I will suggest you are totally erroneous. School boards, indeed, have done planning, and I wish you would make up your mind. Have school boards done planning, or is this something new that you're suggesting school boards are doing?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, no, I didn't say that. If the member would reflect back for a minute, he will probably remember what I said. It is the department that has been into looking at the policy on long-term discussions, long-term planning. I just stood here and told you that the urban — Saskatoon Catholic was the one that I used as an example — has done some very good long-term planning, as have many and most of the other boards. I did not say that.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Then, Madam Minister, if you now will agree with me that school boards have done future planning — call it long-term planning if you like — what would prevent you from doing in this year what you did last year — and that's later in the year, say in the fall — letting the school boards know what projects they should be planning for the next fiscal year when you bring in your new budget, or another government brings in a new budget? What prevents you from doing that when you did it last year?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, three things: financial considerations, budgeting processes, and pressure points are the three facts that we take into consideration, and those will remain for at least this year until we get back to the Department of Finance in what we think, perhaps, is feasible to take place on long-term planning.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Why would you not have taken

financial considerations, pressure points, and whatever your third criteria was in the last year when you made the earlier announcements? If it was legitimate to do that then, why is it not legitimate to do it this year?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, periodically, as good as we can project enrolments, periodically our predictions don't always turn out to be reality, as strange as that may seem to the member across the way. Perhaps reality to him is something different that it is to me. But obviously enrolments is a good example, and I could use a few specific areas where in fact that happens.

The other thing that comes with it is the closing of schools. If a board is looking at closing one or two, or in the case of a few divisions around the province, three or four, and making one new school, obviously some planning takes place with that, particularly with the community. And so if the closing of a school comes into it. It is not always a simple matter of doing out your planning and saying it shall happen in 1986 or '87. And we took those things into consideration when we looked at the pressure points with the four schools that were given approval to begin planning.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Madam Minister, the closing of schools, as followed by school boards, is such . . . and their policy that they give the community at least a year's notice so the community, and so do you, Madam Minister, and your department know at least a year ahead of time that a school board intends to close schools. That is the general policy that responsible school boards are applying.

Having made that comment, let me turn to another question on school capital. How many rural school divisions — and I would include rural to be such divisions as the Humboldt Roman Catholic Separate School system or like systems — how many rural school divisions have got approved in your budget, new school construction?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the member could clarify the question. Did you say how many have not?

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I asked, Madam Minister, how many rural school division new capital projects have you approved in your budget as opposed to urban? Okay.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well just in dealing with new schools, it balances out at four and four — four rural new schools and four urban new schools.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you for that information. The reason I asked, Madam Minister, because I wanted to clarify something. In your earlier remarks on another question, you said that we don't approve near as many rural new capital projects as you approve urban. And here you're telling me that what you said earlier no longer applies because now I have asked a different question.

You have approved new rural school construction — four schools — and you've approved new urban school construction — four schools — even though you argue that the pressure is in the urban because of core schools closing down and population moving out are far greater

than they are in the rural. Now, Madam Minister, use one argument, otherwise we will proceed very slowly in here today.

Now can you correct yourself? Are there greater pressures in the urban school divisions for new school construction than there are in the rural, and if so, how do you justify that there are only four urban new schools approved this year and four for the rural?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, one of the main differences between the urban and the rural is that when you approve a new school for the rural area, most of the time it is replacement of the old school. It is not another school or a new school in a subdivision. They're not adding to the number of schools that would be in that town or that community.

You know the member hits his head like he doesn't understand. I don't find that difficult to understand.

Let me use Leader as an example. Leader was given approval for a new school this year, but there will be several small schools closing outside the town of Leader in order to accommodate the new school being built at Leader. That is what the board looked at and requested, and they decided that's the best way to go with it.

So instead of having like you had . . . for instance you keep talking about Glencairn in Regina, where the F.W. Johnson school was built. There was no high school over there, so that was put over there. But in the case of the school going into Leader, it is replacement for two or three smaller schools.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Minister, one more question. Are you saying that when an urban school divisions closes a school, as urban school divisions have done, then therefore there is no replacement element involved? Or are you saying that when the F.W. Johnson Collegiate is built — and it was certainly needed — and therefore Central Collegiate was closed, that there was no replacement component involved?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, no, not in its entirety. I recognize that a shift in population, the mobility, the new subdivisions that open up in terms of city planning, that type of thing, are very much a factor in the cities. So you can't just in isolation take one reason and compare rural to urban. It doesn't work that way.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Minister, along with the funding from the department, I wonder whether you and your government has addressed a problem, whether you have addressed a certain problem — is one dealing with the insurance that schools have had to pay for. And insurance for school divisions have increased by 50 per cent, 100 per cent, and depending on the school division, both liability and other insurance have increased very dramatically. I'm wondering, what kind of allowance have you made in the calculation of your operating grants to recognize the tremendous increase in insurance costs that some school divisions have had to incur?

(1630)

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the operating grant, as it relates to insurance, first of all we don't give specific areas the increase. The overall operating grant received an increase, and as to the components of the expenditures that a board may have, you know, that's viewed with the overall picture in mind.

There's no doubt that the issue of the rising costs of insurance is a concern to trustees and government, and we have been in discussion with them in trying to sort out the whys and perhaps some solutions. I'm also aware that there are several school divisions that have gone together and bought their insurance. Four divisions, for example, have gone together and bought their insurance and got a better deal than what the individual one was doing. That's nothing different or new for them because they've done it in the past with buses also.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Minister, the Minister of Urban Affairs informs me when we considered the Urban Affairs estimate, that discussions are taking place with Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association and his department to see if there can be a resolve of this very serious insurance difficulty that local governments have had to face. What involvement have you, Madam Minister, and your department had in those deliberations on behalf of education?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, as I understand it, each one is dealing with their own agencies — Urban Affairs with SUMA; Rural Affairs probably with SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities). And as I said earlier, we're dealing with SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association).

We are just at a point of trying to put together a data base in order to have something to come back to an overall group with, to find out the severity of the problem and who it impacts most on.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm a little surprised at what I'm hearing. And maybe my question wasn't clear or maybe your answer wasn't clear. But it seems to me, Madam Minister, that a government in charge would have looked at the problem that municipalities face, recreation boards face, school boards face, and then determine that it's necessary to have some co-ordination of finding the solution here.

What I'm hearing you say is that the Minister of Urban Affairs is going off on his own, dealing with Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association; you are going off in your direction, dealing with the school trustees association; and I don't know what other ministers are doing at all. Now I hope that that's not what you said, and I will not suggest that's what you said until I've given you an opportunity to clarify it.

Is there some means through the cabinet, with your involvement of your officials' involvement, to co-ordinate the seeking of the solution to this problem? And if there isn't, why not?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, first of all, the member did not understand me correctly, or chose not to understand me correctly, or perhaps didn't hear me. I said we are

meeting with SSTA to collect some data on the extent of the problem that school boards are facing with the rising cost of insurance. Likewise, at the same time, the Minister of Urban Affairs is doing that with another local government body. And so it goes.

At the point in time, after getting the data, we will be able to come together within cabinet and bring all the factors that have been impacted by the insurance. That is what I said. Is that understandable?

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Quite understandable, and that's why I'm worried. Madam Minister, can you tell me: is there a committee of cabinet involving all of the departments involved, or is there a committee of officials involving all the departments involved, or are you still off on your own?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — There is a co-ordinating body, Mr. Chairman, and the chair of it is Consumer Affairs.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Is this a co-ordinating body of officials, or is there also a committee of cabinet that's involved?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well at this point in time it's a little of both. I mean, I've already said that the ministers are meeting, officials are meeting with SSTA. I don't think that's difficult to understand.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Which ministers are on this ministers' committee, Madam Minister, that you referred to? The ministers are meeting; can you tell me which ministers are involved and which ministers are on the committee that are meeting, I hope regularly, on this question?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I already stated that the ministers that deal with local government bodies have been directed, with their departments. There's the Minister of Education; there is the Minister of urban Affairs; the minister responsible for the Crown corporation of SGI; and there is the Minister of Rural Affairs.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Madam Minister. If you would have told me that 10 minutes ago, we could have been on another subject. I just want to know who the ministers are, Madam Minister, because I'm really serious about this. I want to be able to communicate with this committee from time to time to see how it's doing and offer and send to them any concerns that are sent to me.

Can you tell me who is the minister that is the chairperson of this committee so that the public and so that others can have access to this committee? Who is the lead minister here? I assume it's the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, but can you confirm that for me?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I stated that three minutes ago.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, this minister reacts strangely. She didn't state anything of the sort. She made a generalized statement about the Department of Consumer Affairs being involved and somebody else being involved. We finally got her to answer who the

minister is. I will appreciate dealing with that minister, I'm sure, and I will refer concerns that the minister has, and I think that's important. I don't say it in a facetious sense. I think it's important that the public knows and that the members of the opposition know, and that the members of the government side know who it is they're supposed to direct their concerns to. And we have established that now after a long protracted period of questioning — and I don't know why it would take that long — and I'm pleased with that.

Well, Madam Minister, let me turn to another subject. Recently your department has been spending a lot of money on advertising — like other departments. And one of the major expenditures . . . and I'm not talking about information brochures to school boards, and so on, as part of your curriculum development; I'm talking about advertising. And recently you ran a series of advertisement of various kinds revolving around a famous Saskatchewan personality called Reuben Mayes dealing with, why don't you stay in school, type of thing. Can you tell me the total cost of that advertising, Madam Minister?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, we have done one advertising program, and the member from Regina North East has already given the title to, "stay in school." It is approximately \$300,000 from start to finish. Half of it was spent in the last fiscal year, and half this year. I would also suggest to the member, as a teacher, he would well understand that that \$300,000 is went spent when you compare it with 600 million to advertise Crown corporations under the NDP.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Minister, \$300,000 — does that include all costs? Does that include production costs; placement costs; the fee that may have been paid to the personality? Is that total cost?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I said that is total cost from start to finish — approximately 300,000.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Minister, can you tell me: how much of this is being spent for television, how much for print, how much for radio, how much for billboards, how much for brochures, and how much for the household poster which all of us received in our mailboxes recent?

If it will be of assistance, Madam Minister, to save time, if you will send over that information to me, we won't have to take the time of the committee for the reading of it, and that would be sufficient.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well first of all I don't have the breakdown as you requested. I believe you said, how much on TV, how much on radio, that type of thing. All I have is phase one, the development costs, and then the total advertising costs from March; and then into phase two, April 1st to May 30th. There were no household posters, a general household poster which you said there was. There isn't. There was not a poster that was mailed to each household. That cost came to 319,000, and the components of the campaign were: TV commercial, radio commercial, billboard mall posters, there were . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. Order, please. Order! I'm sure the member who asked the question can't hear the answer. There's just too much noise in the House, and please desist.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, you didn't hear me say a word about not hearing quite well, actually, but thank you for your consideration. I know what the members opposite do get noisy from time to time, and to have them behave, I think is quite appropriate.

Madam Minister, I guess I must have mistaken this poster for another department. Can you tell me . . . There was a poster sent out to all homes dealing with education and it was about 2 feet by 3 feet. Was it not your department which sent it out? Can you tell me which department sent it out so I know where to ask the question?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, no it wasn't under my department and I would suggest the member talked to the minister responsible for Advanced Ed.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I will do that, Madam Minister. Can you tell me, this advertising, was it done through an advertising agency, and if so, was it one advertising agency, and which one?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we've been dealing with Dome Advertising, and the "stay in school" awareness campaign was done through Dome.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Minister, was it tendered or did you just invite Dome into your office and say, well we need a little work done; give us a number so that we can give you the cheque; or was it tendered so that other Saskatchewan advertisers might have had an opportunity to give you a proposal or maybe give you better deal?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, Mr. Chairman, it was not tendered and I would suggest that the member would have to go a long way to find a media campaign of this type of \$300,000 from start to finish.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Minister, who made the decision on which advertising agency? Did you make it, or did some other level of government make it? Who made the decision that it should be Dome Advertising since it wasn't tendered and you didn't have the benefit of being able to consider other advertising agency proposals?

(1645)

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, those kinds of decisions are made at the officials' level and in consultation and co-operation with many other people, myself included. Those are government decisions — government from elected people and from senior officials. And I don't find that unusual at all. I'm not sure what the member expects.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I see. Are you telling the committee, Madam Minister, that all decisions of your government when it comes to advertising are made by officials in the various departments, including yours? You simply have a hands-off policy, and your officials decide at the deputy

level? The deputy minister decides whether it's going to be Dome Advertising; he's going to make that choice? You don't even ask for a tender from your deputy minister to find out whether he's made the right choice? Is that what you're telling the committee, Madam Minister?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — What did I just say? I said these things are done in consultation with many people involved, myself included. I said that very clearly — myself included.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — What kind of consultation takes place? In other words — earlier you said that your officials made a decision, which means your deputy, ultimately, Madam Minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's what she said initially, and then she followed up with a comment that there is some consultation.

Madam Minister, who is consulted in this kind of a decision besides yourself? Is it the Deputy Premier, or is it the Premier, or is there a special committee of cabinet that allocates this advertising to selected advertising agencies so that they could fill their purse up in order that they might be able to assist the Conservative Party in its election campaign plans?

You say you do a consultation process. Please inform the committee who is consulted before your official approves the advertising budget, which, I might say, for this one item is \$300,00. That is not chicken-feed.

For \$300,000 you could have . . . Because you don't spend all your money for a new school project in one year, you could have approved more school class-room expansion, badly needed ones, for \$300,000. For \$300,000 you could have provided some very substantial resource material to our teachers in the class-rooms and in our high schools, including as many as 10 counsellors who could have then done a really good job about encouraging students to stay in school, as we should do. I don't argue that that's not a good concept; indeed we should encourage them.

But I suspect, Madam Chairman, that simply spending \$300,000 on your chosen advertising firm — your Progressive Conservative advertising firm — is going to do the job when you could have done the job better by hiring some people, by providing resource materials, by providing institutes and workshops for teachers to better prepare them to be able to do that kind of work.

Who, Madam Minister, if I may go back to my question, who is consulted, besides yourself, before this kind of advertising is placed with a particular advertising agency?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well I find the comments utter nonsense. And I would line up Dome Advertising any day with the NDP-chosen Dunskey and Struthers — any day whatsoever. He wants to talk about who's got a bag full of money; you will have only to look across the way and there it is.

The money spent on the "stay in school" campaign, Mr. Chairman, I will defend anywhere. We are talking about kids and students — many of them non-students — who have already dropped out. They're not in school where

the teacher can reach them. They're gone by that time. They're not just in the class-room, and these kids are hard to reach.

Now if the member from Regina North East is suggesting that kids are not worth to spend a dollar on, then I think he should either resign from here, and/or teaching, or perhaps both. He'd do everybody a favour if he did so.

When we did the "stay in school" campaign, there were several discussions. And while I am not at liberty to talk about what goes on in cabinet, there are several ministers where the impact of student drop-outs fit into. Advanced Education is one. The Employment Development Agency is another. And then we have the Department of Social Services, because many of these young kids end up on welfare, and so we have to look at that area also. So between us, several, it became a government thrust.

First of all, it is important that students stay in school to grade 12 and then set a goal in post-secondary education of some kind. That's important.

And the question became one of, how do we reach them? We need an overall effort. Never in the history of the province had there been anything done in terms of media campaign directed towards the very young people, and that is people that were thinking of not finishing school or that in fact had already dropped out. Those decisions are made in consultation, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Minister, what additional programming have you instituted through your department? What additional programming or new programming in this budget are you initiating through your department to assist students who have difficulties in our schools so that they will not be turned off by the system but will be encouraged to stay in our school system? Can you tell me what in this budget you're proposing which will provide additional efforts in our school system for that to happen?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the education development fund, when it was set up, took several things into consideration. One of them was drop-outs or students having a hard time in the school system. And so it became a point of criteria for school boards, in order to access moneys, that they in fact look at their drop-out factor and the guidance and counselling areas that impacts the greatest on students. This year the fund is \$35 million; last year it was 10. And that is the area that we will be looking at for this year.

We have approximately 45 projects on the go for guidance counselling for about \$647,000. There are also about 45 new drop-out prevention programs for about \$700,000, plus we've been doing some in-service on community and staff involvement. Some of it is on alcohol and drug education and how to work with students that are having a hard time in those areas.

So I think it's relatively set up well for this coming year. While some were started last year, there will be many more coming on stream, and in fact you will see an expansion of those that were there last year as they continue on in 1986.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Madam Minister, I'm glad that you mentioned the concern dealing with alcohol and drug problems because we have raised that in the House before. And the Minister of Health smiles and I know he's quite aware of it, although he chooses to delay action on it for a year. But, Madam Minister, tell me: how do you justify your government's position on advertising alcohol, which our youth see, and at the same time express your great concern about the problems of alcohol and drug abuse? Even your federal Minister of Health has said, and I quote from *The Globe and Mail*:

Canada's brewing industry is spending millions of dollars to recruit young people as drinkers, Health and Welfare Minister, Jake Epp, said yesterday in levelling a broadside against beer makers. He said, radio and television advertisements portraying drinking as a glamorous activity can be linked to a drop in the age at which young people begin to drink.

Madam Minister, how can you rationalize your stated concern about alcohol and drug abuse, which you have just made and which school boards are acting on, and the position of your government that promotes the advertising of alcohol? Do you not believe, Madam Minister, that that's kind of phoney?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, Mr. Chairman, what is phoney is for the NDP to sit there, or stand there, and say it was never in the province in their day. It in fact was, and through cable vision, and that has simply grown. Two stations, CTV, CBC, didn't have it; all the rest had it. Now that's phoney.

Let's talk about the advertising as it relates to kids. There's no doubt that the issue of life-styles, as it is portrayed in some of those advertisements, probably stretches the guide-lines that are in place as to what's appropriate and what isn't. And I think the guide-lines, once enforced, are fairly good in that particular area.

You know, the member knows very well that consumption is not up, and perhaps one of the greatest factors to that is the awareness component. I mean, the first one in Canada where a substantial portion is given over to awareness of alcohol as we know it. And I think that is extremely positive. I don't see that as a negative — the awareness of that — and I really don't think that the member from Regina North East does either.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — The point, Madam Minister, is that even your federal Minister of Health has now . . . and he should know. I mean, he sees the statistics . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the provincial Minister of Health doesn't know. He's shown that time and time again in the House. he laughs about the advertising of liquor. He thinks it's a big joke. I don't think it's a big joke.

The federal Health Minister in Ottawa, the federal health Minister in Ottawa has rejected alcohol advertising, and, quite frankly, he has a point. And I find that peculiar when I've heard the member from Indian Head-Wolseley talk about how the federal government is looking at them . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order, please. I think we need to have some quiet, please.

Mr. Tchorzewski: —: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member from Indian Head-Wolseley has just got to allow me to be able to continue, and I shall do that.

Madam Minister, the Minister of Health stood in this House and he said, oh, but our advertising program is so terrifically good and our whole efforts are so tremendous that even the federal government is looking at our operation as a model. Well, how in heavens can you stand in the House and say, if you support your Minister of Health, that that is happening, when the federal Minister of Health has stood up, as any courageous man would — and he obviously is a courageous man because he's standing up to those breweries who are supplying the Conservative Party with an awful lot of funding — and he has said, alcohol advertising is doing harm to our children and it shouldn't be allowed? And your provincial Minister of Health stands up and says, oh, go ahead and advertise because alcohol consumption has decreased.

Well, Madam Minister, we asked in the House: has there been a change or has there been a decrease in alcohol consumption for young people, teenagers and adolescents; and we have yet to get an answer from this government. And I suggest to you that the reason we have not been able to get an answer is because the figures will show that the consumption of alcohol and drugs, and particularly the alcohol and drug-related problems in recent years, have increased very significantly with young people. You can't deny that, and I don't expect you to. As a responsible individual, and particularly the Minister of Agriculture, you know that those problems have increased.

Now I'm seeing something happen which I think show some promise. We started several years ago with the Safe Grad program. I think that's had some significant result. Now there are some high schools that are introducing a "no-alcohol, no-drug" graduation program, and I think that their success is going to provide some incentive to others. And those are steps that are being taken by people who are concerned about what they see happening to the young people. They're giving of their time voluntarily, and they're organizing committees, and they're talking with young people — not to them, but with them — and they're trying to help. And while they're trying to do these things, and while they're trying to accomplish all of this, what does your government do? It promotes the drinking of alcohol. Let me correct that. You probably don't directly promote, but through your advertising permission, you are promoting it.

And I submit, Madam Minister, whether a person is in favour of the advertising or opposed to it . . . and there are both sides to the question. The important thing here is that your government, and you, continuously go ahead contradicting yourself. You say one thing on the one hand, and then you do something else on the other hand.

I wanted to bring this to your attention about what Jake Epp, the federal minister has said, because I think here is a man who seems to be so different from the normal mode of the conservative party approach to this issue. And I

respect him for that — I respect him for that. I don't respect the phoniness of a . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. It being 5 o'clock, I do now recess this House until later on this evening at 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.