

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Environment and Public Safety
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 9

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I wanted to direct your attention to the question of the Emergency Measures Organization. I'm wondering what is going on with this particular department with this particular branch. I refer, Mr. Minister, to the estimates for '86-87. In that year, which I gather was the year that the EMO was transferred from the Department of Labour, the spending tripled. You went from three employees to five employees and from \$100,000 to an expenditure of \$350,000. This year, Mr. Minister, in this year's estimates, the toboggan is headed back down the hill, and you're cutting your staff from five to three but not your expenditures, though. Your expenditures are actually going up.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you'd give me some indication of what you think you're doing with this agency which, while admittedly not always high profile, is vital to the province.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — There's actually been no cut in the staff there, but it is a bit confusing the way it's worded. There are two staff members who work under contract; they're not directly salaried. They're under contract, and the reason for that is because we can charge the cost back to the federal government through the JEPP (joint emergency planning program) program. It's the joint emergency program. When they're under contract, we charge their costs directly back to the federal program, and we really are covering it with exactly the same staff contingency that we were before.

Mr. Shillington: — Who are those individuals who are under contract, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The two who are under contract are MacMillan and Woltman.

Mr. Shillington: — Can I have their full names, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We're having a bit of difficulty. The director of that division is away, so I haven't got them here. I could bring a man in tomorrow, but I don't have . . . or Wednesday, rather. I don't have one here tonight. I think it's John Woltman, and I'm not sure whether it's John MacMillan or not. Could be.

Mr. Shillington: — How long have these individuals been employed by or associated with the EMO (Emergency Measures Organization)? Do you know that?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I believe they were employed at the time that the JEPP program came into being, in about February of '85.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, would you be prepared to give us a contract which they've signed? Contracts by this government, Mr. Minister, have been a subject of very considerable abuse. Contracts have been entered into for fixed terms, extending beyond the normal term that one would be employed. Some of the contracts have been entered into at excessive rates of pay. And I'd ask you, Mr. Minister, if you'd give us the contract. We wanted to delete a portion of it, I suppose, but I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you'd give us the actual contract.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Generally you don't give personal service contracts out, so I'll give you the amount of money involved in the two contracts. There are two people, and the total of the two contracts is \$55,200.

Mr. Shillington: — That doesn't tell me an enormous amount, Mr. Minister. Is that for an hour's work, or two hours, one month, one year? What do they do for the \$55,000?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — There are two employees and they're full-time employees. They work full time. They were on staff, and then they were put on contract in order to meet the requirements of the JEPP program so that we could charge it back to the federal government.

Mr. Shillington: — Okay, I would appreciate it if you would forward their names, then, and at least their job description if you won't give me a copy of the contract.

Mr. Minister, the item "other expenses" has gone up by some 21 per cent, 22 per cent. Perhaps, Mr. Minister, you could indicate what that is.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That's strictly because of the contracts. There are 55,200 was transferred out of salaries into other expenses, and then that whole amount is recoverable from the JEPP program.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, moving on to subvote 6. I heard an exchange between yourself and the member from Regina North East with respect to the payments to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. Your response, I think, could be fairly characterized by saying you've no notion what the 970, \$985,700 is for and you're just taking it on good faith that you won't be overcharged. Mr. Minister, you may have complete faith in the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation; I can tell you there's a number of members of the public that have . . . stop a little short of that.

Mr. Minister, I think it's essential that ministers come to the legislature prepared to answer questions — legitimate questions — on each subvote. This, Mr. Minister, has been a ripe — I was going to say prime;; I think ripe is a better term — a ripe area of patronage in the past. If there's one area, I think, where we would not be prepared to trust this government or any other, it's with respect to leasing of property and the purchasing of property and the provision of supplies and personal property.

So I think, Mr. Minister, it's just simply not satisfactory to say, gosh, I don't know, I know it's a million bucks but I just haven't any idea what it's going for. Mr. Minister,

that's just not a satisfactory approach. And I think, Mr. Minister, you're under an obligation to give this legislature and the people of Saskatchewan an accounting of a million dollars. You may believe with C.D. Howe, "What's a million?"

Some of the agencies who have had their funding cut with 30 or \$40,000 cut out of their budget and thereby effectively been very impaired, I think, would look kindly on a million dollars. So I think, Mr. Minister, you've got to give us an accounting of what this is for. We have got to have, I think, some detail about the breakdown of that, the same detail that the members would get if the Saskatchewan property development corporation were before the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No, I'm not quite as rich as C.D. Howe, and I haven't come to the point where a million dollars is nothing. It's a lot of money in my business.

So the figures that I gave to you before are the proper figures. I told you that the office space rental \$860,800; mail and postage, \$124,900 — that's the two figures, and that comes to \$985,700.

Mr. Shillington: — Well that's . . . I'm just smothered in detail. I want to tell you, I don't know how anyone could handle such an enormous mass of detail. For a million bucks, I get about 30 words.

Mr. Minister, I'd hoped for frankly something a bit more than that. I'd hoped you might give us an accounting of \$985,700, and a comment that \$124,000 is spent on postage and messenger, and \$860,000 relates to the property — frankly, just is not satisfactory. Mr. Minister, I would ask you if you would give us an accounting of what services you're being provided, what space you're being provided for this sum of money.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — If the member has his pen handy, we lease space in Estevan, in Derrick Plaza and Downtown Plaza; in Humboldt, in the graphic arts building on the first floor; in Kindersley, the Wellbelove Building on the first floor; in Melville, the provincial office building, first floor, Moose Jaw, the W.G. Davies building, second floor; North Battleford, Kramer Place, first floor and second floor; Prince Albert, the MacIntosh Mall, the lower one and on the 12th floor; in Regina, the Palliser Square on the second floor, Saskatchewan Place on the fifth floor, and the Walter Scott Building, the lower one, first floor and second floor; in Saskatoon, in Circle 8 Building on the second floor; the E.I. Wood Building in Swift Current, second floor and fifth floor; and in Tisdale, the Provincial Office Building, second floor; Watrous, the Water Supply Building, first floor, and in Yorkton, the Kuziak Building, second floor. So that would cover the space locations that we lease. The figure that I gave to you was the cost of leasing that space.

Mr. Shillington: — Does that not include the provision of supplies as well? Does that not include the provision of personal property, everything from pencils to typewriters, as well, that figure? Or does that come under the general heading of postage?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — It includes the operating and

maintenance charges, the cost of telephones, the mail and the postage costs that I gave you the other day, and the purchase of furniture. I gave all those figures before.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, could you give me a written breakdown of this? You were reading it. Could you give me a written breakdown? Could you give me a copy of that?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I could give you a copy of the same listing. I can't give you the paper I was reading from. I could give you a listing of those names, but they'll be in *Hansard* tomorrow.

Mr. Shillington: — What is it on the paper that you were reading that you don't want to make public, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Now that would be really telling you something, and I'm afraid I'm not prepared to give you that information.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, it would be a good deal better if there were a minister here able to answer for the governments expenditures, which are very considerable on personal and real property. You people made the decision that you wanted to at least to attempt to avoid that kind of scrutiny. You didn't want to put a minister up who would have to answer for this governments expenditures on real and personal property.

Mr. Minister, Therefore we have no option but to go through this individually with each of the ministers and get it from you. And I therefore ask you, Mr. Minister, for a breakdown of how the 985,700 was made up — and I do not regard two figures as an adequate breakdown nor would, I think, any fair minded person. You owe us some detail, at least as much as it's going to appear in the public accounts next year. You owe us at least that much detail on how this million dollars is being spent.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I gave the information before that the former Supply and Services department looked at the amount of money that was being paid in rent for this space that we are now utilizing, and the figure that they gave us for the existing office space — and we're not adding any — was exactly the figure I gave you, and that's for rent on the space that I gave you, is \$860,000. Now that's the biggest part of that overall cost. The other one is mail and postage and the small amount of furnishings. And we don't expect to buy that much furniture this year. Our department is some smaller. We don't see the need of buying a lot of furniture. Everybody has the furniture they need. So that's basically the figures that you will see.

(1915)

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, if I was satisfied with two figures that go into making up a million dollars, it doesn't add up to \$985,700. The very least you owe us is a set of figures which add up to \$985,700. And the two figures you get, which I copied down at \$868,000 and \$124,000, don't add up.

Mr. Minister, I'd ask you to give us a breakdown of that. Give us the breakdown for leasing of real space, leasing of real property, expenditures on postage, if you like,

telephone, and expenditures on supplies, and furniture, and personal property?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The figures I gave you add up to exactly \$985,700. That's what's in the blue book; that's exactly what those two figures add up to. So I don't know what your mathematics is doing to you, but try it again — \$860,800 and \$124,900, and if you add it up, it's \$985,700.

Mr. Shillington: — Okay. In that case, Mr. Minister, I had not copied them down correctly.

Mr. Minister, this could be avoided if you'd give us the figures in writing instead of playing cat and mouse, as you're doing tonight.

Mr. Minister, I have gone through a dozen estimates. You always get these figures in writing; we always have until this year. Now you don't. Now you don't have a minister, so now we've got to try and pull teeth, Mr. Minister. If you'd give us this breakdown in writing, which we have always gotten in the past with respect to Department of Supply and Services, we could bring this silly charade to an end. But if you insist, Mr. Minister, we'll go through it and get it broken down however long it may take us.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well the figures that I gave you are in the blue book; the \$985,700. I listed all the areas that we had space leased in. Mail and passages is very difficult to break down because it's an estimate. The only way I could break that down would be to tell you how many letters I write, and that will come at the end of the year, not at the first of the year. This is strictly an estimate of the costs of those areas.

Mr. Shillington: — What, Mr. Minister, is the estimate of the amount that will be spent on furniture, then?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That was not broken out by Supply and Services when the figure was given. It would be the amount that was spent last year, I would estimate, but I haven't got a figure on it.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I am frankly concerned about the lack of accountability and the lack of control over these expenditures. Given the track record of this government and the sloppy management which this government has honed to a fine art since its election, I think anyone would be concerned about the manner in which you people control expenses.

Mr. Minister, how was the figure of 975,000 arrived at? Was that the figure you got on a memo from the corporation? Is it according to some sort of a formula, or how did you arrive at the figure?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I indicated to you earlier that the Department of Supply and Services added up the cost of all of the rent for the space that we now occupy. They added up the cost of the furnishings that we purchased last year, and the cost of our mail, postage, and telephone, and these are the figures they gave us from last year's costs.

As you realize, when Supply and Services looked after

space, that figure was never provided to a department. So the figure I'm giving you is more information that has ever been given before by a department. You might have gotten it out of Supply and Services, but you certainly didn't get it from a department's blue book; it was never charged before.

Mr. Shillington: — No, we certainly didn't, but there was no need to. In any other year, Mr. Minister, the estimates of the Department of Supply and Services were before the legislature; now they're not. What we have is 20 or 30 of these subvotes with the expenditures in it, and so we have to put it together.

Mr. Minister, it is true that they haven't given us the amount that they pay. In past years they have refrained from giving us the square footage rental on private leases. We have, however, Mr. Minister, got complete detail about the amount of space actually occupied and actually rented. Indeed, it has traditionally come in the form of a computer print-out which is fairly thick. That has given the opposition and the legislature complete detail with respect to the amount of space that you're leasing.

Now you won't give me that. I'm not sure why you think that's such a dark secret, but you won't give it to me. It must have been on the document you were reading. I suspect that came out of your briefing book, and I suspect the square footage and the other detail with respect to the leased space is on the document you were reading. But for some reason which I cannot fathom, you've decided that that is not in the public interest that that should be known.

If you wanted to maintain confidentiality with respect to space that's leased, there's some precedent for that, but the only thing that has not been disclosed in previous year is the amount of rental per square foot paid for private leased space. Everything else has been given to us in exhaustive detail, Mr. Minister, that's what I'd like from you is the detail of what this is being spent on, the square footage, etc.

I want to know, Mr. Minister, what we're getting for our million dollars. If you and the House Leader want to get together and devise a better way of doing this, that is right as rain with us, but at the moment all we can do is get this detail from each individual minister. So I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, to come clean. give us a reasonable accounting where the million dollars came from, or where the million dollars is going, rather.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well I think I gave you a pretty reasonable accounting when I gave you the locations of the office space, the amount of money being spent for office space, and the amount for other items like telephone and postage. I think that does cover it all.

Now I'm not going to be able to break it down and tell you what every one of \$985,000 are doing, but I think traditionally if you say rent, and it's covering the rent of the office space, and I gave you the locations of that space. I don't see where you can fault me on that kind of detail. And I've given you the exact figures of what we intend, in a budgetary way, to spend this year. If we can

cut back somewhere in the amount of space we need, fine, then there would be less cost.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, if you could have cut back in terms of your own personal staffs, that might have made some sense, but you didn't do that. Let's not get into where you could have cut back. There's a number of places we would like to have seen you cut back other than the places you did.

Mr. Minister, am I correct that this figure also includes supplies purchased by the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation and you were charged your share of the supplies purchased by . . . what I suppose would now be the purchasing agency?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I've advised that the only kind of supplies that would be in there would be maintenance, and that's covered. Like the maintenance of the space is covered under the contract, so we wouldn't have a break out of an individual cost for the cleaning supplies or something like that. But if you're speaking of supplies like stationery and pencils and typewriters and things, no.

Mr. Shillington: — Where does paper, pencils, and typewrites come . . . Typewriters, I think, is in the furniture thing. Where do pencils and paper come from? Where does the department get them?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That kind of supplies, I'm advised, would come out of the administration budget. And, yes, I went one too far when I said typewriters; they would be included in that figure if we had to buy a typewriter because all furnishings are covered.

Mr. Shillington: — It's my understanding, Mr. Minister, that supplies were purchased formerly by Supply and Services and was then made available to the departments as they needed it. Are you telling me that you are now going out into the market and purchasing your own supplies?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Supplies are purchased by the purchasing agency. We requisition from that agency, but they're charged out to us, and it goes through the administration budget within the department.

Mr. Shillington: — Is the purchasing agency not in the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, or is that somewhere else now?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No, it will be in the property management corporation, but it isn't part of this kind of figure.

Mr. Shillington: — Good. How much under administration do you spend on supplies then?

Mr. Minister, I'm frankly surprised to hear that answer. I would have thought that the \$975,000 included everything that you owed to the property management corporation. I'm surprised to hear that you're making payments to them under the administration, and you have a separate subvote wherein you charge yet two additional items — two such disparate items as telephones and leased space.

I would have that the \$975,000 would have included everything that you paid to Supply and Services for all the real and personal property which you got from them.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Let me read to the hon. member two paragraphs from this document.

The accommodation service provided include items such as the rent, operating and maintenance charges, office furniture rental, space improvements, program equipment in major facilities and any taxes associated with the properties.

Departments can provide a complete list of facilities.

And so on. And then it goes on in the bottom of there . . . No, that's the only area. It says it includes the square footage for office space, warehouse, special purpose facilities, that sort of thing. That's the only areas.

You asked me about the total cost of supplies. Last year it was \$18,000, and that's the estimate for this year.

Mr. Shillington: — And that's a separate payment which you make to the property management corporation that's not included in subvote 6. Is that right?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes, that will go back to the property management corporation in one payment, or in a group of payments, I should say. But whenever we order supplies, we buy from there and they pay there.

Mr. Shillington: — All right. How much do you estimate you'll spend this year then? I heard how much you'd spent last year. How much do you estimate you'll spend this year?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I told you our estimate was 18,000.

Mr. Shillington: — Are there any other items which you've got squirreled away somewhere, Mr. Minister, that you're paying to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, or is this the complete list now?

(1930)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm afraid our department doesn't have any squirrels, so we just have everything out in the open. And the subvote that I gave you of 985,700 is quite an open subvote. It shows what it's for.

And the 18,000 for supplies . . . I guess every department has always had supplies. I understand the process that's used now is the same process that has been used over a long period of time. The difference is that now it's called the property management corporation; before it was called Supply and Services. So there's no major change, really.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I'm delighted to hear you're running an open government. You'll then be prepared to give me a copy of the document you just read

from which set out your arrangements with the Saskatchewan property corporation. I assume you'll make a photocopy of that available to us.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Members should never make assumptions. I gave you the information that I can give you from that document.

Mr. Shillington: — Why, Mr. Minister, can you not tell us what your arrangement with the Saskatchewan . . . Why can you not give us a copy of that document which clearly spells out your arrangement with the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation? I would think that would be clarified. I would also think it's information that this Legislative Assembly's entitled to.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — It's an inside working document of the department, and no, it's not the kind of information that you normally releases and that the legislature is entitled to. It's a working document that my department has. It, in the past, would not have been tabled and tonight will not be tabled.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, in the past there was no such thing. This is a brand-new arrangement. You clearly have reduced your arrangement with the property management corporation to writing. You just finished reading from it. I'd ask you, Mr. Minister, to make a copy of it available to us. Surely that's a minimum that we should be entitled to. We should know what your arrangements with the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation is. I ask you to make a copy available to us.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I answered the question. I advised the member that no, that was an inside working document of the department and will not be provided.

Mr. Shillington: — What is it about that document, Mr. Minister, you don't want to make public? What is it that you're ashamed of?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm not ashamed of anything. It's one of the working documents, and there are many of them that we do not provide. It's an ongoing working document, and we'll keep it to work within the department. It's always been done and it will continue to be done.

Mr. Shillington: — It's not always been done. That is the first time this matter has arisen in Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, will you at least have the courtesy to tell us why we can't see it?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That's very simply, because I won't give it to you.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, your arrogance may amuse your back-benchers, Mr. Minister. I doubt that that's going to amuse the public of Saskatchewan. It certainly doesn't amuse me.

Mr. Minister, if there's a reason why the public shouldn't be burdened with this document, then that's fine. But if there isn't any reason for it, then, Mr. Minister, we should have a copy of it. It is important information that goes to

our ability to make this government accountable to the public for the very considerable amounts of money they spend.

So if you've got a reason, Mr. Minister, give it to us. If you don't have a reason why the document shouldn't be disclosed, give us the document.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The member is speculating on what's in the document, and I've advised you that it's an inside working document of the department. There are many of those inside working documents that are not meant for public consumption. And this one is not, and I'm not prepared to go further than to give you the information I gave you. I think I've given you the background information that's pertinent to these estimates, and I'm going to leave it at that.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, this government has a history of going out of its way to avoid accountability.

Mr. Minister, I'll just . . . We won't go beyond a year ago. Mr. Minister, the session was started in June in the hopes that no one would say attention to your misdeeds. I think the polls suggest that perhaps some have, notwithstanding the timing when the session started.

Mr. Minister, the conversion of the Department of Supply and Services to a Crown corporation has a number of major ramifications, one of which is it's much more difficult for the public to find out what's going on when it's a Crown corporation. There are simply not adequate mechanisms established to provide full accountability.

This is not a Crown corporation, Mr. Minister, which competes with any other. It performs all of the functions of a line department, and everything it spends is collected in taxes. There's nothing about this department which requires it to be a Crown corporation, and the benefits of it are not too obvious. One of the benefits to the government is obvious, and that is it's very difficult to find out what you're doing with an area in the past which has been a notorious source of patronage — the purchasing of supplies and the leasing of space.

Mr. Minister, we didn't ask you for a lot of detail; we simply asked you what your arrangements are with the Crown corporation. And that surely is not too much to ask you. You read it from a document — No, you didn't. You didn't give us any detail. You gave us a lot of silly blather about how you got a memo from them, and that's what they thought it was, so that's what you paid. Clearly that's not the situation, Mr. Minister. Clearly you have reduced your relationship with the Crown corporation to fairly specific terms — you read from it.

Now do you not have the courtesy, having read from a document, to table it? If there is a reason, Mr. Minister, why you can't give it to us, tell us that. Give us the reason. If there isn't a reason, then carry out your responsibility to this legislature and give us the document. But you owe us either the document or a reason why you can't give it to us.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well, the member made quite a speech about Crown corporations, and I guess maybe I

finally found the reason why, when you were government, you established so many Crown corporations. But unfortunately, since we've been government, Crown corporations are not a place to hide things.

Our Crown corporation are available to you for review, and every item within the Crown corporations can be reviewed during the course of the Crown Corporations Committee review of this kind of an item. So the member hasn't really much fact when he says that we're hiding; we're not. The whole thing will be open the same as it's been open before. And when you were here the Crown Corporations Committee was called, and we all had a chance to question it. When we're on this side of the House, the Crown Corporations Committee will be called, and you'll have the opportunity to question it.

So the member can't stand behind that one and say that we're hiding anything. It's wide open. It's operating the same now as it did when you were here, only it's a different Crown corporation.

I indicated to you that the document that I read from is an internal working document of the department. It's not intended for public release.

I gave you the information that covered the items that these dollar figures are covering, and for that reason you have the information that you need from that document.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I must say that I am sorely wounded. Because, Mr. Minister, five or six days ago you refused to provide any information when questioned about the relationship with the property management corporation, except what is in the blue book — a figure, one figure; refused to provide anything.

Now you've told the hon. member from Regina Centre information about where the space is located which the Department of the Environment is using. Now that may be due to his superior ability to extract information from you because of his legal training.

However, I do want to follow up on the matter, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister. And I gather that the figures that, or ... or the locations that the minister provided were locations in public government buildings.

And I would like to find out how much space is leased at the present time in each of those locations; and I would like a list of the private lease space that the Department of the Environment has. And I would want to know whether the minister can provide costs which are attached to this information.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm sorry the member feels slighted. But you know, it depends on what question you ask. You don't expect an answer for something you didn't ask.

He asked where, and so I gave him where; and if had asked where, I guess you'd have got the same answer.

I gave the hon. member the locations where those office spaces are rented. And I gave you all of the space that we rent across the province. And it's all there in *Hansard*.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Minister, that you lease no space from the private sector; is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — All of our space is leased through the property management corporation, and I imagine some of the locations that I read out are privately owned, but I couldn't even tell you which ones. Some may be and some may not be. But I read the names of the buildings and which city they were in.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Well, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I can recall in the early '70s when the department of government services was under enlightened minister direction, this kind of information was readily provided to the members that sat on this side of the House.

And I want to know if the minister can provide to us a list of the locations where space is leased, the amount of space that's leased, and whether it's public or private space that's leased.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that my staff could get the square meters or the square footage; I don't know which way it's listed. But as far as whether it's privately owned buildings, we can give you the name of the building, but the property management corporation never indicates to us whether they own it or whether someone else owns it. So I don't have that information in my department.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Minister, will you promise me that you will give it a try? You may be able to convince the minister that's in charge of the Crown corporation that he should tell you whether this is space that's owned by the Government of Saskatchewan or space that's owned by a private company. I think he might, because he's a man that can be reasoned with; and I want you to give it a try. Because I don't believe you've ever asked him that. From your comments it appears that you have never asked him that. And we'd like to know where this space is for the Department of Environment and whether it's in private buildings or public buildings.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you could provide us with the guide-lines or the policy of your department which governs every interface between your department and the property management corporation, whether it's supplies, or whether it's space, or whether it's postage. Give us the policy or the guide-lines, whatever you call them, that governs that relationship.

what we're trying to do here, Mr. Chairman, is understand what the relationship is between the property management corporation and each department of government. Since this is the first department that is before us, it seems logical to me that we're going to ask the questions on the first department, to find out what that relationship is.

(1945)

Now whether we should know that relationship or not is not a question that is before us at this time. It's conceded that we should know that information, because that information was readily available when the space of this province was handed by the department of public works,

the department of government services, the Department of Supply and Services. That information was readily available. And what I want the minister to do is to shed some light on the relationship between his department and the property management corporation.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The property management corporation develops its own guide-lines in the way that it deals with the departments of government or the agencies of government. If the member wants that kind of information then he should properly get it from the minister responsible. I don't believe it's my document to give, it's his; and if he wants to release it, that's his business, but that is not for me.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, I think that the . . . I believe that the question has been voiced to you by a member sitting in his seat. You are here asking us to approve your estimates, but you won't tell us what guide-lines govern your relationship with the property management corporation as such; we're asking what is the relationship between the Department of the Environment and the body that it rents its space from. And we have a right, as members of this Legislative Assembly, to know that information. And when you're on your feet again, Mr. Minister, I want to get the answer that I posed the question for just a short few moments ago. And that is a listing of the leased space and the private space, and the amount that the Department of the Environment has in every location.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Let me take the last question first. And I indicated to you that we would provide the name of the building, the town that it's in, and either the square footage or the square meters. I don't know just how the buildings are measured. Some of them that we've had for a while may be in square footage. But we'll indicate those things.

Whether or not the building is privately owned, you'd likely know by the name of it or by talking to one of your members who happens to come from that area. But we don't as a department go out and negotiate leases. That's done by the property management corporation. So that type of information is within the corporation and should be sought from that corporation, not from us.

You ask about our relationship. It's a fairly simple relationship. We pay the property management corporation for the space that we lease. We pay the property management corporation for the use of the mail room for sending out our mail. We pay them for any furniture that we buy and we pay them for any supplies that we buy. So you know, it's a fairly simple relationship. They provide and we pay. It's not too complicated, really.

Mr. Brockelbank: — It sounds, Mr. Minister, like the property management corporation has a stranglehold on you. And I wouldn't, if I was you, allow myself to be in that position too long because this Crown corporation which you don't believe in, which you philosophically don't believe in . . . And we can tell you don't believe in it because you've started about three or four new Crown corporations since you formed the government of this province. I wouldn't get myself in that position if I was

you.

I would demand from the property management corporation a detailed explanation of what they're putting you through when they're renting you space. And it's very easy because he sits very close to you. So you get over to him and you find out what the arrangement is.

Now I'm not sure whether he's going to make that arrangement available to us when we get, at some time in the future, in the distant future, get a chance to question that minister who's in charge of that Crown corporation. It may be too late to prevent you from making some sorry mistakes on behalf of your department. We want you to know how you're dealing with this Crown corporation which has been established, and we want to know what the relationship is.

Mr. Minister, changing the subject only slightly, I would like to know in the closed fiscal year, the immediately closed fiscal year, how many consultants were retained by the Department of the Environment, and what was the purpose of the retention in each case, and the costs? Consultants retained by the Department of the Environment, the purpose of retaining the consultants, and the cost, and the name of the consultants, of course?

An Hon. Member: — Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: — State your point of order.

Mr. Shillington: — A few moments ago I addressed a question to the minister with respect to the relationship between the corporation and the department. The minister read several sentences from a document. When I then asked him for the document, he refused to give it to me.

I would refer, Mr. Chairman, to *Erskine May*, page 433:

A Minister of the Crown may not read or quote from a despatch or other state paper not before the House, unless he is prepared to lay it on the Table.

A minister who reads from correspondence then ought to lay it on the Table.

Similar authority, Mr. Chairman, is to be found in *Beauchesne's*. I'd refer you to paragraph 327:

A Minister of the Crown is not at liberty to read or quote from a despatch or other state paper not before the House, unless he be prepared to lay it upon the Table.

And then section (2) of that:

. . . a document which has been cited ought to be laid upon the Table of the House . . .

I'd ask you, Mr. Chairman, to instruct the minister in his responsibility to this Legislative Assembly and ask him to lay that paper before the House.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — That particular rule, Mr. Chairman, has always been if you are quoting from a particular

document. The hon. member indicated that what he was doing was referring to various briefing notes, and briefing notes have been used in this Assembly on many occasions, and it's . . .

**Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Environment and Public Safety
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 9**

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order. The chair has no way of knowing what kind of document it was, but:

It has been admitted that a document which has been cited ought to be laid upon the Table of the House, if it can be done without injury to the public interest. The same rule, however, cannot be held to apply to private letters or memoranda.

The point of order is not well taken. Debate continues.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Chairman, I appeal that ruling. I challenge your ruling. I challenge the Chair.

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

Mr. Muller: — Mr. Speaker, in Committee of Finance the member for Regina Centre raised a point of order stating that the minister was required to table the document from which he was reading.

I referred to *Beauchesne's* citation 327(2) and ruled the point not well taken. The member challenged my ruling.

(2017)

Ruling is sustained on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 30

Muller	Meiklejohn
Duncan	Martin
McLeod	Toth
Andrew	Sauder
Berntson	Johnson
Lane	McLaren
Taylor	Hopfner
Smith	Swenson
Swan	Martens
Muirhead	Baker
Maxwell	Gleim
Schmidt	Gardner
Hodgins	Kopelchuk
Hardy	Britton
Klein	Goodale

Nays — 18

Brockelbank	Kowalsky
Shillington	Atkinson
Koskie	Anguish
Romanow	Goulet
Thompson	Hagel
Mitchell	Calvert
Upshall	Lautermilch
Simard	Trew
Solomon	Van Mulligen

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, let me remind you of what is at stake in this area. Last year the Department of Supply and Services spent \$112 million. There is no clear opportunity to come and question anybody on that. We have to do it department by department. Mr. Minister, this has been a prime source of patronage in the past. This department's been no end of trouble and embarrassment to this government, and we would be derelict in our duty if we didn't ask you to account for this million dollars, if we didn't ask you for a reasonable amount of detail.

This issue arose because we asked you to give us a clear and specific statement of your relationship with the property management corporation. You read from a document which has it. Then, without giving us any shadow of a reason why you shouldn't disclose it, you arrogantly stood there and refused to do so.

Mr. Minister, we are . . . Mr. Minister, we're here to ensure that public money is spent wisely and efficiently and fairly. That's what accountability is all about. Everything you've done since the election, Mr. Minister, has suggested you want to avoid that.

Mr. Minister, you were late in bringing down a budget. You brought it . . . You opened this session in the summer when you hoped no one would be watching. You have time, and this government has time and time again made every conceivable effort to avoid accountability and to avoid telling people what you're doing.

This, Mr. Minister, involved \$112 million of money that is expended in such a fashion that it lends itself readily to patronage. This is not \$112 million paid out in salaries. The majority of this is paid out for goods and services, and it's been a source of an endless number of embarrassments to you people in the way in which you've done it in the past.

Mr. Minister, we have a right to this information. We have a right to know what you're doing with the taxpayers' money, and you,. Mr. Minister, have a responsibility to account to us for the way that money is spent. And that's what this is all about, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, you clearly have the detail of how this money is being spent. You read from a document which has it. I'd ask you, Mr. Minister, to carry out your responsibility and give us that information.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — There's no item in my budget that says 112 million. I kind of wish there were. It happens that in my budget there's one item that says 985,700. I've given the hon. member an account of how that is accounted for, what it's spent for, and I believe the information that I gave you is as factual as I can provide. I have no other information on the subject, and I've answered the question a number of times.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, it may be as factual as you can make it. It's certainly not as detailed as you can make it, Mr. Minister, you were reading from a document which has some information which is very germane. It sets out your relationship with the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, what they provide, and how it's done. And that is obviously, that is obviously a document which the public ought to have. If, Mr. Minister, if you've got a reason why you won't tell us, why you won't give us this sort of detail? If you've got a reason why, for some reason or other, the public shouldn't know how their money is being spent, then give it to us, or give us the information. But don't stand up repeatedly and say, that's an internal working document. That is not a reason not to disclose a document to us.

So I ask you, Mr. Minister, give us an accounting of how the public's money is being spent. It's almost a million dollars. And I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, you've got a responsibility to tell the public how that million dollars is being spent and you haven't.

Mr. Minister, in past years . . . I invite you to have a look at any estimates previous to this one, and look at the sort of information which was given by Supply and Services with respect to the money that they spent. There is 19 subvotes; it's broken down according to what was spent on operations, renovation, maintenance.

Mr. Minister, I and, I think, members of the public who have watched this government sloppily waste money for five years, are interested in how you're spending their money. They're interested, Mr. Minister, in whether or not there are any renovations, in how the buildings are operated. And you have a responsibility to give us that. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, to come clean and give it to us.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I indicated to the member earlier that it was for rent and for postage and mailing and furnishings. I told you that we would provide a list of all of the locations of the buildings and the square footage or the square meters in each building.

Now the postage side of it, it's put in at basically the same figure that was used for postage last year. We don't know. It's an estimate, as you know. It's an estimate of cost. So we don't know what we're going to mail in this particular year. So I can't give you any great breakdown of mail, but I think when it says mail, that's basically what happens in the mail room down downstairs here.

So I have given you that break down, and I've promised to give you the listing of the office space that we rent. I can also tell you that the space that we rent now is the same space that we occupied a year ago with the exception of the portion that was transferred to us from Labour. All other space is the same that we had a year ago. If you received the information last year from Supply and Services, and you say you did, then you should very easily be able to look up again and see exactly what our costs were, and you'll find that the figure I'm giving is right.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, what we are faced with here is a government who intends to cloak part of its operation in secrecy, a part of its operations which have been plainly visible to the public prior to this time. And this in keeping, Mr. Chairman, with other actions of the government with regard to how they're running the government. And this is obvious. People are starting to ask questions out there, Mr. Minister. And when you see the auditor's report, you understand why the people of Saskatchewan are starting to ask questions about this government and its secrecy and its not providing information to the representatives of the people in this Chamber.

And what does the . . . And what are the public reading out there? Well, they're reading this: The Regina *Leader-Post*, June 18. This is on the very subject I'm talking about here, and I'll quote you:

Concerns over a lack of government spending accountability and possible interference in his own independence have been raised by the provincial auditor, Williard Lutz.

Specifically, Lutz said he was concerned about the time lag in the tabling of the government's audited financial information in the form of public accounts.

Right on. We're concerned about that; the public's concerned about it. And if the Deputy Premier wants some more, I'll give it to him. "Lutz is . . . concerned about the lack of . . . " Perhaps the minister should get his mouth out of gear and listen to what I have to say.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: —

Lutz is also concerned about the lack of accountability resulting from the creation of the Property Management Corporation out of the old Supply and Services Department.

If this information is not disclosed by the Property Management Corporation, Lutz said, MLAs will be denied "essential information."

I could go on reading more about what the Provincial Auditor says about this government here. Now the minister says, well, I wish, I wish I had a lot more in the budget, when accosted with a figure by the member from Regina Centre. But let's go over to another department, the Department of Education. The figure is not \$1 million. I believe it's \$23 million, payment to the property management corporation.

(2030)

And, Mr. Chairman, this minister refuses to tell this Assembly what are the conditions that control the interface between his department and the property management corporation. Now if we're up against the same kind of reticence to provide information to this Chamber in every department of this government, we'll come out at the end of the day with zip about government

space, relative to previous times when that information was available. Not only was it available about public buildings, it was available as to whether the buildings were private or public. We need — the people of Saskatchewan need — that information in order to make an analysis of what the Minister of the Environment, and every other minister of this government, is doing in relation to the property, the space that they rent for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, you have not provided that. Through a technicality you're denying that and I want the minister on record, in response to my comments, as to why he is denying this information. Because if he is denying it, that means every other minister over there will be denying it as well. And we're not going to get at that information because the minister in charge of the property management corporation will not be putting evidence or information before a committee of this House for at least a year, for at least a year. So there is an interval in there where there is no information provided to us.

The minister in charge of the property management corporation says that this is going to be an efficient and effective Crown corporation which will provide benefits to the people of Saskatchewan. We want to know, Mr. Minister, what are the benefits? Have you determined what the benefits are to the Department of the Environment? I want to know.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well the member again says that we're hiding information, and that's not true. You can go through the auditor's report, and you won't even find that he's had any problem with the department of the Environment. We aren't even mentioned in the auditor's report because our staff have done a good job. Everything has been up front, everything is recorded, so there is no problem.

When you talk about the amount of money that's paid to the property management corporation or estimated to be paid to the property management corporation in the next year, it's my estimates. The figure is there; I gave you a basic breakdown of what that figure would cover. You asked for the space; I've told you that I will provide a written document to you that will list the buildings that we are situated in, which cities that we are situated in, and the square footage or the square meters.

Now I believe the hon. member has all the information he needs. And for him to stand there and cry the blues about us not giving him information is a bit foolish. The information is here. All you have to do is listen. I gave it to you before; you wouldn't accept in that form. I give it to you again.

Could I have the page, please?

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering if the minister could tell us as of February 28, 1987, how much physical space there was rented for office space storage in regard to the operations of the Department of Environment and Public Safety, what the total square footage is that was rented by the department?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I would have to get that information

for you, and I have agreed to provide it to you, and I will provide it. I'll bring it tomorrow . . . or bring it on Wednesday; we won't be in the estimates tomorrow.

Mr. Anguish: — Could the . . . I find it amazing that all the people you have — you have one, two, three, four, five, six, seven people from the department — and there would be no one there that would know that as of December 28, 1987, as to how much space you rented in the Department of the Environment. No wonder the auditor is concerned about the controls that's being kept by this government if out of all the people you have here this evening you don't know how much space you rent to house your operations. Have you asked any of the people here tonight? Do any of those people sitting along the back row over there know how much space you rented in the Department of Environment and Public Safety as of December 28, 1987?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well I told the member the different communities that we're located in, and there are a number. And to just pick that figure out of the air would be wrong. I'm going to give you exact figures for every office that we're in and when it comes you'll be satisfied that it the actual space located in your town and in other towns. And we'll break it out either in square footage or square meters, depending on how it has been provided to us. We'll give it to you; we'll give you every space that we're in.

Mr. Anguish: — Well that would be very . . . That would be very kind of you to do that, Mr. Minister. We look forward to that information forthcoming.

Maybe you could tell us just a small example — how much square footage is rented currently from the property management corporation for executive administration, for example. Can you tell us that this evening?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm not just quite sure what you mean by executive administration. Do you mean my personal office here in the Legislative Building? Is that what you're talking about, or are you talking about, or are you talking about the deputy's office, or which offices are you talking about?

Mr. Anguish: — Okay. The permanent head of the department — how much space is rented for the permanent head of the department and the operations that are immediately under the authority of the deputy minister?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well that would end up being all of the office space that we have with the exception of my office here in the Legislative Building, and that's that information that I'll provide you. I couldn't even tell you how many square feet in the office that I occupy here in this building, and I doubt if most ministers consider that as a real concern.

Mr. Anguish: — The member from Meadow Lake, Mr. Minister, asked me how many square feet there are in my wife's kitchen. There are 240 square feet in my wife's kitchen.

Could you tell us then just the deputy minister's office, not including the secretary's space? How much space does

the deputy minister have in his office? What kind of controls have you got on? You don't know how much there is one office; you don't know how much there is in total offices; you don't know how much there is in your own office. You're supposed to be publicly accountable to the people of the province of Saskatchewan — you certainly aren't. How much space is there in the deputy minister's office?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We don't have that figure; we could make a wild guess and I don't think that's the way to deal in estimates. We'll give you the figures of how much space we occupy. He's in the Walter Scott Building, and it's not a large office but the exact square footage I really don't know. it might be 300; it might be 350; but it's not large.

Mr. Anguish: — Would you break that information down for us as to the various branches, how much is office space, how much is storage space? Would there be a detailed breakdown as to the square footage that you rent for the total Department of Environment and Public Safety, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The amount that we'll give you is the amount of space in each building. That's all that we'll give you. We're not going to break it down into how much is in bathrooms, and how much is in office, and how much in storage space. I don't think it's significant. We pay rent on whatever we're leasing, and we'll give you the overall figures for each building. But beyond that, no, we won't break it down.

Mr. Anguish: — I agree that the bathroom sizes aren't significant, unless there was an overly large amount of time spent in the washrooms. We'd want to know what people were doing in such a large space. But we would appreciate it just by building, I think would be adequate for our needs. And we don't need to know the fine details of washroom facilities. But if you'd break it down by building, we'd appreciate that.

Would you also, for the next time we sit in this committee, along with the total square footage that you rent, would you also have a breakdown as to providing us with what percentage is rented from the Crown, or is owned by the Crown; and also what percentage is rented from private interests that would in fact rent that through the property management corporation to the department of Environment and Public Safety.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I've answered the identical question several times this evening, and I've told you that I will give you the name of the building, the city or town that it's in, and the amount of square meters or square feet that we lease. I don't even know which ones are owned by the Crown and which ones are owned by private individuals. If I tell you the name of a building in North Battleford, it's quite likely that you know whether or not it's owned privately or publicly.

So the property management corporation may know and should know, but I don't know. We lease only from the property management corporation, as you know. That's the information that I can provide you, and that I will provide.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, when you go and ask for increased space because you've had a change in priorities on a program, or a change on priorities for some specific area of the province, and you require more office space, how does that process work? Do you say to the Premier, or to cabinet, to the Executive Council, that well, we're going to require so much space? Or does the property management corporation have some magic formula whereby they know exactly how much space you're going to need over the course of the year? Or does your department go and negotiate with property management corporation?

Tell us a little bit about how that process occurs because you're; indicating to us that you have no input whatsoever, the property that you rent and lease is laid upon you. And so I'd like you to enlighten us as to how the process occurs, that you gain the rental property that you require for the operations of your department.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well since I've been with the department, we haven't had to go through that process because the space that was in existence last year is the space that we still use.

I'm advised that when we need new space, the process is for us to list the people that we need the space for, the classification on the government scale that those people would be at, and people on different classifications are allotted a certain number of square feet.

So the property management corporation then would review the amount of space required for the people that we're proposing we need more space for, and then they in turn will shop for that space on the market and provide the space to us. Prior to this year we would have never had a figure, basically, of what our individual space would have been. This time we do get a figure, and I give you that figure.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, if you make this request from the property management corporation, they come back to you, do you accept absolutely the property that they're providing for you? Or does the deputy minister or someone in your department go and look at the property and say, well, this property's acceptable, this property isn't acceptable? Or do you have to take what the property management corporation gives to you? Or do you have some input into the property that you actually get?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that in the past when a circumstance arose that we needed space, that usually there were one or two operations provided, and the deputy or someone would go and look at the space and then make the selection of which ever one he wanted.

Mr. Anguish: — With due regard for economy, efficiency, and effectiveness, I suppose you would also want to know what the cost per square foot is of that property because it comes out of your budget. And if you are showing due regard for the public's money, then you should have some consideration for the cost of property that you're renting. Is it a consideration of your department to question or to accept the property

management corporation's allocation dollar amount on the property that they assign to you?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The property management corporation, as you know, is just newly formed. The space allocation at this point is strictly the space that we had before, and the costs that were in place last year are the costs that are still in place. There haven't been changes really for any department that remained the same.

(2045)

One of the advantages that will be there for our department in the future is that, yes, you can take a look at what the space is going to cost, and you can make your choices because that will reflect in your budget. Prior to this year, that was not the case. The more space and the better space I could get for the department, the better we liked it because there was no direct charge to the department. That will not be the case under this because the charge will be made to each department of government. And I think it is a good move. It will make all of us really be a little more responsible and be better manages. I think it's a good idea.

Mr. Anguish: — If it operates like that, that aspect of it, I think, in fact would be a good idea. It makes the department responsible for what they're spending.

Now what I'm asking you is that when you go for more space, or a change in space, Mr. Minister . . . Mr. Minister, when you go for more space or a change in space, do you have some leeway with the property management corporation? Do you advise them ahead of time that we have \$13 a square foot to spend, or we have \$28 a square foot to spend on property? Do you do that ahead of time? Or do you wait until the property management corporation comes back to you, then say to them, well this is a little bit too expensive, we'd like property for \$20 a square foot, we can't afford the \$25 a square foot property that you've secured or are offering to us.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — In the future we may be able to do some negotiation with regards to rents and the types of space. At this point the space is there; we occupy it; there's very little opportunity for that kind of negotiation to take place. All of the rental agreements are in place. But down the road when there is need for change either up or down, I hope that that opportunity for negotiation will be there.

Mr. Anguish: — I'm glad that you're looking at that for future negotiations with the property management corporation because I'm sure that's what you'll do to be diligent in saving your department dollars and cents. I would also assume that you know what the department is willing to pay for property at certain locations. And I'd like you to tell us, Mr. Minister, what you're willing to pay for office accommodation in the city of Regina today?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We don't have a figure that I could give the hon. member. We haven't really discussed it. We aren't in the process of leasing more space; so no, I don't have a figure that I could provide under that.

Mr. Anguish: — Did you tell us earlier, Mr. Minister, that when you provide us with some of the questions we've asked about the total square footage requirements by the department and the breakdown, that you would tell us the dollar amount that's paid for each of those locations per square foot?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No. I didn't say that. I told you I'd give you the building and the amount of square footage or square meters in each building and in which town they're located.

Mr. Anguish: — Well, Mr. Minister, will you also provide us with the dollar per square foot on each of those facilities?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No, I don't have those figures, and I won't be providing them.

Mr. Anguish: — Are you telling us you don't know how much you're paying for rent? You just advocate this great new system in the property management corporation where you're going to be saving all kinds of dollars and making you more responsible. Well, you're going back, again, and your irresponsible. You're absolutely irresponsible. You don't know how much you're going to pay for rent or how much you have been paying for rent. Is that what you're telling us? You don't know how much you're going to pay over the coming year for rent?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I gave you the figures, how much we're going to pay in the coming year for rent.

Since 1976 the dollar figure that is charged per square foot or square meter has never been given in this legislature for a building that the government leases. And the main reason that it hasn't been given is because to give those figures out will have an impact on the lease rates of buildings in Regina or Saskatoon or any city.

It's not good business when you're in a negotiating process to give the figure out, and it has never been given since 1976 when you were in government. I don't know what happened prior to that, but I know it hasn't been given since that time.

Mr. Anguish: — I think maybe it's time to change the past practice, Mr. Minister. I think you should provide us with what you're paying per square foot. There's all kinds of patronage your government's given out all over the place in the province of Saskatchewan, and we suspect that there's likely more patronage here. I don't know specifically about your department, but I know in the Department of Highways there's certainly cases that will be coming up during estimates.

I think people have a right to know if there's property that you rent that's actually owned by the Crown, but you rent it through the property management corporation. If that's at, say, \$18 a square foot, and you have comparable property in terms of quality and quantity of space and desirability of department in the private sector that the property management corporation leases or rents for you at 28 or \$30 a square foot, I don't think that's having due regard for efficiency and economy and effectiveness within the department.

And I think that the minister should place before his House, when he gives us the information he already has promised, what the dollar cost per square foot on each of the rental properties that the department get through the property management corporation. And are you telling us tonight that you will not, that you refuse to give us the information, detailed as to what you pay for rental property across the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I've already given you the figure on what we're paying for office rent, total. But I'm not prepared to give you, on a square footage basis, the amount of money that we're paying for office space in any given city or town, because that, I believe, will impact on the market, the rental market, in whichever city or town you would be giving those figures out for.

You designed the process when you were government. That was the process that was followed then, and it's been followed from that time to this, and it's going to continue. I believe it was a good policy. You never gave the figure when you were in government, and I'm not intending to give the figure now.

Mr. Anguish: — You didn't give it because you already admitted you didn't know it. You said you didn't know what the rental was per square foot. You told us that in this House this evening, Mr. Minister. So don't go back on what you've told us earlier. You very clearly told us this evening that you didn't know what the square footage costs were. Are you saying also that no one in your department knows what you pay per square foot for office space?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That's a figure that has never been given out to departments over the many, many years that Supply and Services has been in place to lease space for government. That was held by Supply and Services and it hasn't been given out; it's kept confidential. The space that we need has been provided for us on an allocation basis — certain types of positions get a certain size of office. That's the way it's always been done since I've been around government and for some time prior to that. I think the hon. member realizes that the method has been in place, and it has been a good method and will continue to work that way.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, how do you expect to get good bang for your bucks if, so to speak, if nobody in your department knows what you're paying for rent? Does property management corporation just come along at the end of the year and give you a bill and say, here, were charging you — I don't know what it is in the Department of Environment; I don't have the figure before me — that you've got to pay a million dollars for rent this year, and you just pay the bill? Is that this better system that you've got developed within your government?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I indicated to the hon. member that what we're doing is being charged for the same cost that was in place last year. If there's an opportunity come up for us to take new space, then we will indeed negotiate for that space and for the rates that we would pay. But that is not the question before my department at this time at least. We aren't seeking any new space. We have

sufficient space at this time, and as time goes along and we transfer some people from the gas inspection and the electrical inspection to Sask Power, we'll likely have surplus space. So we're not looking for more space, there will be no negotiations for space this year.

Mr. Anguish: — Well you haven't known in the past what you pay per square foot for your facilities that you require. Are you saying that in the future you will know what you pay for your facilities?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That's a good possibility, as we negotiate for new space, that we will know what the cost per square foot is. And I think it's good for a department to become accountable so that they are not using more space or better space than is required, but rather that they are operating on an economic base, and that's what we're looking forward to doing in the future.

Mr. Anguish: — Well, Mr. Minister, we'd like to see you become more accountable because I certainly think it's a very accountable system, where you just pay the bill for rent and don't know whether you're getting good value for your money or not. There's certainly no negotiation process right now. Property management corporation don't tell you who you're renting from, which I find very, very hard to believe, Mr. Minister.

I also find it very, very hard to believe that in the interest of the taxpayers' dollars that you wouldn't try and get the best value for your rental dollar that's available to you, regardless of whether it's in Regina, or the Battlefords, or Moose Jaw, or Saskatoon. I think it's very irresponsible for you not to know what you're paying for rent.

No business . . . And this is the government that always says they're the big government — that's right — big government in favour of big business. They run things so efficiently. I don't know of any business that could ever succeed if they don't know what they're paying for rent. You try and get the best value for your dollar you can.

And, Mr. Minister, I hope you're right about what the property management corporation is going to do. But I suspect that it just increases the hidden accounts of the departments within this current government that we have in the province of Saskatchewan. That you can't get it through the departments, they don't know what they're paying. They don't actually even know the process. They're uncertain. They don't know what the future holds. It portrays a lack of planning that this government has had since 1982 when you first came into office, and it seems to be getting worse.

Property management corporation could mortgage and sell facilities out from under you. You seem to have no concern about that. You seem to have no input or influence over into it.

And, Mr. Minister, I suppose we look forward to getting the information. And you can expect that we'll be coming back to you wanting to know what you're paying for rent, and the split between what the Crown owns and what you're paying the private sector, because we would think that there is likely a very big differential between the

property that the people of Saskatchewan own and the property that your friends own that are high profile Conservatives in the province. They get bigger values out of the property they own because of the patronage this government offers to them.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The member is making some pretty wild claims about patronage. Maybe that was the case when your government was in office, but it's not the case in my department.

We're not providing any patronage for space that we're leasing. So you seem to have a lot of information about patronage, and I guess maybe some of the former ministers over there were involved in some of that. But that's not the case for us.

When you talk about the space that we rent from private and the space that we rent from public, if you take a look at some of the fancy gold buildings that you built in this city of Regina, that's likely the high-priced space. When you get out into rural Saskatchewan and into the small towns, the space isn't quite so elaborate.

And I believe that our department is not located in elaborate space, but rather in economic space. It always has been, and I make no apologies for the quality of space that we're in. It's not elaborate, but it serves the purpose.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you can indicate to us whether in your discussions, and I assume you've had some negotiations with the property management corporation, whether the space that you rent from the government internally, within government, as compared to private contracts and leases, whether the rate that is established for government is an economic market rent, market influenced rent, or whether it is an artificial rate that's established by the property management corporation.

(2100)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That kind of information is not available to me. All of the space has been leased through Supply and Service prior to this year and will now be leased through the property management corporation. Most of it is the same space, so there won't be any change basically there. But I can't give you that figure, whether it's the same kind of rent paid for government buildings as private. I just don't have the information.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Well, Mr. Minister, would you acquaint yourself with the facts as to whether the government space is an artificial rate, or whether it's an economic market rent that you're paying for your space?

And I assume you have some space with the private sector, and some within the government sector. In any event, whether you have any private space or not, you should acquaint yourself with the facts about whether the space is an artificial rate or whether it is a market driven rate.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well as I indicated to the member, we have the same space that we had last year. The rent that we're budgeting for this year is the same amount of

rent that we paid last year.

So for the hon. member to ask me the question, it's very difficult for me to give you a figure because it's a figure I don't have. We've never had the figure for what rents were in government; they were kept within Supply and Services. The situation is still the same; we haven't been given the figures on square footage rental at this time.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Well, Mr. Minister, I was attempting to get away from the questions that the member from Regina Centre was asking you. I'm not asking for a rate. I'm just asking you to determine and supply to this House whether the rate that is charged for the public leasing of space is an artificial rate or is it derived from the market place. That's what I'm asking you to determine and to provide the information to the House, and I wonder if you could do that.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No, that information is not available to me, and I don't think that it's the kind of information that I will supply to the House.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I think sometimes with the deluge of detail that comes with the estimates, we can lose sight, momentarily at least, of the forest for the trees. And I'd like to focus just on the forest for a moment, if I may.

It seems to me that as we're standing here in this evening and having this debate that we're involved in right now, that it is part of a much larger issue. And the issue is this, Mr. Minister. There are two things. The issue of your credibility, and the credibility of the government of which you are a part. And the issue is also your accountability and the accountability of this government of which you are a part.

Let me just for a moment, Mr. Minister, focus on what would have been provided in the detail for the dealings with what is now called the property management corporation a year ago when the Department of Supply and Services existed. At that time, information not only about leasing and purchase details would have been provided, but also information about maintenance of buildings, operations of buildings, renovation of accommodations, printing, mail and telecommunications, photographic services, and materials management. Clearly, Mr. Minister, the list is much longer than that which you've been prepared to provide tonight.

And as we in the opposition stand here in these estimates, it is our responsibility to try to force — I'm sad to say — to force the government to be accountable and to be credible with the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — And we have to do that in a context because that is important to the people of Saskatchewan because of the track record of this government, Mr. Minister. We all recall standing in this room at 1 o'clock in the morning on Christmas Eve, passing Bill 5 — Bill 5 which gave government permission to create government departments, wipe out government

departments, mix and match them and change their budgets around — and you've done that — and to do all of that behind closed cabinet doors. That was what Bill 5 was all about. The public was not terribly pleased; they wondered why the session was called before Christmas and why we were taking the motion at 1 o'clock in the morning on Christmas Eve.

Then we came to June 17. And June 17, Mr. Minister, being if I may suggest to be exact, ten weeks and one day — ten weeks and one day — the latest budget in the history of Saskatchewan, and many people suggesting a budget that was presented so that we could come and do these deliberations while the people of Saskatchewan are involved in their summer holidays; and so that in essence, again, the operation of government would be carried out behind closed cabinet doors as much as it is possible for you to manipulate.

And I suggest again, Mr. Minister, when the property management corporation was created, many people again said: here is another symptom of a government that doesn't want to operate in the public eye, with the public accountability and public credibility. It's creating the property management corporation; a corporation that will make it just opportune to engage in the practice of patronage while arranging for the facilities for government to do its business.

And I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that as we sit here this evening debating the estimates, and as we discuss your department's relationship with the property management corporation, the issue is very clearly your credibility — and the credibility of your government — and your willingness to be accountable to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well the member makes an interesting speech, but one that has very little substance.

When it comes to accountability, we have given you the figure for this department, and as you go through your estimates books, you'll find that every department is giving you the same kind of figure that shows you how much our rent is costing by department. That's something that wasn't available to you before; you got a bulk rent for the government.

So we are providing you with information, and we're not sitting behind closed doors as the hon. member indicates. We're standing here in this legislature of Saskatchewan; the television cameras are running; the public are watching; there's no big secret.

And I have given information day after day. The information that is available for me to give, I have given, and I have given a lot of information. And some of the members have even got up and thanked me for the forthright way in which the information has been provided. So don't tell me that I haven't been giving you information. I have been giving you much information. I have given you information on the subject that you're talking about tonight, and I've given it many times. So the member can make his speeches, but they're not factual.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, it has been the record of the presentation of this budget to include in every government department the property management corporation expenditures, and that way to artificially enhance the budget that is being accredited to each department. You and I both know that.

And when I stand in this House, Mr. Minister, and express my concerns about this government operating behind closed cabinet doors, that is not merely my personal opinion. That is an opinion that is shared by people around Saskatchewan; and if you cared to pay any attention to the poll that was published last week, you would know that just as well as we do.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — You know, Mr. Minister, you know as well as I know, as well as all the members of this House know, that Bill 5 was clearly intended to move government behind closed cabinet doors. I don't know how many government departments were wiped out, how many were created, and how many were mixed and matched. You may be able to answer that better than I. We're through finding out new things everyday as we go through the estimates.

But clearly, it has been the agenda since the time that the Premier allegedly said that he understood, to the best of his information, that we had a \$500 million deficit when he told the people of Saskatchewan in October that that was the financial circumstances that we had in this province. We have seen since October, Mr. Minister, this government moving behind closed cabinet doors and refusing to be publicly accountable and, I say also, increasingly becoming less credible with the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — You know, as well as I, Mr. Minister, that when the Crown created the property management corporation, that it had all the characteristics of making it possible to carry out patronage in a way that it had never done before. And your government, Mr. Minister, has managed to carry out patronage in this province in ways that it has never been done as well.

We are simply asking, as we stand here tonight, for the information that we expect from every department, from every minister, as we come before the estimates of this House. We are expecting some specificity with the details in your relationship with the property management corporation. And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that if you don't come clean, and if the other ministers do not come clean, your credibility is going to sink to an all time low, and you can count on that from the people of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — When we get into estimates, sometimes we actually touch on subjects that are within the estimates of the department. It seems like the member is covering a lot of other ground that isn't within the Department of Environment.

When you talk about doing things behind closed doors in cabinet, to the best of my knowledge, as long as I've been in government, and for many, many years before, cabinets have always sat behind closed doors. And they make many decisions, but the decisions become public after the decision is made, and that's continuing to happen within our government.

We have set up the property management corporation. The figure that I give you is the figure that is going to be charged by that corporation for the services that this department needs. The property management corporation, in its turn, will appear before you in Crown corporations, and you will have the opportunity to question, in detail, the minister responsible for that corporation. There are no closed doors; they're all open doors. And if you have questions on the Department of Environment, I'd be pleased to answer those questions.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, I find it unbelievable the statement that you're making. I do not remember in this province of Saskatchewan there having been a Department of Labour wiped out at any time in the past without coming before this legislature. I do not at any time in the past remember a Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment being created without coming before this legislature. Clearly, your government has chosen to operate behind closed cabinet doors.

Mr. Minister, there are a number of topics. I outlined those at the beginning of my comments, and let me to through those again that have to do with the expenditures relating to the property management corporation and your department.

And I ask you simply this: to provide to this House the same information related to your dealings with the property management corporation as would be provided by the Department of Supply and Services in last year's estimates, and let me refer to those again, those being: the lease and purchase details related to facilities that you use; the maintenance of buildings; the operation of buildings; renovation of accommodations; printing; mail and telecommunications; photographic services; and materials.

And I ask you simply this, Mr. Minister: related to the Department of Environment, will you provide all of the details on those topics, on those categories, in the same way that they would have been provided by the Department of Supply and Services?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The detailed information that I gave earlier that broke down the \$985,700 is the only break down that I can give the hon. member. I gave you that.

Mr. Shillington: — Slight correction. It's the only one you will give us. You could give us a good deal more if you weren't, for some reason or other, ashamed of the information.

Mr. Minister, we had the spectacle of you reading from a document which gave us a good deal of information that we would like, and you won't give it to us, and you ought to.

Mr. Minister, as the member from Moose Jaw North stated, your term of office since the election has been a litany of cover-ups, a litany of avoiding accountability.

(2115)

Mr. Minister, the information we have asked concerns the expenditure of a good deal of taxpayers' money at a time when you've been taking money away from people who very badly need it. If you insist that \$1 million ought to go to the property management corporation, you have a responsibility to tell us why and how.

Mr. Chairman, I move:

That this committee direct the Minister of the Environment to provide to the committee the following information with respect to the relationship between the department and the property management corporation, for each of (the) 1986-87 and 87-88 (fiscal years):

- (a) The purposes for which the department has made or proposes to make payments to the Corporation, citing the cost in each case;
- (b) The list of space occupied by the department, including the location, the number of square feet, annual cost and lease arrangements;
- (c) The number of vehicles assigned to the department and the cost of each;
- (d) Other services performed by the corporation for the department, including the cost of each.

I move seconded by the member from Quill Lakes.

Mr. Chairman: — Order.

That the practice of permitting substantive motions in the Committee of the Whole and Committee of Finance be discontinued.

That's page 64, Committee of the Whole House. And on page 170, procedures in committee.

Each resolution for a Vote forms a distinct motion which can only be dealt with by being agreed to, reduced, negated, superseded or withdrawn. The committee may reduce the amount of a Vote by the omission or reduction of the items of expenditure of which the Vote is composed. Here the power of the committee ceases.

Mr. Shillington: — I thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me see if I may meet your exacting standards for these motions. I move:

That this committee delete the sum of \$985,700, the sums to be supplied to the Department of Environment, until the Minister of the Environment provide to the committee the following information with respect to the relationship between the department and the

property management corporation, for each of the '86-87 and '87-88 years:

(a) for purposes of which the department has made or proposes

to make payments to the corporation, citing the cost in each case;

(b) the list of the space occupied by the department, including the location, number of square feet, annual cost, and lease arrangements;

(c) the number of vehicles assigned to the department and the cost of each;

(d) services performed by the corporation for the department, including the cost of each.

Mr. Chairman, I so move, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Westmount.

Mr. Chairman: — Order. The motion . . . I find the motion out of order because it doesn't specify the amount to be reduced and in item . . . Order. In item 6, it can be voted against when that item comes before the committee.

Mr. Shillington: — I wonder if the Clerk could . . . I'll try this one more time. I was going to ask for a copy of it back. I will move:

That subvote 1 be reduced by \$985,700 till the minister provides the information requested with respect to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

Mr. Chairman: — Order. As the motion stands, it's not in order. But if the member was to put a period after \$985,700, and delete everything after that, the motion would be in order.

Mr. Shillington: — I make those changes, Mr. Chairman, so that we can . . . if you want to return it and have me initial it, I'll do that. Make those technical changes so that the matter may proceed.

(2150)

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 19

Brocklebank	Goulet
Shillington	Hagel
Koskie	Lyons
Romanow	Calvert
Mitchell	Lautermilch
Simard	Trew
Solomon	Van Mulligen
Kowalsky	Koenker
Atkinson	Goodale
Anguish	

Nays — 27

Duncan	Martin
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McLeod	Toth
Andrew	Sauder
Berntson	Johnson
Lane	McLaren
Smith	Hopfner
Swan	Swenson
Muirhead	Martens
Maxwell	Baker
Schmidt	Gleim
Hodgins	Gardner
Hardy	Kopelchuk
Klein	Britton
Meiklejohn	

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, I just have one question. I'm sure the information is forthcoming, Mr. Deputy Premier. Mr. Chairman, before we had the first vote this evening, I had requested certain information from the minister with regard to consultants: the name of each consultant employed by the department in the year that's closed; the purpose of the retention of each consultant, namely the study and the cost of the studies that were . . . or the money that was paid to each consultant. And I wonder if the minister can provide us with that information.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well, if the vote had carried I'd have had a lot of difficulty providing you any information because that would've destroyed to staff of the Department of Environment. I thought you fellows were interested in environment and were kind of supportive of having a department. But anyway, the question that you've asked. Yes, we'll provide the list of consultants that we've retained over the past year and the job that they were retained to do. I don't . . .

An Hon. Member: — And the amounts paid to . . . inaudible . . .

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes, and the amounts of the contract that they held.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'll be looking forward eagerly to that. I will excuse you, Mr. Minister, for reflecting on a vote which has just been taken. And I will await the answer to the question which I posed to you.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:58 p.m.