

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour for me to introduce today to the Assembly some students on behalf of the Hon. Pat Smith — 21 students from Dickson elementary school. This is a special school, in my opinion, because my sons have all gone to that school. And I want to welcome Miss Joanne Dyck and Mrs. Pruden to the Assembly, together with the students.

I will be meeting with them later on to discuss what goes on here, and I hope you enjoy yourselves in your stay here in Regina.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise and introduce to you, and through you and to the members of the legislature, a group of adults sitting in the Speaker's gallery. They are hosted here today by Mr. and Mrs. Bev McDougall from Liberty, which are from the great constituency of Arm River.

Mr. Speaker, they are here today accompanying five adult students who represent the International Agriculture Exchange Association. These five students are from Denmark and Australia. Mr. Speaker, they are also accompanied by their host families. Host families' names are as follows: Ron and Irene Bishoff of Keeler; Richard and Marjorie Vickaryous from Watrous; Terry and Gloria Hamre from Kenaston; Bev and Fran McDougall from Liberty; and Martin and Donna Bohrsen from Kenaston.

Mr. Speaker, I will be visiting with these groups at 3:15 for a brief visit and some pictures. My wishes are that this will be an educational and productive year in the lives of both the students and the host people.

I would now ask the five students from Denmark and Australia to please stand and be acknowledged when I call your name: Robert Herbohn, Atherton, Australia; Wayne Lewis, Gibson, Australia; Jessie Hansen, Borre, Mon, Denmark; Peter Mollegard, Assens, Denmark; Per Horlyck, Vamdrup, Denmark.

I would ask all members to join me in welcoming these students and their host families to the legislature today. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Deficiency Payment for Western Farmers

**Mr. Engel:** — I have a question to the Minister of Agriculture, and it deals with your stand on a key issue of vital interest to Saskatchewan farmers and rural communities, and that is the need for an early and major deficiency payment from the federal treasury.

And I might add that it's a weak-kneed stand that I really didn't appreciate. The New Democratic Party, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, even the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, have all been pushing for a deficiency payment in the order of \$2 billion for months now, with no meaningful support from either you or your colleagues in the government. Today even Brian Mulroney's own back-benchers joined in this fight when the special parliamentary committee on the pricing of domestic wheat unanimously called for a deficiency payment.

Will you as Premier now show some courage and stand up for Saskatchewan farmers and join the fight for an early \$2 billion deficiency payment from Ottawa?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had have been doing his homework and read the western premiers' communiqué, he would see that all four western premiers recommended a \$1 billion payment by the federal government.

So, Mr. Speaker, if the four western premiers — and Manitoba, which is obviously the same side politically as the members opposite — have agreed with me and agreed with the Premier of Alberta and the Premier of British Columbia that the deficiency payment be made, Mr. Speaker, then I guess . . . I mean, that's pretty clear as far as western Canada is concerned, that all four premiers say that it should be there and it should be paid.

And I, at the outset — at the outset — have said that I want to see the money coming here, and I would take any kind of money that they could offer, and we could have deficiencies or we could have any kind of money that we could, and we've received in the neighbourhood of \$2 million. And now we've put on the table . . . the western premiers are saying, another billion. So, Mr. Speaker, it's been on the table; it's in the public; and the member opposite asked a question when he hasn't even read the western premier's communiqué. Well the least he could do is read that so he knows what the issues are and the results are.

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Mr. Speaker, new question to the Premier and it concerns the same issue raised by my colleague, the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, the position of the Premier on deficiency payments.

Mr. Speaker, a recent study by the Canadian Wheat Board estimated that the Canadian farmer will get about \$31 in subsidies per tonne, that an American farmer will receive the equivalent of \$96, and the European farmer, \$115 per tonne for wheat grown in the 1986-87 crop year. And it goes on to say that it will cost an estimated \$2 billion a year to bring Canadian grain subsidies up to the level of the United States.

Mr. Premier, you have not called for a \$2 billion payment. You have said that you might support one of \$900 million, I believe, is the figure, but only if certain conditions on the world market take place in the months ahead.

Mr. Premier, surely this view is grossly inadequate. Will

you now join with all the other farm organizations who are asking that Saskatchewan farmers receive a deficiency payment which, together with other payments, will yield at least \$2 billion, the amount being received by American farmers?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite wouldn't acknowledge yesterday that we had a billion two out at 6 per cent money in Saskatchewan when they're talking about money for farmers. And again today the Leader of the Opposition hasn't got control of the MLAs because they continue to speak from their seats. They won't even listen to the response. So I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to at least control his members long enough so that they can listen to the response.

The response is that we have put \$2 billion out in western Canadian agriculture, the majority of it coming into the province of Saskatchewan.

At the western premiers' conference that we've just finished, and at the first minister's conference that we've just finished, the western premiers recommended to the Prime Minister that they put \$1 billion up to make sure that the grain that we export receives the same benefit here in Saskatchewan and in western Canada as the Americans are receiving. An equivalent basis to keep the price up to what it was last year would be about \$1 billion on the export.

Today the committee's report is out with respect to the two-priced wheat. They recommend \$10 a bushel. The premiers recommended \$11 a bushel — well, we were with \$1. But it's a major increase that was recommended by me, and recommended by the premiers, and we will now be looking I would suspect . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, I would ask if the Leader of the Opposition could get control of his members again. They want to talk from their seat; they don't want to listen . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Listen to them, Mr. Speaker. If the Leader of the Opposition could just control his members. If he can't control his members, then it's a little bit difficult to provide the answer.

We will get in the neighbourhood of 10 or \$11 wheat. We have all recommended \$1 billion right now to compete with the export side of it. So on the domestic side the recommendations from Saskatchewan is we have \$11; the committee has now recommended \$10. On the export side we said \$1 billion in cash. You put the two together, plus the cash that's already been out here, Mr. Speaker, and you're in the neighbourhood of \$3 billion to western Canadian agriculture.

#### **Withdrawal of Services by Doctors in Swift Current Health Region**

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Premier, in the absence of the Minister of Health for the last couple of days. I want to ask you, Mr. Premier, a question, and it deals with the withdrawal of services by doctors in the Swift Current health region. I wonder, can the Premier give the Assembly a full report on exactly

what action the doctors have taken, and can he tell us what specific steps he has taken to guarantee that the health and safety of the public in the Swift Current region is not threatened by this action taken by the doctors?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I was advised by the deputy minister of Health this morning that the action taken by physicians in Swift Current will not jeopardize health . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to again control his members so they can listen to the response. They're no longer interested in a response. They don't care about health care or agriculture, Mr. Speaker; they just want to talk from their seats — they just want to talk from their seats.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if they don't know how to behave themselves in here, the public will soon find what they're like, all over Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Listen. Listen to them, Mr. Speaker. I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to get control of them if he could. Well, Mr. Speaker, I mean, I can speak . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. Order.

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in Swift Current I'm advised that there's emergency services there. I'm advised that the medical profession will say that there will be no danger to anybody, that they will make sure that they respond to any concerns that they have.

I'd also point out, Mr. Speaker, that I am optimistic that we can reach an agreement and, Mr. Speaker, I would look forward, and I certainly invite the medical profession back to the bargaining table at the earliest convenience.

#### **Availability of Health Services**

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Premier, I wonder if you could explain to the public your legal and moral obligation to guarantee full access to medicare to all residents of Saskatchewan — and specifically here I'm referring to the fact that eye service, the specialists in the province, one of them has chosen to opt out of medicare, and two are now leaving the province — can you guarantee the people of the province that full access will be available to them when it comes to the need for eye specialists, as well as, that they will be able to afford to have their eyes checked, the seniors and others who need that kind of service?

The other part of the question, Mr. Premier, is: can you explain why, in the past six months, we have had such a great deal of difficulty with health care givers in this province under your administration? We've had the nurses demonstrating on the steps of the legislature; we've had the doctors now taking work action in the Swift Current health region; we've met with the chiropractors who say you're doing a rotten job with health care; and we have waiting lists in Saskatoon of 8,000 people waiting for surgery. Can you tell the people of the province what you plan to do to get the health service in this province back to the high standards that it has been in the past?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, obviously that's a fairly broad question and I hope the hon. member will allow me the time to respond in some detail.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of opting out, if individuals, Mr. Speaker, decide they don't like the health care system because we removed direct billing, which no longer exists . . . We had direct billing under the NDP. And, Mr. Speaker, we decided because the people of Saskatchewan said . . . Mr. Speaker, again they won't listen. They sit and holler from their seats. If they're interested in the question and they're interested in health care, at least they could have enough respect to listen to the response . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Well, Mr. Speaker, you judge for yourself. But they holler from their seats when they are supposed to be listening to the response. If we remove direct billing, as we have, and some people decide that they are going to move, Mr. Speaker, that's the way health care is in Saskatchewan and there is no more direct billing. We have Saskatoon Agreement II where we agreed that there would not be any more direct billing. And that's the case.

With respect to health care generally, we have increased the health care budget, Mr. Speaker, far beyond anything that was under any NDP administration in this province. We removed a freeze and the moratorium on nursing home construction in this province. We removed it, Mr. Speaker, and we have built thousands of new facilities or beds in the province of Saskatchewan as a result of us spending more and more money on health care, both in terms of new hospital facilities, new nursing home capacity, and the combination thereof.

Mr. Speaker, it's just a little bit . . . We're playing catch-up, Mr. Speaker. It's a little bit like the interest rate thing. When interest rates were 22 per cent, people across never did anything — got a lot of folks into trouble. We had to pick up the ball, Mr. Speaker, and help folks because they wouldn't.

In terms of health care, Mr. Speaker . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. The member for Quill Lakes.

#### **Charges Laid Against Credit Union Manager**

**Mr. Koskie:** — I'll bail him out of his embarrassment. Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, on January 15th a charge was laid under section 383 of the Criminal Code of Canada against the former manager of the Cabri Credit Union, Mr. G. L. Morris. The charge alleges that between 1974 and late 1983 Mr. Morris accepted payments from the law firm of Hagemeister, Wilson, MacBean, and Maurice, in exchange for showing favour to his law firm in awarding of credit union legal work.

Well the former credit union manager has been charged with the accepting the secretary payments, and his preliminary hearing date has already been set for August. No one to this point apparently has been charged in respect to offering of such payments.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, has the minister been made aware of this situation? And have you instructed your officials to make sure that everyone involved in this case is being treated equally and fairly before the law?

**Hon. Mr. Dutchak:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll take notice of the question to see whether there is anything unusual that I should be aware of. However, I have been preliminarily informed about the proceedings. The proceedings are handled as any other case. And the decision as to who to charge and when to charge was made in the usual course of the Crown counsel's duty. And to my knowledge there's nothing unusual about the process in this matter. And I'll provide further details when I can apprise myself of those details, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Koskie:** — A further question to the minister while he's taking notice of the first one. I ask, Mr. Minister, are you aware that the Swift Current law firm named in the charge against the credit union manager at Cabri had among its members, during that period in question: Mr. Geoff Wilson, currently the conservative MP for Swift Current-Maple Creek; Gene Maurice, currently Queen's Bench court justice; and Mr. J. W. Hagemeister, currently a Crown prosecutor. I ask you, in light of those involved, surely the minister will understand the need, not only for justice to be done, but for justice to be seen to be done.

And I ask you again, does it not concern you that to this point only one party to these alleged transactions has been, in fact, charged? I ask you if it has been alleged that he broke the law by accepting these payments, how can those alleged to have made these payments not have broken the law? And these are the questions which are being asked by concerned citizens in the Swift Current area.

**Hon. Mr. Dutchak:** — Well I'll first of all indicate that I don't believe that citizens are contacting the member showing concern, which the member indicates he has. I want to indicate that the member hasn't really raised any issue to me which would indicate that anything unique or different is being done in this particular case. I'm advised, Mr. Speaker — and it's clear the members don't want to hear the answer again — I am advised that matter is proceeding in the usual course as in any other case, and if there is something unusual that the member has in his position or to his knowledge, I'd like to hear.

However, I think I am fair in assuming that the only reason that the member just rattled off the names that he did is that he's on his usual witch-hunt procedure which we've seen in this legislature before. I hope the member has more information to present to this legislature, and I hope he isn't simply attempting to use our judicial process for political purposes.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I will bring back further details, if there are unusual details that I should be aware of. But to date I'm not familiar with anything unusual in this particular proceeding. And I might indicate that the member knows . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. I'm going to caution the members. There's just too much yelling in the Chamber, and I would ask for order during the questions.

**Hon. Mr. Dutchak:** — Mr. Speaker, the second part to the question: the member got into some details regarding a case and he, as well being a lawyer, should know that I can't discuss the details of the investigation since there is a court case in progress at this time.

**Mr. Koskie:** — The last supplement. I ask the minister, and I want to make it perfectly clear. I ask you: have you at any time discussed this case or the circumstances surrounding this case with any of the members mentioned in the law firm, and in particular, Mr. Wilson? Have you ever under any circumstances discussed the matters with him?

**Hon. Mr. Dutchak:** — Definitely not, Mr. Speaker.

### Power Line from uranium City

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, and it has to do with his March 19th announcement that a new power line will be built from Uranium City to five other northern communities and Eldor mines at Rabbit Lake.

Can the minister give the people of the North a quick status report on this project? Has SPC actually taken possession of the three hydro stations near Uranium City, owned by Eldorado nuclear, where the power line will originate, and both clearing and transmission tower construction work begin this summer. And also, what is the current start-up date for transmission of power over this new line?

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — As it relates to the question of taking possession, I don't know if the legal hoops have all been jumped through. But the intention is that as soon as the legal hoops have been handled, that we will take possession of the plant and the units, as well as the people who are employed there would become members of Sask Power staff.

As it relates to start-up, my understanding is that the first leg will be from Beaver Lodge to Camsell Portage, and that will be done almost immediately they'll be going in to complete that one. And that's something like 16 kilometres, I believe.

As it relates to the completed line right from Uranium City to Rabbit Lake and over to Wollaston Post, I think the completion will be in 1988. The surveying and the alternate routes, and etcetera are being done this summer. But the line to Camsell Portage should be started almost immediately.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. A supplementary, Mr. Minister. Could you clarify your statements of last March in which you said that the construction of this line would result in immediate power rate cuts for people in the communities of Camsell Portage, Fond-du-Lac, Stony Rapids, Black Lake, and Wollaston Post. Could you indicate your statement:

However, SPC is asking all commercial rate users, such as the Northern Lights School Board, to sign

contracts which would see them continue to pay higher rates until the \$48 million cost of the power line has been fully paid.

Is the minister aware of this arrangement, and how does he square this with his claim that the line would mean immediate cuts in power rates for everyone in that northern region?

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — There are certain . . . like school boards and other governmental agencies that offer support to certain organizations in the North, through high-cost power, diesel-generated power, and support of that, etc. It is expected that they would be willing, in fact, to continue a higher level, or the same level of power rate in anticipation of reduced rates once the capital cost of the new transmission line is recovered.

Who is touched in what way? I don't have that detail with me, but it's expected that the ordinary consumer will have a significant reduction in power rates the minute that they turn the old diesel unit off and go on to the hydro line, as much, in some instances, 75 per cent reduction. Now I know you understand that that's not right across the board, but certainly some will be impacted to that extent.

As to the detail of who will be touched to what degree and who is expected to pay at the old, if you like, diesel rate, I can get that detail for the member, but I don't have it here.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, could you indicate if there will be any preference given to northern bids for the clearing and the construction of the power line?

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Yes. It's our intention . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — They don't take bids.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — And I don't know if we're going to take bids or not in the North. It's our intention to use . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I know that the member from Athabasca is interested in hearing the answer, Mr. Speaker, but his wingers won't extend him the courtesy to hear the answer.

**An Hon. Member:** — His left wingers.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — His left wingers, is right. Now, to answer your question, Mr. Member from Athabasca, it is the intention of Power to use northern people to clear the transmission cut-lines in the North.

### Cost of Advertising in the Saskatchewan Report

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the Deputy Premier. Mr. Minister, yesterday I asked you a question about how much provincial government departments, agencies, and Crown corporations are spending for advertising in Bill Hunter's Saskatchewan Report magazine. Do you have that information with you, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — I expect to have it tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I will be looking forward to that. Can I also ask you, Mr. Minister, that while you're undertaking to provide that information, would you also undertake to provide me an answer to a second question, and that is: will you give me the total cost of government advertising in the Saskatchewan Report magazine; when you give me that information, in the magazine, will you provide the comparable figure for the Saskatoon *Star Phoenix* newspaper and the magazine Saskatchewan Business?

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Yes, I have no objection to providing that information. I'm not so sure that I can have it all tomorrow, but I'll get it to you as soon as possible.

### **Inquiry into Saskatchewan Bingo Industry**

**Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Consumer Affairs. It deals, Madam Minister, with your government's complete inability to act on any concerns raised by the Saskatchewan people. It's now, Madam Minister, been a year since you first announced the public inquiry into the commercial bingo industry in this province, and it has been five full months since the three-member board of inquiry gave you its final report.

Can the minister explain why you're taking so long to act on the recommendations of the board of inquiry whose study, you said, in the midst of the Pioneer Trust fiasco, was urgently needed? More urgently, apparently, than an inquiry into the affairs of Pioneer Trust. Since it was that urgent that it transcended all else, will you tell us when you'll be announcing changes to the legislation or the regulations governing commercial bingo industry.

**Hon. Mrs. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, I believe that very shortly I will be making a statement in the House. In fact I'm just going over the final thing of it this afternoon.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Madam Minister, I'm not so interested in what you're going over, but if you want to forward a copy of it I'll certainly read it. I'm interested, Madam Minister, in whether or not you'll be announcing changes to the regulations or the legislation which will be coming before this session. I say by way of background, madam Minister, that we have been told by any number of ministers, that is on my desk and will be coming forth immediately, and that's months before we hear anything about it. So I'd like, Madam Minister, to know not what's on your desk, but when you're going to be dealing with a problem which does appear to be urgent.

**Hon. Mrs. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the member, in due course the Assembly will be informed of the findings and the recommendations and whatever will flow from it.

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

#### **Bill No. 50 — An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax**

**Act (No. 2)**

**Hon. Mr. Morin:** — Thank you. I move first reading of a Bill, An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act

(No. 2).

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

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **MLA/Press Ball Game**

**Mr. Katzman:** — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day I would like to report on the annual ball game between the Legislative Assembly members and the press members. The competition has been going on for approximately seven years, and the trophy was named after a legislative reporter who is now deceased. The series is in its seventh year. The series is now four games for the press and three games for the MLAs. It seems like on the even years the press wins, and on the odd years the MLAs win. The press won last night's game 16 to 10, if you consider the seven innings. But if you consider only six innings, the MLAs won 8 to 7.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. Order.

**Mr. Katzman:** — Joe "around the bases" Ralko scored three runs and drove in the majority of the runs for the press. On the other side of the coin, Danny O. Field lived up this name. He was the first batter out, the last batter out, and the only person to go out twice in one inning. I noticed his name-plate in his office this morning is being changed to Danny O for 5.

The member from Saskatoon Centre is still bending and practising to catch the balls as they come across the ground. The *Star-Phoenix* ace, Danny — here we go — Zakreski, robbed the member from Moose Jaw North from a sure home run with a titillating catch at the backfield.

Social Service minister was very unsociable last night, snagging all balls driven his way, including one directed right at his eyes, so that he may open them, as well as his ears, for question period.

The media's secret import, Don Rennie from the Premier's office, was four for four, and played brilliant in short stop, even with sun-glasses on.

The dazzling second base person, or should I say base woman, imported from Manitoba on her charging quarter-horse, showed that she will be a threat in years to come.

And the MLA from Saskatoon, who stood on the home plate to hit the ball, even made a three bagger.

The Minister of Environment, who couldn't get his mind off the environment instead of the ball, was called out on strikes and demanded a fourth strike, the same as they have on the lottery ads.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the pitcher, Mr. Dale "Scoop" Eisler, who seemed to never know where the plate was and, without a lot of assistance from the MLAs, would have lost the game.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, once again, the umpire was totally neutral, as is always.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

**Bill No. 48 — An Act to establish the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency and govern its activities and to provide for an appeal board with respect to certain assessment matters.**

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today, in my capacity as Minister of Urban Affairs, to move second reading of Bill 48, a Bill to both establish the Saskatchewan assessment management agency and to continue the Saskatchewan assessment appeal board.

Mr. Speaker, since taking office four years ago, a concern of this government has been the property and business assessment system in our province. This system was inherited from the previous government which held office for 11 years, and which passed various pieces of assessment legislation, but never really came to grips with the deep-seated assessment problems.

Mr. Speaker, property assessment forms the base for one of the largest tax sources in our province, the property tax, and it is estimated that in 1985 over \$600 million was collected as property taxes and grants in lieu of taxes by local governments. This amount of revenue is comparable only to revenue raised from personal income taxes and oil revenues. The magnitude of property tax revenue, in comparison with other sources, makes issues associated with the property tax and the assessment system very important indeed.

Given this importance, it is very difficult for me to understand why the former administration indeed neglected the assessment system as it was. It is difficult to understand how they could stand by and not address the problems, particularly as the full adverse impacts of the most recent general assessment unfolded across the province.

Mr. Speaker, this government wanted to know specifically what the problems with assessment are and were. And one of the best ways to find out, of course, is to talk to those affected by it; to consult with local governments, with SUMA, with SARM, and the property taxpayers themselves.

In May of 1984 the government established a Local Government Finance commission. This commission was given a two-year mandate to inquire into a broad range of issues relating to the financing of local government and to identify options for addressing those issues.

One of the issues was assessment principles and processes. In September of '85 the commission released a pair of interim reports. One of these dealt with the Saskatchewan assessment system. This report confirmed

many of the things which had been expressed to government members about assessment. It took into account a broad range of local government input.

Mr. Speaker, if I may read from the commission's interim report:

There has been an unfortunate loss of confidence in the assessment system. Many people are concerned that the assessment system is bringing about unfair distributions of the local tax load. Some believe that inequities are an inherent feature of the property tax, while others believe that the main problems are improperly derived assessments. Some are concerned with the governance of the assessment function and how major policy decisions on assessment are determined. Others are concerned about the level of expertise and diligence with which the assessment of individual properties are undertaken. Others question the validity of the manuals used by the appraisers.

Mr. Speaker, to continue:

The commission's review has confirmed that there are a number of serious problems with the assessment function, and that some major corrective action is required, and that this must be taken before the commencement of the next round of general reassessments throughout the province.

The commission's report went on to review how different categories of properties are valued, and commented on the current system of assessment as well. The current governance of the assessment function was identified as a major weakness.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill responds to that problem. During the months since the commission's interim report on assessment was released, the government has undertaken consultations with both SUMA and SARM to obtain their views respecting the Local Government Finance Commission's recommendations, and on assessment in general.

We have discussed with them the basic outline of the proposals contained in this Bill. Representatives of respective provincial departments have met with the executives of these organizations to do this.

Mr. Speaker, we felt it was important to allow some time for the parties involved to give the commission's report full consideration rather than rushing into a precipitous arrangement.

As a result of the feedback and consultations, we have concluded that the commission's recommendation to establish an independent assessment agency has general support among municipal organizations. We have accepted some of the more detailed recommendations, modified others, and decided not to pursue some.

This Bill, then, establishes an independent assessment agency to be known as the Saskatchewan assessment

management agency. This new agency will replace the existing Saskatchewan Assessment Authority. The new agency, like the authority, will be responsible for carrying out evaluations of property and business, and for supervising the administration for the assessment provision in various municipal statutes.

However, Mr. Speaker, the responsibilities of the new agency will go well beyond these. This new agency will determine methods of valuation for various classes of property; it will prepare new assessment manuals; it will review and make recommendations to the provincial government on changes to municipal legislation relating to both principles and procedures of property and business assessment, assessment appeals, and any other matter respecting assessment; it will determine the timing of general re-assessments; it will undertake increased research and evaluation and shifts in taxation.

The agency will establish and maintain two separate committees to review policies and practices pertaining to urban and rural assessment matters, and make recommendations on these to its board of directors.

Mr. Speaker, in short, the new agency will be able to undertake much expanded policy analysis and research in the area of assessment. It will have the authority to independently establish policy and procedures for assessment. It will be responsible for proposing changes to current legislation to address problems in this area.

The new agency will be established as a corporation separate from the Crown. The agency will be under the direction of a board of directors consisting of two representatives of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, two nominees of the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, two provincial appointees, and a chairman selected by the province in consultation with SUMA and SARM.

The Bill provides that one of the two SUMA representatives on the board shall be nominated for appointment only after consultation by SUMA with Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, and Prince Albert. This recognizes the proportion of assessment in Saskatchewan which these cities account for, as well as the present practice regarding who carries out their valuations. It gives them input into the policies and assessment manuals which they will be required to follow in carrying out their valuations.

As is now the case, the cities of Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, and Prince Albert will continue to be responsible for carrying out their own property and business valuations. These cities will have the option, as provided in this Bill, to enter into agreements to have the new agency carry out these instead.

If they choose this option, these cities will be expected to contribute financially to the cost of the operation of the agency, just like other municipalities. If they continue to do their own valuations, these will be based on the assessment manuals and other policies put into place by the agency, so their assessments will be consistent with those of other municipalities.

The new agency will employ staff or consultants as required. Existing employees of the Saskatchewan Assessment Authority will be transferred to the new agency. Members opposite will note that this will be considered a transfer within the meaning of The Trade Union Act, thus continuing the employee's membership in the existing union.

The new assessment management agency will be financed jointly by the provincial government and by municipalities. The province will continue its existing financial commitment of \$5.5 million, based on the assessment authority's 1985-86 budget, plus additional costs related to it but not covered by its appropriation. The provincial and urban, rural, and northern municipalities will finance additional costs over and above this on a 50-50 basis.

It is important to note that for the first time municipalities will have a major say in assessment policy and procedures through their majority membership on the new agency's board. It is municipalities which rely on property and business assessment for their tax base, so naturally it is municipalities which have one of the strongest interests in assessment policies and procedures. Municipalities already have significant responsibilities under present municipal statutes respecting appointing an assessor, maintaining the assessment roll, local appeal procedures for the board of revision, and other aspects.

Mr. Speaker, we believe this new approach will be much more responsive to municipalities' needs and offers them a significant opportunity to determine future policies.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill also continues the Saskatchewan Assessment Appeal board with some changes. The appeal board continues as an independent, provincially funded and appointed appeal body. It will not be tied to the new assessment management agency as originally proposed by the Local Government Finance Commission. This was one area in which we did not agree with the commission, and felt that the appeal body should be separate from the new agency.

The appeal board's formal duties are expanded to include hearing appeals regarding tax exemptions; appeals from municipalities relating to equalized assessment set by the new agency; and appeals of assessment manuals and other orders prepared by the new agency. This will be in addition to the appeal boards' current responsibility for hearing assessment appeals under various statutes.

This Bill does not fundamentally alter the overall assessment appeal process, including local assessment appeal provisions through local boards or courts of revision which are now in place under the various municipal statutes.

Mr. Speaker, it will be up to the new Saskatchewan assessment management agency to pursue many of the other positive recommendations and suggestion made by the Local Government Finance Commission pertaining to assessment. This is considered to be part of its policy mandate.

The agency will have challenging responsibilities to

review the assessment system in this province. This will not occur overnight, but we are making a substantial start with this Bill.

(1445)

I would urge the members of this House to support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I believe that Bill 48 which deals with the Saskatchewan assessment management agency and the subsequent amendments, Bill 49 which we'll deal with — I will be moving that we adjourn the debate on them so my colleague from Regina Centre will have an opportunity to review the minister's remarks and then make his remarks at a future day.

But in listening to the minister I find it difficult to know what will be different with this Bill than what was on the books previous to this Bill being introduced. There will be those who will believe that what is happening here is a bit of a smoke-screen being set up by the Conservative government to take away from the fact that property taxes have increased dramatically as a result of the property improvement grant being removed by the Devine government. And basically I believe that's what's happening here to try to indicate to the public that somehow this government is not in favour of massive tax increases which they have been going ahead with helter-skelter in every area.

And when it comes to property assessment what we know this government does, regardless of what they say they do, is dramatically increase property taxes. And we saw that again with the removal of the property improvement grant.

We have indicated clearly where we stand on property improvement grant. We would bring it back very quickly, and will bring it back after the next election. I will want to have a number of questions to ask the minister in committee. But because my colleague from Regina Centre will want to make some comments on this Bill further, I now beg leave to adjourn the debate on Bill 48 and will be doing the same with Bill 49.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 49 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the Enactment of The Assessment Management Agency Act**

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of bill NO. 49, a Bill to implement consequential amendments arising from The Assessment Management Agency Act. These amendments relate to four separate statutes: The Education Act, The Northern Municipalities Act, The Rural Municipality Act, and The Urban Municipality Act, 1984.

This Bill brings the provisions of these statutes into line

with the new approach represented by the creation of the Saskatchewan Assessment management Agency. I would urge all members to support this particular Bill pertaining to consequential changes.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — As I indicated earlier, I will ask for leave to adjourn the debate because my colleague will want to make some comments on this as well.

Debate adjourned.

**COMMITTEE OF FINANCE**

**Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure  
Public Service Commission  
Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 33**

**Mr. Chairman:** — Before we begin I would ask the minister to please introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be pleased to do that. Directly beside me, the chairman of the Public Service Commission, Mr. Stan Sojonyk; behind me, Ms. Jane Eibner, director of administration; and then seated beside her, Mr. Jim Armstrong, associate chairman; to his right, Mr. Len Posyniak, assistant to the chairman; and directly in front of Mr. Posyniak, Mr. Mike Roberts, director of employee relations.

**Item 1**

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Minister, I would appreciate a list of your personal staff and salaries, and the amount of any increase granted to them for whatever reason over the last 12 months.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Mr. Speaker, I have no personal staff in my office paid out of the appropriation for the Public Service Commission.

**Mr. Shillington:** — And I gather no secretaries either who are in the Public Service Commission. I would then appreciate a statement of the salary of the senior officers of the Public Service Commission and the amounts of any increase granted to them within the last 12 months. If you would prefer, you could give it to me in writing, although I see that the media are all absent. But if you prefer, Mr. Minister, you can give it to me in writing.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Mr. Chairman, I have before me the names, positions, and if the member would listen, the member from Regina Centre ... (inaudible interjection) ... I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, I was attempting to communicate with the member from Regina Centre, okay?

**Mr. Chairman:** — Order, order. I believe that early on in this afternoon's proceedings I should draw attention to the fact that the noise level is already going up, and to ask all members to please refrain from unnecessary interruptions to allow the minister to make a reasoned explanation of the question.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — To the member from Regina Centre, I have before me the names, positions, and salary as of today of these individuals, plus their qualifications. I



don't have the increases here, but we can get those to you and send that to you if that's adequate for your purposes.

**Mr. Shillington:** — I assume you will be giving those to the pages, who are not now in the Chamber, actually. Perhaps the page by the government caucus door could bring those to me because I want to see them.

Mr. Minister, can you give me the percentage increases in the salary of the senior staff.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — We will provide the salary increases to you, as I indicated. I don't have the salary increase information there. We can provide that for you as soon as we pull it together.

**Mr. Shillington:** — I honestly have some difficulty believing that the Public Service Commission do not have the details of their own salary increases. That is a little difficult to believe, Mr. Minister.

**Mr. Chairman:** — Order, order. I would ask the member from Quill Lakes to please allow your colleague to ask a question so the minister can answer it. I'd just like you to please refrain from making any noise. You have been talking from your seat from the minute you've come into the House, and I ask you to stop talking from your seat to allow the order of this House to proceed.

**Mr. Shillington:** — I, Mr. Minister, have the greatest difficulty believing that the Public Service Commission do not know the increases in their own salaries. I really have trouble believing that.

Mr. Minister, I ask you to ask those officials to give you that information so that you may give it to us. I darkly suspect that it's more than 3 per cent. I don't know that, but I darkly suspect that.

I am not, Mr. Minister . . . I want it known, Mr. Chairman, that I am not casting any aspersions on the integrity or the sense of responsibility of the members of the Public Service Commission. I am saying, Mr. Minister, that I suspect that your pay policies are grossly unfair, and the place to start . . . And it has been so alleged by a number of people, some in this Chamber; some of the allegations have been made outside the Chamber.

But I ask you, Mr. Minister, to start by allaying any suspicions that there may be any element of unfairness with respect to the pay increases of members of the Public Service Commission and give us the information. It is enormously difficult to believe you don't have it.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I just provided the member opposite with the salary figures for the senior staff of the Public Service Commission. I indicated to him that I would be providing the additional information that he requested, and I will certainly endeavour to do that.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I want the information now. I don't want it after the election. I'll be very blunt with you. I'll be perfectly candid with you.

It may be of some assistance to give the minister some kind of an idea of what function this legislature serves.

One of its primary functions is to give the opposition an opportunity to question the government, to criticize the government, and to provide an alternative for the public. There isn't much point, Mr. Minister, in us trying to fulfil that responsibility if everything is going to settle into . . . take form and shape after the election.

I want that information now. I don't believe you haven't got it. But if you haven't got it, it's nothing more than a telephone call away. So I ask you to give us that information, Mr. Minister.

I honestly had not expected that these estimates were going to take very long. But if you're going to start by stonewalling on something as sensitive as pay increases, then I think we're going to have a longer time at this than what you thought.

So I suggest you start by giving us those pay increases. If there is nothing untoward about it, then tell us, and we'll go on to the next issue because there are plenty of issues of substance here that need to be discussed. I'd expected this would take 30 seconds.

And I want to say, Mr. Minister, that other ministers have given it to us. We've asked other ministers for the pay increases, and they've given it to us. I don't understand why, with this particular agency, where it is so sensitive, you're stonewalling, Mr. Minister. I think you have the information. If you haven't it's a quick phone call away.

I say, Mr. Minister, if you'll just reach around, take the sheet of paper behind you, give us that information, we'll probably go on to the next estimate.

(1500)

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Mr. Speaker, I indicated to the member opposite that we have provided him with the annual salaries of the senior officials in the Public Service Commission. He is, if he wishes, quite free to make that information public. And I will be providing to him the increases for salaries for senior officials. And I endeavour to do that, and I will provide that to him.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Right after the election, when you are safely beyond the reach of the public — probably because of an election defeat.

Mr. Minister, I find it absolutely unbelievable you don't have the information. If you won't give me the information, will you tell me why you won't give me the information? And you've never said you haven't got it. You just say, and I'm not giving it to you. Well I think something more than that is required.

So if you insist on stonewalling, then at least try to justify your behaviour. It is not satisfactory to say, I'll send it to you, because I want it now. If it's available now and you have it, I say, Mr. Minister, give it to us.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I will read to the member opposite last year's list, which was sent to him last year. And if he had prepared for the estimates, then he certainly would have been able to have that list here. But I

will take the time of the Assembly to read that information.

Last year there was Mr. Sojonky, who was chairman, and the salary was 72,400 per annum; there was one Trevor Roadhouse, assistant chairman, MS1, with a salary at 61,944 per annum; there was one Bill Duncan, the director of staff training and development branch, MS3, 46,500 per annum; there was one Murray Bender, director of administration branch, AO5, 43,692 per annum; there was one Dave Argue, executive director, employee relations branch, MS2, 62,508 per annum; there was one Jim Armstrong, executive director, senior management resourcing, MS1, 65,004 per annum.

Those were last year's senior management positions with their salary. I have given you this year's senior management positions with their salaries.

**Mr. Shillington:** — It appears what has happened, Mr. Minister, is that the people seem to have changed, with two exceptions; the positions have been given new descriptions, and there have then appeared to have been some very healthy increases in the salaries paid to people who work there.

Mr. Minister, if I'm wrong I would like to be informed of that. There are plenty of problem sin the public service of Saskatchewan without us attempting to create any more. And any suspicion that the Public Service Commission isn't playing by the rules of the game is going to do little for the morale of the Public Service Commission; it's already plenty bad enough.

So if I'm misreading this, I would like to be informed of that. But it very much appears that, while Mr. Sojonky's salary has not increased inordinately, Mr. Armstrong's appears to have gone up by about 10 per cent, if I've got that right; the rest appear to be new people basically doing the same positions at 10, 12, \$14,000 more money in most cases — 10 to \$15,000 is too much. You gave it to me in not quite the right order. But there appear to have been one or two positions for which the increases were fairly substantial.

So I'd like you to comment on the nature of those increases, Mr. Minister.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Well, last year, Messrs. Roadhouse, Duncan, Argue, and Bender were with the commission. They are not with the commission, so we can exclude those for comparison purposes. You have indicated that Mr. Sojonky's salary was modestly increased, not inappropriately, so we are left with the discussion then about Mr. Armstrong's salary.

Last year he was in the position of executive director, senior management resourcing, MS1. This year his duties have been substantially increased, and of course one knows that when one assumes new responsibilities, a larger orbit of activity and responsibility that you have to deal with — and he is so doing in his position today as associate chairman of the Public Service Commission — that naturally there is going to be an appropriate salary offered commensurate with those duties.

Now it seems to me that last year, and perhaps even again this year when I went through some other estimates in my various responsibilities, the member challenged me that somehow, individuals who did not take on new responsibilities should not be receiving commensurate salary. And I related to him that at one time I was involved in the profession of education as a school teacher and received a certain salary. When my responsibilities were increased and I was given the title of vice-principal of a school, the salary was increased accordingly. When my responsibilities were again increased and I was given the title of school principal, there was a commensurate increase in the salary.

I'm sure the member opposite would not object to the principle of paying people in accordance with the duties that they are asked to provide on behalf of the public. That is in fact what has transpired. In the case of Mr. Armstrong, it is, I'm sure, a principle that the member opposite would want adhered to very strongly in the Public Service Commission. Because if we are going to receive the best possible service from public servants here in the province, I'm sure he would agree it is important that we pay them in accordance with the responsibilities that they are shouldering on behalf of the taxpayer.

That is in fact what has happened in the case of Mr. Armstrong. It is a principle that I uphold very strongly. I'm sure that the member opposite who has asked the questions would also want to reiterate his support for that very important principle.

**Mr. Shillington:** — What increases have been awarded to the public service generally, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Well of course the salary increases for unionized personnel would be in accord with the negotiated salary increase, the collective bargaining agreement, and for out-of-scope people it was around 3 per cent, I understand. However, for any individual who was in scope or out of scope who assumed new responsibilities greater or larger than they previously had, they naturally would have received a commensurate increase in salary in accord with that particular position.

So anybody in the Public Service Commission, whether they are senior staff within the Public Service Commission, whether they are out-of-scope people, or whether they are in-scope, unionized personnel, if they received a promotion, then naturally they would receive the salary that should go along with that particular promotion. I'm sure the member opposite doesn't agree with that principle, does he? Or does he disagree with it? What is he getting at?

**Mr. Shillington:** — Well, we might, Mr. Chairman, give the minister some assistance. There are opportunities for asking the opposition party questions. But the estimates are not one of them, and given the premium on time in this Assembly, Mr. Minister, we might stick to the business at hand, which is to call the government to account.

Mr. Minister, I don't intend to dwell on this. I would like to know when Lorne Koback, Michael Roberts, and Jane

Eibner, when were they hired? When did they come on board?

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — For Mr. Koback, appointment June '85; for Mr. Roberts, appointment February '86; for Ms. Eibner, appointment January '86.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Well, I intend to leave the matter of the pay increases. They're a delicate thing to deal with and a difficult thing to deal with without more information. This doesn't quite seem like the forum to be doing it.

Suffice it to say that one or two of these increases, Mr. Minister, have not been explained. They appear to be somewhat large.

I think this is a very poor example . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Which one? Well, Mr. Armstrong's and Miss Eibner's. Miss Eibner's appears to be a 6 per cent increase over the salary paid to the previous incumbent. There may be some explanation for that. And Mr. Armstrong's appears to be a considerable increase over what he was paid previously, and over what the previous assistant chairman was paid previously, I should add, more to the point.

(1515)

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Well my comment in the case of Miss Eibner, that she was appointed to this position coming from Manitoba — the Public Service Commission in Manitoba — appointed to this position. So one has to be careful here what you're saying.

Secondly, I indicated, in the case of Mr. Armstrong, that his duties have been substantially increased from his position formerly to his present position of associate chairman, and that his duties as associate chairman are different from those today than those of whoever occupied formerly the positions known as the assistant chairman.

So I'm sorry that the member opposite does not want to put on the record his support for the principle that civil servants should be paid in accordance with the duties that they are asked to perform. And if a servant of the public in this province is requested to take on additional duties, then certainly members on this side of the government believe that they should be paid in accordance with those increased duties. Whether it's in the field of education, whether it's in the field of health care, whether it's in the field of housing, whether it's in the private sector, it makes no difference. One should be paid in accordance with the duties that you are performing.

And I would reiterate for the record again, I'm sorry that the member opposite does not want to place on the record his support for that principle, because I believe that it is fundamentally important if we are to have a public service in this province which feels good about the duties that they are performing, and to create the kind of positive environment here in which public servants can work on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Chairman, I wonder, with leave, if

I could introduce a group of students.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of my colleague, the member for Cumberland, I would like to introduce 14 grade 8 students who are sitting in the Speaker's gallery, accompanied by their teacher, Stephen Davidson; chaperons, Dorothy Davidson, and their bus driver, Ralph Stark.

This group of students, Mr. Chairman, are from the Keethanow School in Stanley Mission, and they're down here on an educational tour. And I want to, on behalf of all members, ask all members to welcome them to the legislature. And we wish you a safe journey home.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Public Service Commission Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 33

#### Item 1 (continued)

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Minister, I would appreciate knowing what your policy is with respect to agencies of a government which are moved from one location to another. What is the policy with respect to transfer of employees? Are they free to refuse the relocation and move into other departments? What's the position of an employee where an agency of government has moved?

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, as the Premier indicated, with the transfer of employees pertaining to the agricultural credit corporation and crop insurance and the Department of Science and Technology to various locations in the province outside of Regina, that those particular employees have been assured that, if for one reason or another they were not able to make the particular move, that they would be offered appropriate employment within the Government of Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Shillington:** — There was a great deal of concern expressed, Mr. Minister, by some employees when the crop insurance board and the Agdevco was transferred . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Who?

**Mr. Shillington:** — I think it was Agdevco — was it not? — was transferred from Regina to Melfort, or do I have the name wrong? I'm not wrong about crop insurance. When those Crown corporations were transferred to Swift Current and Melville, there was a great deal of concern expressed by some employees who were not in a position to move and who had been told they either take the move or quit. And I was unable to understand the rationale of a government for being so harsh. I could see nothing wrong with allowing those employees of those Crown corporations to move into other areas of government and allow some local people in Melville and Swift Current the opportunity to take the jobs. So I could not, Mr. Minister, understand why the government would want to be so

harsh.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I just indicated. For the benefit of the member opposite and for his edification, I will provide him again with this information: that employees who for good reasons are unable to move to another locality with their present position, they will be offered another position at an equivalent level in their present location. That commitment has been made on numerous occasions in many ways, I believe in writing from the Premier. And certainly that commitment is a very firm, substantial, reasonable commitment — not harsh but, on the contrary, very humane.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Then the first communications which those employees had was later rendered inoperative by subsequent instructions. Do I take it that what they were told, at the time, they were told that the agencies were being transferred was in fact later rescinded? — because they were told in unmistakable terms to either take the transfer or quit. The fact that they might be married women with a husband who couldn't find a job in Swift Current, with children who couldn't move, didn't cut any ice at all. They were told to either take it or quit.

Do I take it then that that's just another example of how poorly this government thinks out what it does, and that you later, after some scrambling, did and made the appropriate decision which you should have made in the first place? So then I take it, Mr. Minister, once again you blundered into a hastily conceived action; later you cleaned up the mess by rescinding earlier communications made to those employees.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Mr. Chairman, I simply want to clarify for the member opposite that, as far as I'm aware, at no time was it suggested to anyone that you either move or you lose your job — not so. Not so. It may have been that at the very outset of the process there may have been some uncertainties as to the details. But I want you to know that our commitment has been very firm to those particular employees, and I have stated that in general to the member opposite. And I would simply read for him the letter which has been sent to those particular employees:

As you know, Dr. Jim Armstrong, associate chairman, Public Service Commission, was requested to speak to the staff of Saskatoon Science and Technology on Friday, March 21, 1986, to clarify with you my intentions to assist you fully in making your move to Saskatoon, or in facilitating your transfer to another position here in Regina.

I would like to confirm my commitment to you personally. In making this move I am concerned that both the interests of the public we serve and your interests as an employee are well met. Any employee who for good reasons cannot make the move will be offered equivalent level employment in the public service.

I have instructed the management of Science and Technology to draw up plans for relocation that

will ensure continued excellent service to the public, as well as meeting your needs. I have also instructed my officials to offer their resources to you in helping you to make this decision.

If you decide to relocate, you will receive generous assistance. If you are unable to move, you will be reassigned to an equivalent level of employment. An experienced personnel manager, Ms. Bechard, has been assigned to work with you and your colleagues on this matter. You will find her very helpful in this matter.

Thank you for your co-operation.

And the same letter was sent to all affected employees. I think that very clearly indicates our humane concern to the employees.

**Mr. Johnson:** — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask leave of the Assembly to introduce some students.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to introduce to you 70 bright, shiny faces from the beautiful town of Esterhazy in my constituency. They're from the P. J. Gillen school and they're grade 5 students. They're in the west gallery, incidentally, and they have with them today their teachers: Mrs. Linda Nett, Mrs. Doreen Haubrick, and Mr. Schramm, Randy Schramm.

(1530)

The chaperons along with them today is Mr. Ross Seman, Mrs. Margaret Cook, Lorne Thompson, Mrs. Carol Tucker, Wendy Gyug, and Mrs. Christine Busch. Their bus drivers today are Rodney Irvine, and I think we should commend both of them — and Sharon Gelowitz — because they drive 70 grade 5 children from Esterhazy, which is 150 miles east of here, to Regina — and the tolerance of all the chaperons. I'm sure they'll have a quieter trip home than they had on the way up.

They kind of left at 6 o'clock this morning, so I imagine they'll be slightly more tired going home. But I think I've met a few ringleaders already because I've had drinks with them and pictures taken with them, and there's some pretty live wires in the group, Mr. Chairman. So I wanted to bring them into the Chamber and introduce them in the proper manner to my colleagues and our colleagues in the Chamber. I just wish them having a safe trip home when they've finished the tour of the Legislative buildings.

So I'd ask the members to welcome them in the usual manner.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

#### Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Public Service Commission Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 33

**Item 1 (continued)**

**Mr. Shillington:** — Is one Dan Stephens employed in the Public Service Commission anywhere now?

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — It's my understanding that he is not part of the Public Service Commission.

**Mr. Shillington:** — The name appears in the Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 1985. Could you tell me when he left?

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — We'll provide the member with that particular information. I don't have it right here at my fingertips.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Well, Mr. Minister, you must have the information with you. I can't believe that you don't. Every time we get into a sensitive area, you're going to send me the information. If the practice of these ministers had been to send that information promptly, we wouldn't be squawking so much. We know from experience that a year will go by before we get it. Frankly, by May of 1987 nobody is going to care where Dan Stephens is — May of '87.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you can just check around and see if you can find out when he left.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — For the information of the member opposite, there are hundreds of individuals in the Public Service Commission who regularly leave a department and go to another department, or leave the Public Service Commission and move to some other employment with some other employer. If he expects that I'm going to carry around in my head the names and dates and times that literally hundreds of employees are coming and going in the Public Service Commission, then he is sadly mistaken.

Now I indicated to him that we will provide him with that information as soon as we can. I don't have any problem providing that information to the member opposite. I will get it for him as soon as we can. We don't happen to have it here right now. And I have requested that my officials will provide me with that information as soon as they are able to get it.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Minister, to refresh your memory, Dan Stephens was in the Public Service Commission, ran as the Conservative candidate in Regina West, set a record is so doing. No Conservative candidate has trailed as far behind Mr. Les Benjamin in his entire 20-year career as Dan Stephens did. So he set a record. He's someone to be remembered . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It's the truth. The man set a record. He's one of a kind, and we ought to recognize his peculiar talents. Les Benjamin never beat anyone by 8,000 votes except Dan Stephens. Then he winds up in the year ending March 31, 1985 working for the Public Service Commission. I now see him, I believe, in Executive Council. I believe he's now a personal aide to the Premier. When I see the Premier, in public, I often see Dan Stephens with him. So I suspect he hasn't totally forgotten what the Conservative Party is. I see the member of SGI nodding his head. He agrees with me. He probably remembers.

So, Mr. Minister, I can't believe that you can't give me the month. Give me the month when Dan Stephens left. I can't believe you don't know that. He is obviously a senior operator in the government, and you must know when he left. I just don't believe that, Mr. Minister.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Well I indicated to the member opposite that I would provide him with that information. I didn't have it at my fingertips. I instructed the officials to locate it for me and they have done so.

Dan Stephens worked for two periods. He worked from April to June of 1984 and from October to December of 1984.

**Mr. Shillington:** — The salary then would have been 42,000 a year — worked for six months and he was paid 21,500, if my memory serves me correctly. Did he get any severance in '85 or was he severed; or did he simply go to a different branch of the government? This was the individual who's so gracious in defeat, having set a record for having lost by the most number of votes, then wished an early death might overtake his successful opponent so that he might get a chance to run the by-election. This is this man's diplomacy.

**Mr. Chairman:** — Order. I believe that the member is introducing arguments which are foreign to the debate under discussion.

**Mr. Shillington:** — I don't know that that comment is necessary to the question. I just was giving some background to his diplomatic skills and his sense of decorum. I was just trying to give the minister a complete picture of the man so that we could discuss him.

I wonder, Mr. Minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, just so we could get an idea of how he earned his 42,000. How did he earn the 43,000? What services, apart from placing curses, trying to place curses on his opponent, did he serve any other purpose when he was with the Public Service Commission?

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — As I indicated to the member, Mr. Stephens worked for two periods — from April to June, '84; from October to December, '84. The salary was 3,584 per month and no severance pay was provided to Mr. Stephens.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Is that because he didn't leave the Government of Saskatchewan, but only transferred to a different department?

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — If the individual in question is still working for the government in some particular capacity, then naturally severance pay would not be involved. I don't know if he is working for some aspect of the Saskatchewan government, so I'm not sure the exact reasons why there was no severance. There could be a variety of reasons.

**Mr. Shillington:** — I believe he is working for the Government of Saskatchewan. I believe he's working in Executive Council. I ask you, Mr. Minister, is he not working in Executive Council now, the same individual?

I also want to know what his duties were. I want to know what it was about his diplomacy and charm that inspired this government to pay him 43,000 a year. What were his duties, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — As I indicated previously, I'm not certain if Mr. Stephens is presently employed in the government. He is not employed with the Public Service Commission. He may be employed in some other particular branch of agency of government. It may be Executive Council, and you would have to ask the appropriate minister when you get to various estimates to find out if the particular individual is, in fact, employed under a particular ministry.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Minister, I wanted to raise the issue of the politicization of the public service and the decentralization of hiring.

I listened with some interest to the announced plans of the government to decentralize hiring. Mr. Minister, decentralized hiring used to be the norm in government. It resulted in patronage, and appointments by patronage almost to the exclusion of all else. Because if the central body does not do the hiring, then there's no accountability. But if the deputy does the hiring, and the deputy's job depends on the whim of the minister, then the minister controls the hiring, and that results in a public service which is hired on the basis of patronage.

Professional public services in England and Canada, and much later in Saskatchewan after the people had the sense to get rid of the Conservative government, resulted from . . . the mechanism by which that was achieved was centralized hiring under a public service. You, Mr. Minister, wish to roll back the clock 50 years to the day when ministers, and accordingly . . . when deputies, and accordingly ministers, hired the employees. That is a straight system for patronage; it's nothing more.

Mr. Minister, I think that's not acceptable; nor is it possible to run a government that is as complex and large as governments today with a group of amateurish hacks, and that's what you get with patronage. Patronage is an enormously expensive way to run a government because you hire (a) more than you need; (b) you hire people who aren't qualified. The resulting confusion, mistakes, and duplication, is a very expensive way to run a government.

People ask me, Mr. Minister, how it can be that this government is spending 45 per cent more during a period of time when inflation has gone up by 21 per cent and it's cut back so many services. The response, I think, Mr. Minister, is that, to repeat myself, patronage is a very expensive way to run a government. It's inefficient; there are duplications; and services inevitably deteriorate. A public which is used to a high calibre, professional public service are not going to accept the confusion, the discourtesy, and the lack of direction and assistance which inevitably results from a public service hired by patronage.

(1545)

I ask you, Mr. Minister, if you will not recant this whole backward-looking, foolish attempt to "decentralize"

hiring and, I say, appoint people to the public service through patronage — that's all appointment by ministers will ever be.

The whole function of the Public Service Commission, as conceived in Britain and as adopted by the Mackenzie King government and later Douglas government in this province, was to professionalize the public service. By decentralizing hiring, you're rolling back the clock. That's not acceptable to the public because they know it isn't fair; moreover, isn't workable.

You cannot hire a bunch of amateurish hacks to run a government as large and complex as governments are today. That might have worked at the turn of the century, but it will not work today. Governments are much too big and much too complex, and the public are far too demanding to accept the kind of thing which you are trying to introduce in this province, Mr. Minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

There's no requirement. I say to the member from Moosomin, who has been here as long as I have, and I'm surprised doesn't know the rules any better than he does; there was no onus on me to ever ask a question. I could carry on . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm making eminent good sense. I'm making eminent sense . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

The member from Moosomin asked me to make some sense. I say in my own defence that, while the Tories are in trouble across the province, they are in deep, deep trouble in this city. The cause of that is the public service. I have never seen the mood of the public service as raw or as unhappy or as demoralized as they are right now. I have never seen anything like it, and I have maintained close contacts with the public service for going on 17 years. Most of my working life I have, in one way or another, been connected with the public service. I remember the public service in the dying days of the Thatcher government, and it was . . . the morale was super compared to what it is now. So, Mr. Minister, what you are attempting to do to the public service is not acceptable to the public service.

The results in North East might indicate something to you. The patronage which you're introducing is not acceptable to the public; and it will not work, as demonstrated by these spending estimates — a 45 per cent increase during the period of 27 per cent inflation, with cuts in services. That, Mr. Minister, is because you can't run the government — you can't run the government. One of the reason you can't run the government is because you have too darn much patronage in it. And that is a central problem with this government which underpins so many of the problems you people think you have.

Mr. Minister, many of the problems, many of the mistakes, many of the screw-ups, which I'm sure infuriate you ministers, because you wonder why they can't get it straight — I'll tell you what it comes from. It comes from a public service which is deeply unhappy, which lacks direction, which is demoralized, and which is going to cut this government off as soon as you have the nerve to call an election.

The minister may smile — I'm surprised the minister can smile. The minister is unfortunate enough to be running in this city, and all your hard work may go for nought. And the primary reason, Mr. Minister, will be because you have tried, you have attempted to undo the professionalism of the public service. That's hurt you very, very badly. It's hurt your ability to run programs. It has hurt you in this city particularly.

I listen to the member from Lakeview muttering and sputtering away, chewing gum or candy or whatever it is that he's trying to keep himself awake with. I say that . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — That's a cruel statement. He just came back from dinner.

**Mr. Shillington:** — I say to the . . . it may be cruel. He may be chewing his cud; I don't know what he's chewing. But I say, Mr. Minister, that the member from Lakeview has got some serious political problems, and they stem directly from your . . .

**Mr. Chairman:** — Order. Order. I think that if we stay with the item at hand that we will be able to progress much more quickly, and let's get on with the estimates.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Minister, I would like you to comment on the decentralization of hiring and the consequence of politicization of the public service.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Mr. Speaker, I would be delighted, absolutely delighted, to respond to the comments of the member opposite.

Mr. Speaker, my first association with the public service was as a young boy. My father was a member of the public service, and he served the people of this province and of this country for many years as a public servant. And he taught me the importance of the public service here in this country and in this province, of a professional public service, of an efficient public service. And it was in those early days that I developed a very sound respect for the public service in this province and in this country.

And Mr. Chairman, I want to say that during the 11 years that the former government was in power, they wrote the book on patronage and politicizing the civil service. And Mr. Chairman, I'm going to back those statements up in a few minutes, to the shame and the embarrassment of the members opposite. But before I do that, Mr. Chairman, I want to indicate exactly how professional we are today in our approach to the staffing and the administration of the Public Service Commission.

First of all, Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate that we have today, for the first time ever in this province, we have today a statement on the mission of the Saskatchewan Public Service Commission which the former government never had. Because I'm afraid your purpose was to politicize and to patronize. Our purpose is to provide a professional civil service in the province of Saskatchewan. And here is the mission of the Public Service Commission, and I will be happy to provide the member opposite with a copy of this when I'm finished.

Our mission is to represent the public interest by providing professional human resource services in an effective and ethical manner. And our goals: we believe employees want to serve the people of Saskatchewan to the best of their abilities, and that their full potential can be achieved if our services ensure that appointment is based on merit; offer opportunities for employees to develop their knowledge and skills; promote a participative work environment that will enhance employee performance and development; ensure that employees receive recognition based on performance; demonstrate leadership and innovation in improving human resource management; provide fair treatment and equal opportunity for all individuals; anticipate and meet service requirements in a timely, responsive, and cost-effective manner; respond to challenging employee needs and government priorities.

Mr. Chairman, that is the mission of the Public Service Commission. Those are the goals of the Public Service Commission. This is what we believe in. The former NDP administration did not believe in this. Did they ever provide the public and the civil service here in this province with this kind of a statement of missions and goals? Never. And I would ask that this particular document be transmitted to the members opposite in order that they might edify themselves about how a Public Service Commission should be run in the province of Saskatchewan.

I want to indicate that I am surprised that the member is not aware that we do have a fully centralized employment service here in the Public Service Commission in accordance with The Public Service Act.

Now the member opposite has made certain allegations and cast certain aspersions upon people in the Public Service Commission. And I want, therefore, Mr. Chairman, to indicate to the members of the Assembly, and to the members of the Saskatchewan public who may be watching this afternoon, that we believe that it is important to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all candidates for positions in the Public Service Commission, and to ensure merit in appointment.

And accordingly, Mr. Chairman, I want to take some time to read for the member opposite the exact steps that we take to ensure a professional civil service here.

The Public Service Commission is responsible for the staffing of all permanent classified service positions, and ensures that all appointments are on the basis of merit. The staffing of non-permanent or unclassified service position, orders in councils, temporaries and part-times is the responsibility, of course, of the department.

Now the process observed is as follows: Re-employment list. Upon receipt of the staffing request from the department, and prior to advertising, the re-employment list is checked. This allows for the placement of individuals who may have been subject to lay-off or return from indefinite leave.

Advertising. The position is advertised in the

appropriate media, the selection of which for in-scope positions may be affected by contractual obligations. All advertisements comply with equal opportunities legislation. Then we have a preliminary screening panel. After the competition closing date, a preliminary panel meets to finalize the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the position. This panel consists of a Public Service Commission representative, a department representative, and for in-scope positions a union observer is present.

All applications are reviewed against the critical knowledge, skills, and abilities, and the best applicants are invited for interview. Then there is a selection panel, and of course the interview guide. An interview guide is developed to evaluate fairly each candidate's ability to meet the required knowledge, skills, and abilities. The selection panel then interviews and rates each candidate.

For in-scope positions, Mr. Chairman, the union is invited to participate as an observer to further ensure consistent and equitable treatment of candidates. The union may grieve any suspected discrepancies.

What about reference checks and certification.

Reference checks are completed on the most meritorious candidates. A maximum of three candidates are certified on the basis of merit. Certification means the candidate is fully qualified to perform the duties of the position.

Candidate selection. A contractual requirement for in-scope positions is that the most senior certified candidate must be offered the position. If there are no certified candidates with seniority, or if the position is out of scope, the department is able to select freely from the list of certified candidates.

So there, Mr. Chairman, we have a very detailed, very clear, equitable and fair approach to the hiring of people in the permanent classified Public Service Commission in the province of Saskatchewan.

I believe very strongly, Mr. Chairman, that we have likely one of the best — if not the best — public service in Canada. And I say that, Mr. Chairman, because I have, in my various capacities, travelled across the country, and I have at various times sat in on various conferences and forums where I have seen people from other provinces. And I have remarked on many occasions when I have returned that the civil servants who work for the public here in the province of Saskatchewan have acquitted themselves most admirably. And I think we can be very proud of the people that serve the public of Saskatchewan. I want to ensure that we continue to have the kind of fair and equitable treatment in the selection and hiring of candidates that we presently do.

And I want to contrast that, Mr. Chairman, I want to contrast that now with the approach of the former

government. I want to contrast that for the members opposite who are here today, for the members of the government side who may not be aware of this information, and I want the public of Saskatchewan to contrast what I just described as the present practice of this particular government with the practice of the former administration.

And I happen to have with me today, Mr. Chairman, a list, a list of some of the individuals that were hired by the former NDP administration. And I want to say at the outset, Mr. Chairman, that I was shocked, I was shocked when I first was made aware of the extent of patronage and of blatant politicizing that took place under the former administration — not only the politicization and the patronizing that went on with regards to friends of the former NDP administration, but many close relatives. And you will find when I read this list that nepotism was rife under the former NDP government.

I don't know, Mr. Chairman, if we have time to read the entire list. It is a long one. But I want to begin.

(1600)

First of all, Mr. Chairman, there was one Harvey Abells, former organizer for T.C. Douglas and the CCF, an OC appointment in Revenue, formerly government services, as director of purchasing. This gentleman was the son-in-law to Auburn Pepper, former NDP MLA in Weyburn.

Then there was a Janet Abells, who was appointed secretary to the minister of northern Saskatchewan, who happened to be the daughter of Auburn Pepper, former NDP MLA.

Now I want to say, Mr. Chairman, as I go through this list, that it may very well be that these individuals may have been competent people. I have no way of measuring or judging that. I have no way of measuring or judging that, but I do know, Mr. Chairman, that these individuals were not hired through what we would call the normal, equitable, fair, apolitical, neutral, non-politicized approach to the civil service that I just read.

Then there was one individual, Doug Archer, former executive assistant to cabinet minister Brockelbank, who was appointed the director of administration in government services. His wife Gloria was the sister to Bill Knight, who happened to be one of the higher echelon types in the NDP party. Then there was one Pat Atkinson, who I understand today happens to be an NDP candidate, who was at one time the vice-president for the provincial NDP, who was appointed as an investigator in the Office of the Rentalsman in Saskatoon.

Then there was one Chris Banman, former NDP candidate in Rosthern. Then there was one Myrna Barclay. Then there was one Curtis Bowerman, a garage attendant in the Highway Traffic Board, happened to be son of Ted Bowerman, former NDP cabinet minister.

Then there was Faye Boyle, SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) board member; Janis Boyle, wife of Patrick, rentalsman office. And then there was Patrick



Boyle, son, who happened to be executive assistant to the former Mr. Cody.

Now then, there was a Frank Buck, former executive assistant to Mr. Elwood Cowley, cabinet minister under your administration, who then becomes administration officer 4 in mineral resources, and then resigned from government and was granted an SGI agency in Regina. Certainly, I don't believe politics was involved in that.

Then there was one George Burton, transportation agency; one John Burton, former NDP MLA, who happened to be appointed admin. analyst 1 in the Department of Finance. Then there was one Zenny Burton, wife of John S. Burton, former NDP MP, appointed to the Highway Traffic Board. Then there was Eric Kline. Now Eric Kline was a defeated NDP candidate in 1978, who happened to be appointed a Crown solicitor 1 to the Law Reform Commission.

Then there was one Don Cody. Don Cody was an MLA under your government 1971 to 1975; was defeated in 1975 and was given a senior position in SGI. Then there was one W. Cameron Cooper here, one of Margorie Cooper-Hunt, former NDP MLA, special assistant to the minister of transportation, executive assistant to the minister of Education. Then there was one Ray Funk, who sought the nomination for the Federal NDP, lost it and was latter assigned to the community college in Prince Albert, in 1981.

Now I still have a fairly lengthy list here. The member opposite seems to be interested in hearing the rest of the list. There was one Ted Glover. Ted Glover was appointed special assistant to Hon. E. Kaeding, Rural Affairs minister, and he happened to be an NDP candidate at one time. Then there was a Glenn Hagel, NDP candidate from Moose Jaw North in '82, who received an honorarium of \$5,700 from the Department of Education. Then there was one David Henley, NDP candidate for the federal election in Moose Jaw in 1980, who was given a job with Saskoil, and happened to be an executive assistant to a variety of NDP minister. One Gren Jones, later was given a management position with Sask Housing, and his son, Dennis Jones, was executive assistant to Mr. Cody, who happened to be one of your cabinet ministers. Don Keith was a defeated NDP candidate who was appointed general manager for the Saskatchewan development fund. Connie Kinzel. There was a Bill Knight, former NDP MP, who was appointed as assistant principal secretary. This list goes on and on.

I will skip this list for a moment to move down to the Koskie family. And I think it's important — I think it's important — for the members opposite, for the public, for the members who are here today, and for the public service, to understand exactly what the approach of the former NDP government was when it came to directing, or shall I say running, perhaps politicizing, the civil service.

There was one Deanna Koskie, wife of Morley Koskie, who worked in the Attorney General's department as an administration officer 3. She happened to be the sister-in-law to Murray Koskie, who was a former NDP cabinet minister. That's one.

Then there was Linda Koskie, who was clerk-steno 4, an OC (order in council) appointment to the provincial secretary, sister-in-law to Murray Koskie, former NDP cabinet minister.

Then there was one Morley Koskie, vice-president of SGI, brother to Murray Koskie, former NDP cabinet minister. Then there was one Ted Koskie, appointed executive assistant to the minister of Consumer Affairs, the brother of Murray Koskie, former NDP cabinet minister.

Then there was one Barrie Hicks, who was married to Mr. Koskie's sister, and he happened to be involved as a chief liquor inspector. Then I understand there was one Marlene Giles, sister of Murray Koskie, who evidently worked in the Department of Health.

Now I don't know, Mr. Chairman, if, in all the years that I have lived in the province of Saskatchewan, that I have ever heard before, nor do I hope that I shall ever have to hear again, that there was a government in power that had six relatives of a cabinet minister employed by the government of the day at the same time. And it sure wasn't a Progressive Conservative government that was guilty of that crass nepotism. It was an NDP government.

Mr. Chairman, the list goes on. The list goes on. It's a lengthy list. And if the member opposite wants to continue to talk about patronage, then fine. There is more of the list to read.

I have read for him the mission and the goals of the Public Service Commission as it is today. I have stated my commitment to the maintenance, the establishment, the ongoing direction of a professional Public Service Commission in the province of Saskatchewan.

I have read for him the hiring practice of the Public Service Commission today. And I have no hesitation in saying whatsoever, that today in the province of Saskatchewan we have a Public Service Commission that is far more fair, far more equitable than it ever was under the former NDP administration. And I apologize to the member opposite if I happened to miss one of the Koskie's that were employed under the former administration.

I indicated earlier, Mr. Chairman, that I was shocked to come upon this list to read through the names of the individuals that were employed. As competent as they may have been as individuals, it was not right, it was not right for the former administration to so politicize the public service here in the province of Saskatchewan.

And I might just share one or two personal anecdotes, which would support the contentions that I have just made. Prior to my running for government, my wife happened to work for the Public Service Commission in one of the departments, and she indicated to me on various occasions that the Public Service Commission under the NDP was so politicized that it was shameful, shameful. That's exactly what happened, exactly what happened. And I'm sure that there are many other individuals who would support that same contention.

Mr. Chairman, my approach has been to ensure that we

have a professional public service. I think I could cite for you example after example of what this government has done to elevate people within the Public Service Commission, to bring people from the private sector to the Public Service Commission, to bring people from out of province to assume certain positions in the Public Service Commission, and to provide a fair and equitable approach to serving the people of Saskatchewan in the non-politicized, neutral, equitable, and fair way that the public want. That has been my goal; that will continue to be my goal. And I can assure the members of this Assembly that as long as I am minister in charge of the Public Service Commission, we won't have a list of six members of any member of this side of the government working for the Public Service Commission.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Chairman, I listened with interest to the minister rant and rave about people who were connected with the New Democratic Party who also worked for the government, and I don't think one should find it surprising that in the civil service, in the Crowns and in the departments, which runs now in the area of 20,000 to 25,000, that there would be Conservatives, and NDP, and Liberals who work for the government. Obviously there will be, and obviously there are a number of Conservatives from your families who are now in cabinet who work for the government.

René Archambault is the brother-in-law to the Premier, words for the government. He gets a big wage down in Gravelbourg. You know that, I know that. For you to stand here and sanctimoniously say that the NDP hired NDP and that's all, or that you hire, and that you're clean and don't hire your relatives. The Premier's own family. I'm glad you raised it, because we weren't going to raise the fact the René Archambault who is the brother-in-law . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, we weren't. We weren't going to raise it. But the minister sanctimoniously stands here and says that the NDP shouldn't have hired anyone associated with the NDP, is ludicrous. Obviously there will be times when people like Martin Pederson, the former leader of the Conservative Party, who now works for your government . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — He's a good man.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Yes, he is a good man, but for the minister to sanctimoniously say that NDP governments only hired NDP and the Conservative government doesn't hire any political people, is ridiculous. I mean, it shows what a phoney you are.

**An Hon. Member:** — Remember the name Paul Rousseau.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Paul Rousseau, who is a sitting member appointed to a position in London, how can you say to the public that you're clean on this one. And there are many others. But I want to tell you that at the time that the NDP were in government, we also hired family members of Conservative candidates.

Now for you, Mr. Minister, to stand there and sanctimoniously say that we're unfair to Conservative candidates, your wife worked for me when you were a candidate. Your wife worked in the Department of Social Services when you were a Tory candidate. In fact at that time she even worked in my office as a secretary in the Department of Social

Services. And I never worried a great deal about it because I believe that she was a competent and fair person.

**An Hon. Member:** — Unlike her husband.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — And I say unlike her husband, because you are not telling the truth when you talk about the record of our government. Yes, we hired Conservative candidates' family members, and we didn't dismiss them when the Minister of Social Services and the minister in charge of the Public Service Commission, when you became a candidate. We didn't fire her. She continued on in the Department of Social Services and did a good job. And I congratulate you on the one side for having the good judgement, because there are many, many cases that I could cite . . .

I'm not going to take the time to talk about Terry Leier and the Dan Stephens, and all the people that you have hired. But I'll tell you, for you to stand here and sanctimoniously say that you're squeaky clean, and that the NDP government didn't hire people associated with the Conservative party when you, Mr. Minister, your wife was working for my department when I was a minister and you were a candidate, shows how phoney you are. And I think the public is beginning to see through you.

(1615)

I think the public is beginning to see through you at every turn, because I'll tell you, the list that you read out, yes, included a good number of people associated with the NDP party. But if you were fair, you would read out a similar list, and there is a list to be had of people who were associated with the Conservative Party who worked for our government as well. And at the top of the list, your wife's name would appear because she worked in a minister's office — not at some lowly level of checking the oil in trucks, like you were reading out there — but she worked in the minister's office from time to time.

And I just say that your reading out a selective list show how phoney you are. And that's all I'm going to say. I'm sorry I got into this because my colleague was doing a very able job.

I know that the member from Saskatoon has some students to introduce and I wonder if we could have leave to do that now.

Mr. Chairman, I ask for leave to introduce some students.

**Hon. Mr. Folk:** — Mr. Chairman, I'd like leave of the committee if I could introduce a group of students who are visiting us.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Folk:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It's my privilege today on behalf of my friend and colleague, the MLA for Turtleford and the Minister of Parks of Renewable Resources, to introduce to the Assembly a group of 24 students from the Turtleford

school in Turtleford and from Livelong School in Livelong. They are seated, as you'll notice, in the Speaker's gallery, as well as a couple of visitors on the floor of the Assembly today. They are accompanied today by their teacher, Mr. Bill Kresowaty; as well as chaperons, Marilyn McDonald, Marilyn Roney, Lynn Nordell, and Peggy Wooff.

I will have the pleasure of going for pictures with them and, as well, meeting with them in the members' lounge later on. So I would ask all members of the Assembly to join with me on behalf of the member for Turtleford in welcoming this group here today. And we hope you enjoy your visit to Regina and of course to the Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Public Service Commission Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 33

#### Item 1 (continued)

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — I do want to comment, Mr. Chairman, in response to the statements of the member from Shaunavon, who evidently is not here to hear my comments now. Mr. Chairman, he suggested that somehow this particular government was involved in patronage to the extent that the former NDP government was. Well I can assure you the former NDP government was grossly involved in patronage, and here is the evidence.

I want to assure you, Mr. Chairman, and the members opposite, that right today there are people working for this government that are members of the NDP party, that happen to be former NDP candidates. That is not surprising. I'm sure when they were in power that, as the member from Shaunavon indicated, there were sympathizers of to her parties than the NDP working. That's not uncommon.

What is uncommon is the extent of patronage. And as I indicated before, I am not aware ever in my living memory of six members of one particular cabinet minister's family being hired by the government. Surely, member from Regina Centre, that is uncommon. Surely that is extreme in terms of patronage.

Now the member opposite made reference to my wife having happened to work in the Department of Social Services, and indeed she worked as a professional civil servant for a number of years here in the province before I ever had any inclinations to get involved in political life. And she happened to be working in the Department of Social Services at the time that I decided to run for office. That is correct.

What is most interesting, however, and what the NDP member from Shaunavon failed to tell the Assembly, is that the suggestion was made subtly — subtly, but it was very clear that perhaps she should resign once her husband decided to get involved in politics. Was it because the members opposite were concerned that

somehow someone of a different political stripe was somehow now involved in government and they didn't want that to happen. She can remember civil servants selling NDP memberships out of their offices. Now that's not a professional civil service. That goes directly contrary to an apolitical, neutral, professional civil service.

Mr. Chairman, if the member opposite wants to move on to some different topic of discussion, I certainly am willing to continue talking about this particular issue. But I make the point very clear to the members of the public who may be watching, to those who are here visiting today, to the members of the Assembly, the extent of patronage under the former NDP administration was gross; it was odious. After 11 years it's no wonder that people said that they had enough and they had wanted to throw the rascals out. And that's exactly what happened.

**Mr. Shillington:** — But did so a great deal less in Regina than they did throughout the rest of the province. I point out to the members opposite that before the last election we held all but one urban seat in the province of Saskatchewan; after the election we held two but they were both in Regina. So perhaps our relationship with the public service wasn't quite as bad as the member makes out.

I say, Mr. Minister, we will let the public decide. I think they spoke with some eloquence in Regina North East and when this government gets the nerve to call an election, when you get the nerve to write your exams, the public service are going to speak again, as the rest of Regina will, the rest of Saskatchewan will.

Mr. Minister, one of the ways you have politicized . . . I want to say one other thing, Mr. Minister. A great many of the names you read out were public servants first and then got involved in the NDP. A very large number of them were first involved with the public service and then with the NDP — that happened. It happened because we were fair and honourable with the public service, and many of them decided that they wanted to continue serving the public through elected office. But they did that because they were impressed with the competence and fairness of the former administration.

Mr. Minister, another of the ways you have publicized the public service is you have increased the number of OC appointments and you've increased the number of out-of-scope appointments. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you would give us those figures for this year, for the past year; and I would appreciate it, Mr. Minister, if you could give us those figures for the 1984-85 year as well.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — The statistic: March 1982, there were 627 OC positions; March 1986, 605 OC positions. There are fewer OC positions today than there were when your government was still in power.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Minister, are executive assistants, ministerial assistants, and those sort of things, now excluded from OC appointments?

(1630)

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — The '86 figure does not include executive assistants. For comparative purposes we don't know exactly what the NDP were doing back in 1982 in terms of all of their executive assistants or ministerial assistants, or who was buried in what particular department or was doing what for what particular purposes.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 5 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 33 agreed to.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — I do want to thank the members opposite for their questioning. I'm sure we were able to provide them with at least some answers that were satisfying to them. And I certainly want to thank the officials who have assisted me and are an example of the professionalism that we do enjoy here in Saskatchewan in the Public Service Commission.

**Mr. Shillington:** — The minister I think provided us with very few answers and a lot of weak excuses. I do nevertheless want to thank the minister and his officials for participating in these estimates. We will hope, Mr. Minister, that this is the last time we have your estimates and that before the estimates come before this session again, there'll be a new broom in office cleaning up this mess.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### **Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Ordinary Expenditure - Vote**

**Mr. Chairman:** — As I said previously, we will be dealing with the estimates for the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. However, before we do that, I will ask the minister to please introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to introduce Larry Boyes, executive director, financial services, behind me; to his immediate right, Ron Styles, director, policy development; Larry Dybvig, regional director, Prince Albert regional office; and the president, Mr. Calder Hart, will be with me as well. Mr. Chairman, there's also Glenn Silliphant, vice-president of programs, who will be assisting me today as well. Thank you.

Item 1

**Mr. Shillington:** — I'm somewhat confused as to where your officials are. You introduced one more official than I see, actually. I see three and you introduced four. Okay.

Mr. Minister, I'd like to know what has been the take-up under the PC's home buyer's grant? What's been the take-up of this?

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — As of May 26th, 500 applications received, 341 committed — that's as of May 26th.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Minister, is it fair to say that you would have received a much larger volume of

applications in the spring than you'll get later on — they'll peter out as the spring goes on? Houses in this country are generally built in the summer.

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — No.

**Mr. Shillington:** — We are going to have to adjourn for the pantry parade over here.

Mr. Minister, I would suggest that 500, in what has . . . it has been now almost two months — three months — it's now going on three months since your program was announced. I would suggest, Mr. Minister, that 500 in 3 months is not exactly a runaway success. Mr. Minister, I wonder if you would care to admit that your housing program was too paltry and too niggardly to do much good. I wonder if you'll admit now that you might have been a bit more generous, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Dirks:** — Which dictionary do you have in front of you this afternoon?

Well I would like to comment just momentarily for the member opposite. In fact, housing starts are up substantially in the province this year, and I think we can all be very encouraged by that. The single-family starts, 1985, to April 30 — in that particular year there were 416 starts, Mr. Chairman. This year we are at 639, a 54 per cent increase in single-family housing starts in urban Saskatchewan. I think that is indicative of a very strong economy as it relates to housing starts, a very keen interest in the housing program which we have introduced.

We naturally are concerned that when you introduce some kind of a stimulative program that you do it with discretion in order that you don't draw forward all of the demand into one particular narrow time frame and throw the market entirely out of whack. I don't believe that would be a prudent thing to do.

We chose through this particular program to provide some measure of modest stimulation to assist those people who would be buying homes for the first time. And we find that in fact a large number of the people that are applying for the grant are first-time home buyers, of course, and that the program is in fact creating jobs here in the province. And that was naturally one of the motivations behind the particular announcement. So I'm sure the member opposite will want to join with me in expressing his satisfaction at the significant and the substantial increase in housing starts in the province of Saskatchewan this year.

**Mr. Shillington:** — What the government has is a housing program which is much lower than it has been. The housing program is running at record-low levels. When this government came into office in 1982, I recall suggesting to your predecessor in office that your programs were too niggardly, that you were not going to be able to sustain an adequate level of housing with such programs. What I got was a silly song and dance about how you had the mortgage interest reduction plan and that's all you needed.

That's what your predecessors . . . The minister is not

listening. That's what your predecessors in office said. That's what your predecessors in office said. And we said it was too niggardly and it wouldn't work. So it didn't work. You have now, Mr. Minister, housing starts which have fallen from 10-12,000 in the '70s; and late '80s, to 4-5-6,000.

Mr. Minister, the housing starts are the lowest they've been in years. And your program simply isn't providing an adequate level of support. Mr. Minister, I believe I am the first person since the throne speech to mention the PC housing incentive program. I don't think a soul opposite has mentioned it. I wonder why, Mr. Chairman, none of the conservative members have mentioned it.

This province has been subjected to a blizzard of advertising. yesterday, in front of a microphone, I complained that this government was advertising programs which aren't yet in existence. There is no pension plan in existence, no way of us or the public ever finding out what a pension plan, what the proposed pension plan . . .

**Mr. Chairman:** — Order, order. Order, order. The pension plan or any advertising or anything else which you allege, has nothing to do with Sask Housing.

**Mr. Shillington:** — I'll tie it in. You have a bewildering amount of advertising. You're advertising programs you don't yet have. I will not, Mr. Chairman, repeat the fact that they're advertising a home owners' pension. I won't repeat it. I said I wouldn't repeat it, and I'm trying to follow the chairman's dictates, and I think he's being difficult with me for no good reason.

The advertising extends so far. There's one particular program which you're not going to have until September. It's the coding program for video cassettes. But you advertised it last winter.

**Mr. Chairman:** — Order. Order. I once more ask the member to please direct his questions directly to the issue of Sask Housing.

**Mr. Shillington:** — I won't mention again the fact that we have advertising programs. But what you don't have, though, is any advertising programs which deal with the PC housing program. None at all.

You have advertised every other conceivable program, a number of which you don't have yet. I mentioned two of them. I won't mention again the home owners' program and the video cassette program. But you've been advertising all of those programs, but not the PC housing program — never mentioned it. I wonder why. Why? Because you are ashamed of it. You are ashamed of the program. It has been a success.

(1645)

One of the things, Mr. Minister, that has happened is that people have been comparing it with our housing program, and the comparison, Mr. Minister, shows your housing program to be a cheap, shoddy, niggardly affair. It is not worth worrying about. It is just not worth considering. And I note that there's been no advertising

program — been no advertising program at all.

Mr. Minister, compare it if you will with the NDP housing program — a program which provides \$7,000 grant for first-time home builders; it provides \$7,000 for the grant to build a house; and \$7,000 for rehabilitating older houses; provides 7 per cent mortgages for mortgages up to \$70,000 for seven years.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you're prepared to admit that the reason why nobody has mentioned your housing program, least of all Conservative elected members, is because your housing program is an embarrassment to you. It is so cheap, so shoddy, and so ineffective, Mr. Minister, that you aren't mentioning it. You are not mentioning it. And I say that's why we haven't heard about it, Mr. Chairman, haven't heard about it because members opposite are embarrassed about it. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if members opposite would care to bring forth a housing program that doesn't embarrass themselves.

We have brought forth a housing program which has stirred up a very considerable interest. I do not recall receiving as many requests about any campaign promise the NDP has unveiled as we have about the housing program. And the questions invariably, Mr. Chairman, are along the same vein. They will say: now I've got a basement with a crack in the wall and it's going to cost me \$10,000; do I qualify? Or I'm going to do this, and this; and do I qualify? My circumstances are such; do I qualify? What we are witnessing is an unparalleled interest in a good housing program.

We have again, Mr. Chairman, not a \$3,000 grant which is likely to disappear as soon as the election's over with; it's only going to last nine months at most. We have a program which will provide \$7,000 grants to people who want to buy, build new homes, and that will be available for three years.

So there won't be the big bubble that there was in 1983 which caused enormous dislocation. It stretched the housing industry to the limit. It meant that they often wound up paying premium prices for labour and materials during that period in 1983, and thus their businesses were distorted. When it was over, then they were left with nothing to do, and businesses which had been over-extended.

As for home owners, I think many of them were rushed into buying houses. Some of them were rushed into buying houses at a time when it might have been premature for them. It might have been better off for them to wait for a few months, perhaps a couple years. They were all rushed into it.

The staff of the land titles office were just swamped. Both Moose Jaw and Regina ran six weeks behind time. It caused very serious problem in closing transactions. Conservative members went into a great hue and cry when the land titles office went on strike. They caused a delay which was in many ways more serious than that with that ill-thought-out housing programs.

Well you haven't made the same mistake twice, I must

say. Nobody is going to accuse you of overheating the housing market with this silly program. Nobody is going to accuse you of making the same mistake twice. It's one of the engaging features of members opposite. You can always find a new mistake to make. Just when people think you've made all the mistakes, and there's none left to make, you find some new ones. You find some new ones.

In 1983 you people brought in a housing program which distorted the market and distorted it badly and accomplished very little. Now you bring in a housing program which certainly hasn't distorted the market. It hasn't even caused a ripple on the market.

**An Hon. Member:** — They're waiting for an election.

**Mr. Shillington:** — They are waiting for an election. My colleague from Shaunavon says they're waiting for an election. That's right. That's what they are doing.

I was talking to one young women who said to me, she asked me: I have a basement with a crack in the wall, and I want to know if the program will apply. So I answered the question as best I could. And that was when the program was announced in, I think it was, April. I ran into her about a week ago and I said to her, how's the basement, half in a facetious tone of voice. She said, with a heavy tone of voice, I couldn't wait, I'm afraid; do you think it'll be retroactive? I said, I don't know, quite frankly, I don't know.

Maybe we should. Maybe if this government doesn't call an election when they should have called an election, which was April, failing that, in June, perhaps because of this unnatural disaster that befalls us with this government which won't call an election, perhaps we ought to make it retroactive. perhaps that's fair — perhaps that's fair. Perhaps that's fair, Mr. Speaker.

We haven't since the last Tory government, had a government which has stayed in office this long. And we see, Mr. Minister, what his government is trying to perpetuate itself in office through unnatural means, because you don't have any policies or programs. I don't know what you thought you were going to accomplish with this housing program. I honestly don't. I just don't know what was going through the minds of the members opposite with a \$3,000 housing program.

Let us review for a moment the housing program that you had in 1983, which was successful but too much so because it distorted the market. I want to say, as well, that our caucus met with the real estate industry. This was after the announcement of the housing program had been made. And they said to us: listen, we had a bad experience with that housing program in 1983; please don't give us another one of those; we've still got the hangover from that.

So we explained our program, that grants are available for three years; mortgage interest reduction is available for seven years; and it's available for rehabilitation of older homes; and a \$7,000 grant for remodelling as well for older homes.

When they had hear that, the mood changed. They were

much less hostile to our program, because I think they saw that the preconceived notions with which they entered the room for the meeting might not have been valid. I think we turned a number of doubting real estate agents and real estate developers into believers that our program was going to work. I even thought I saw a tinge of excitement in some of those people who saw a housing market finally pick up steam, something it really hasn't done in the four years you people have been in office.

You people came into office saying you were not going to participate in the recession. You participated very fully. It's the recovery that you people have decided you don't want to participate in because . . . I will keep that in mind, but I will . . . I somehow or other have to give the House Leader an opportunity to adjourn the House for the day. So I will sit down before 5 o'clock and give the House Leader, whoever that may be — it's not obvious who is the House Leader today. The attendance of cabinet ministers is so brief and so few, we never know who the House Leader . . .

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:56 p.m.