

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the members of the Assembly, Mr. Barry Morgan, who is seated in your gallery today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Morgan is a representative of the Lawyers for Equal Justice, and you will know, Mr. Speaker, that this is the group of lawyers who have come together just recently because of their concern for access to counsel in court for all Saskatchewan people, regardless of income, with a special concern about the deterrent fees being imposed on legal aid clients.

I would ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming Mr. Barry Morgan.

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

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to call to your attention, and to the attention of members of the House, that we have a guest with us sitting behind the rail, the member of parliament for Regina West — the member of parliament for Regina West since 1968 — and I know all of us would want to welcome him to this Chamber.

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Legal Aid Commission Fees

**Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services. It deals with his attempts to deny responsibility for the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission's new deterrent fees on poor people.

Last Wednesday in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, he denied responsibility for those deterrent fees, even though the treasury board, which is a committee of cabinet ministers, had approved them.

Is the minister now aware that by section 40 of The Legal Aid Act it is quite clear that it is the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the cabinet, which sets all regulations with respect to who is eligible and who is not eligible for legal aid.

Was the minister not aware of that law when he made that statement last week, or is this just the latest of his attempts to duck responsibility for these deterrent fees?

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

**Hon. Mr. Schmidt:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to advise the member opposite that cabinet has not changed the eligibility for legal aid.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A new

question and the same minister. Mr. Minister, clearly the legal aid deterrent fees have been imposed because of the \$500,000 budget cut imposed on the Legal Aid Commission by your government. I want to simply ask, Mr. Minister, about yours and your government's priorities — you support on the one hand the imposition of these deterrent fees on the working poor in Saskatchewan because of the \$500,000 cut, and on the other hand your government spends \$10 million a year on political aides to the Premier and cabinet ministers of the Government of Saskatchewan.

My question, Mr. Minister, to you very simply is this: what kinds of priorities of your government does it indicate when you make those kinds of choices? Will you please explain that to this Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Schmidt:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the member opposite gets this fictitious figure of \$10 million as a cost of providing government in this province. But I could tell the member opposite that as far as I can calculate, with my two portfolios, the additional sum I receive as a cabinet minister is about \$1,400 a month to be the minister in charge of Social Services. And I don't think that's an exorbitant amount of money.

With respect to legal aid, I don't know what else the members opposite want done with legal aid or how they want it operated. I believe that the members opposite are all chartered, card-carrying members of the "money grows on trees" society.

**Mr. Mitchell:** — It's appalling, Mr. Speaker, that the minister tries to make a joke out of this very serious matter.

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

**Mr. Mitchell:** — We've been talking in this House for days and days and days about this being an unfair imposition on poor people who don't have any money, and the minister simply refuses to recognize any responsibility for it. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of national and provincial organizations have spoken out against this policy of deterrent fees and some, including the Lawyers For Equal Justice, have taken the position that such fees are illegal, violate a number of laws, and violate the Canadian constitution.

Will the minister take these sincere concerns into account and at least put this foolish plan on hold until these concerns have been dealt with?

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

**Hon. Mr. Schmidt:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't know which plan in particular that he considers foolish or which plan should be put on hold, but I can tell you this, that it was not the government who told Legal Aid Commission to charge any form of fees. And I can tell you that had I direct control over the Legal Aid Commission, I may have went about reducing the cost in other ways.

I can tell you this, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite indicate that they have spent days and days on this topic, and that is true. But what's more important to this province is the position we are in with respect to tariffs on potash and possible tariff interference with uranium. That is more important than spending days and days . . .

### Variable Grain Freight Rates

**Mr. Upshall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, who I understand is down in Michigan for the second time in two weeks, my question is to the acting minister.

On August 1 variable rates for the shipment of prairie grain went into effect because the Mulroney cabinet in Ottawa refused to overturn that decision of the CTC (Canadian Transport Commission) which approved these rates. The cabinet refused to overturn the variable rates decision in spite of formal appeals from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, from other farm organizations, and individuals.

My question is this: did the government of Saskatchewan file an appeal with the Mulroney cabinet asking it to prevent the introduction of variable grain freight rates?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if there's much more I can add on this question of variable freight rates. I think, going back over the last four or five years, that every opportunity that this government has had to make an intervention over the issue of transportation, transportation freight rates, and particularly including variable freight rates, we have always made that intervention, and our position has been clear that we're not opposed to lower rates for Saskatchewan farmers. What we've always argued for is that those lower rates be available to all Saskatchewan farmers, and I think that's a position that Saskatchewan farmers agree with, if the results of the last election, at least, are any indication, Mr. Speaker.

In answer to this question, a couple of weeks ago in the House we talked about more recent interventions by our Premier. To some degree now, I suppose, what has happened is past history. But we have always been clear on . . . and our government's position has been clear there, and we've always made interventions and we've been there personally, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I am astonished, I'm appalled that your government did not even submit an appeal to the Government of Canada, an appeal that could have overturned this decision, could have overturned a decision that will greatly alter the structure of Saskatchewan's small towns and communities and the lives of rural people.

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

**Mr. Upshall:** — In all your consultations with the government, as you have just rhetorically stated, what

formal position did you put forward on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan to the Mulroney government to stop the implementation of variable grain freight rates?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it was as I outlined earlier.

### Grain Price Deficiency Payments

**Mr. Goodale:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also to the Acting Minister of Agriculture, and the minister will know, the acting minister will know that we are now in a new crop year with a 20 per cent decrease in grain prices, and most farm leaders are saying that this is going to be a particularly tough and critical year for farmers. Obviously, a timely and generous deficiency payment, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely essential, and everyone agrees with that.

I'm concerned about the arithmetic that has been used by the government in relation to the deficiency payment that everybody hopes will be coming toward the end of the year.

Before the western premiers' conference our Premier was talking in terms of \$5 billion, I believe. At the western premiers' conference the western premiers talked in terms of a range of 1.6 billion to 3 billion if I remember that correctly. And at the recent meeting . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order, please. I'm afraid the preamble of the hon. member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg is getting somewhat long, and I ask him to get to his question.

**Mr. Goodale:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker. My point was simply that a number of figures have been used in relation to the arithmetic about deficiency payments, ranging from somewhere around \$1 billion up to as much as \$5 billion, and I would like to know from the government specifically what is their number?

What is the number in terms of a deficiency payment for the current year that this government would regard as satisfactory, and could the acting minister indicate what arithmetic was used to arrive at that calculation to meet the needs of Saskatchewan farmers?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll give the hon. member my most recent understanding of some of the arithmetic that's been used to come up with some several numbers, and the reason there has been more than one number is because there are a number of bases on which one might calculate a deficiency payment.

For example, a simple calculation would suggest that if there's a 20 per cent drop in initial prices, to get it to the same point as we were last year one could argue that we should have a deficiency payment 20 per cent larger. If one was to use the theory that the deficiency payment should match the like . . . deficiency payments of a similar nature in the United States for example, the number might end up at 3 billions of dollars. And I think if one was to use the European example, you could even get higher.

I think, once again, as I pointed out to the member, the NDP member from Humboldt, I think it was last week in this Assembly, the important thing is that we do have a deficiency payment. And I think our Premier has made great strides forward in this regard, in that he's received unanimous approval at the most recent ministers of Agriculture meeting for a deficiency payment, and we expect one to be forthcoming. And I applaud our Premier, not only for the initiatives . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. I'm afraid we had a question there which was very, very long, which provoked debate. And that's what we're getting. So if you have a supplementary, please make it brief and to the point.

**Mr. Goodale:** — Yes, I will, Mr. Speaker. It is specifically the comment that came out of the Quebec City meeting of agriculture ministers that has concerned me, because it seemed to me that the arithmetic being discussed there was substantially lower than numbers we had heard before. And once again, I would ask the minister if he could indicate, very specifically, what is this government's bottom line? What number do you regard as the figure that is your satisfactory target for a deficiency payment this year?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Well I've given the hon. member the best and most recent information that I have.

And the other point that I would raise with him, Mr. Speaker, is this. On the one hand, we must deal with the question of deficiency payments and getting our farmers through this period, through this short term. But at the same time, we must not lose sight of the longer term and of the root cause as to what's causing these problems. And that's exactly why our Premier has been in Michigan and is back there again, because the real issue here, and the real question here, is not promulgating deficiency payments of whatever size and whatever arithmetic. The question is, Mr. Chairman, or Mr. Speaker, are the world leaders prepared to address the bizarre policies that have led to this situation across the . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — I think the minister has adequately answered the question.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, I did not hear what the answer to my last question was, if there was one. And I can understand why the silence on this issue, as silence on many other issues facing Saskatchewan farmers, like nothing on . . .

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

**Mr. Upshall:** — Silence on the ending of the crop year; silence on the Farm Credit Corporation moratorium ending; silence on farm credit interest rates; and silence on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the acting minister: why has your government . . . in light of all the silence you have given us, why have you not stood up for the family farms of this province on this and many other important issues facing them? And why have you, instead, stood up for the

multinational corporations that are infiltrating our province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a question of our government somehow being silent on the question of agriculture. And, Mr. Speaker, in reply to that whole issue of who has been silent as relates to the key issues, including agriculture, facing this province today, I would ask: where have the NDP been on the agriculture issues? Forty-three days into this legislature before we even had the question of agriculture raised. Where have the NDP been as it relates to the free trade debate where it is so important to agriculture? Where have they been on the potash issues? Where have they been on uranium, Mr. Speaker? And have they made one representation at the national or international level as it relates to agriculture subsidies?

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

**Mr. Upshall:** — Mr. Speaker, members opposite on July 29, when I tried to raise this question in the House, refused to even talk about it . . . on June 29.

Mr. Acting Minister of Agriculture, it is obvious that you have failed the people of this province; you have failed to communicate to the Mulroney government the importance of variable rate issue. Does the minister not agree that variable rates are designed to assist multinational grain companies like Cargill at the expense of Saskatchewan-based grain companies like the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool? And do you not agree that variable rates will slowly drive business away from Saskatchewan Wheat Pool elevators to the large main line terminals?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I mean, I stated, in a shortened version obviously, what our briefs have been to the CTC and standing committees all along the way. We have no more desire than does the hon. member nor than anybody else in this province in seeing the railways, if you like, somehow control or determine the woof and the weave of rural Saskatchewan, and that has been our position from day one. If there is an opportunity for lower rates for everyone, we're interested in that, Mr. Speaker, and I don't know why we wouldn't be.

And as it relates to somehow the hon. member suggesting that we are somehow failing Saskatchewan farmers, and particularly as it relates to the deficiency payment, our Premier was working on that issue the day after the last cheques were in the mail, Mr. Speaker. And I have every confidence that he'll deliver for us, not only in terms of the short term, in terms of dealing with deficiency payments to make up this shortfall income, but in terms of our Premier being the natural leader on the national and international stage, which is where this is ultimately going to be resolved, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Koskie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the Acting Minister of Agriculture. I don't expect a lot of answers from him if his past performance is any

indication. But, Mr. Minister, are you aware that the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool has a network of hundreds of elevators throughout this province? And they have a network of elevators throughout this province because they have a commitment to rural Saskatchewan farm families and to the small communities in Saskatchewan.

And this network of elevators established by the wheat pool was made possible because we had a freight rate structure that allowed it. And as of August 1, with variable rates, that structure of the network of the wheat pool elevators throughout all of the farming communities and small towns is going to be affected.

I ask you: does the minister deny that variable freight rates will accelerate the closure of small- to medium-size elevators and branch lines throughout this province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Speaker, certainly the potential for that to happen was the basis for the approach that we took in our briefs and submissions to the standing committees and the CTC all along.

It seems to me, though, that the other dimension to this issue of what's happening in rural Saskatchewan, or what could happen in rural Saskatchewan, it's no longer good enough for us as legislators to thump just a single drum, and for that matter maybe even an old drum. There's no sense rehashing historical problems. We've got to look to the future and what the solutions might be.

And that's part and parcel why our Premier, along with the other four western premiers, so warmly greeted yesterday's diversification announcement for western Canada. Because that's going to be . . . that's very much going to be a part and parcel of designing and maintaining the woof and weave in rural Saskatchewan that we've come to appreciate and to know that it has to be maintained in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Koskie:** — Mr. Speaker, I will ask a supplement, and I would ask you to listen if the man answers it.

Mr. Minister, are you aware of a specific example taking place in Saskatchewan, which was on the media, where a multinational corporation, the Cargill grain company in The Battlefords area are using the benefits of the variable rates; at the same time, in the same community, the wheat pool, a farmer-owned operating facility — Saskatchewan established — is unable to use the variable rates because it's unable to dock the 18 car unit next to its elevator. I ask you: is not variable rates really a design of this Tory government to help your multinational corporation, the Cargill grains of this world?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Speaker, I talked about members beating on old drums, and this is a classic example of the NDP . . . If it's a corporation and it's into food processing, as well as grain marketing, as well as farm supplies, it's a multinational and it's instantly bad in the eyes of the NDP.

If he thinks for some moment that I'm condoning any practice which would somehow pit farmers against farmers, and somehow redesign rural Saskatchewan in favour of some corporation, he's absolutely wrong. Every farmer in Saskatchewan knows he's wrong, and his logic is simplistic at best, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Koskie:** — My final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I never thought I'd see the day when a cabinet minister stood up in this legislature and supported a multinational corporation against the wheat pool.

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

**Mr. Koskie:** — I gave him the specific example. I absolutely can't believe that he stands up and supports Cargill over the farmer-owned wheat pool.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, is it not true that the Tory governments in Ottawa and Regina have, in fact conspired to introduce the variable rates in order to put, in fact, benefits to the multinational corporations, like Cargill, to give them an opportunity over and above the network that the wheat pool has?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Speaker, if one was to take the hon. member's logic to its obvious conclusion, one might suggest then that because the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool bought part interest in Robin's Donuts, now they too are a vertically integrated, multinational company, and somehow they are bad too. That's where that logic takes you, Mr. Speaker.

What this question today indicates, Mr. Speaker . . . What this question today indicates is that the NDP do not have a food and farm policy in this province. They probe away and beat on old drums. They do not have a food and agriculture policy. It's the same old stuff that's come out of the NFU (National Farmers' Union) handbook for the last 20 years, Mr. Speaker. And Saskatchewan farmers have had enough of it. They want to see some solutions put forward, not the same old haranguing.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please.

#### Lease of Space in Credit Union Central Building

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Tourism, Small Business and Co-operatives.

Mr. Minister, your government claims constantly that we are in tough economic times and that every dollar counts. In light of that claim, can you explain to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan why your government has been paying more than \$12,000 a month to lease the entire fifth floor of the Credit Union Central Building in downtown Regina for a grand total of three employees since June 1. How is that kind of expenditure wise and efficient use of taxpayers' dollars?

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

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, certainly one realizes, and should be aware, that we have realigned the Department of Co-ops, and some of them are in the Department of Tourism and Small Business. The Co-op securities are in with the Securities Commission under the Minister of Justice.

It may well be, and I will take notice of the question, that we are in a long-term lease. That's logical. I think any member would realize that . . . the possibility that the lease may be of a longer duration, and we have to go to expiry. I don't . . .

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, supplementary. I'm sorry, new question, Mr. Speaker. While the minister is taking notice and checking into this situation, I believe he will find that the government has a long-term lease to that property, and that property used to house 37 employees from the former Department of Co-ops. But when you did away with that department and moved all but three of the employees, you failed to find another use for that space, and that was more than two months ago; or out another way, more than \$24,000 in rent ago.

My question is: did you do absolutely no forward planning at all with respect to the closure of the Co-ops department? Did no one think about trying to find an alternative use for this space, or getting out of the lease altogether as of June 1?

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

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. Some hon. members are interfering once too often.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Mr. Speaker, it seems logical to me that when we were down-sizing government, which we have done a considerable amount of, that there would be some excess space. There is excess space in places other than the credit union building, and certainly we are going to look at how we can best utilize that space.

The member opposite asked a very interesting question. He said: did you not do any forward planning when you looked at down-sizing the Department of Co-ops? I want to tell you the forward planning that we did, Mr. Speaker.

We are going to put the co-op function in the business resource centres of this province, out there on the front line so that people coming in to see how you start a business in Saskatchewan can see that the co-op model is one model they can use, as well as a proprietorship, or a corporation, or what it may be. I believe the forward planning that was done in realigning the co-ops into the Department of Small Business and Tourism, where they should normally be, will be an enhancement to the co-ops in Saskatchewan, and that's the type of forward planning that was done.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, we will debate what you're doing with the Department of Co-ops another day. You know that what you're saying is patently just not the way it — it's not reality at all.

But I understand, Mr. Minister, that Credit Union Central wants out of this space, and obviously the government wants out as well. But the question that taxpayers have a right to ask is: what is taking so long to get a relatively simple question resolved? Your little inefficiency or waste . . . It may be small to you, Mr. Minister, but by the end of this month it is going to represent more than the total budget that your government recently cut from the Voice of the Handicapped . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order. Does the member have a question? Let me hear the question, please.

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When each month of delay means another \$12,000 in lost rent for some phantom employees, why didn't you work this problem out before you dismantled the department of co-ops?

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

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, all I can indicate to the member opposite . . . And I realize that the other members of that government were government. The Leader of the Opposition understands the number of leases that a government is in. And as you down-size, it's only logical that there's going to be some excess space.

As the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, we are looking at this, and we're going to have to get out of some leases that we've been in. But to suggest that you can just overnight change these sorts of things, is not as simple as it looks.

And we are giving . . . I assure you, Mr. Speaker, and the people of this province, that we're taking every sincere attempt to see how we can then utilize space in the city of Regina since the down-sizing of government.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 12 — An Act to amend The Management Accountants Act

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and move second reading of The Management Accountants Amendment Act, 1987.

The council for the Society of Management Accountants of Saskatchewan have requested this amendment. The present legislation limits to 10,000 the value of real property the society may hold. The council believes this limit is too restrictive in today's complex business environment. The amendment will permit the society to consider lease versus purchase options for the real property and thereby take advance of the best business

case decision.

We are pleased to support the council for the Society of Management Accountants of Saskatchewan in their request. I am therefore pleased to move, seconded by the hon. member for Indian Head-Wolseley, that Bill No. 12, The Management Accountants Amendment Act, be now read a second time.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've had an opportunity to study the Bill as it has been tabled in the House and which the minister has just now made reference to.

On the outset, from the looking at the legislation as proposed here, I do not see that we would have any great concern with it. There are a number of consultations that we want to hold on it before we pass final judgement, Mr. Speaker, and before I make some further remarks. So at this time I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### **Bill No. 20 — An Act to amend the Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act**

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Mr. Speaker, in March I indicated my economic and financial report that our province is faced with a new economic reality. It's a reality that demands fiscally responsible action. But before we ask others to make sacrifices, we had to be realistic, but fair, in our efforts to control government expenditures.

One of the major actions that this government has undertaken to further improve the financial management of our affairs is to reduce the size of the civil service by over 2,000 positions. This was not an easy task, Mr. Speaker, but a necessary one. By offering incentives for retirement we were able to make significant progress towards accomplishing our down-sizing objective.

Through the early retirement program, 1,200 positions have been vacated, and 800 of these have been permanently deleted. The program was available to employees whose age and service totalled 75 years prior to December 31, 1987. Employees under the public service superannuation plan received an unreduced pension benefit based on salary and service to the date of retirement. Employees under the public employees superannuation plan receive an increase in their accumulated equity of 1 per cent of equity for each year retirement is, before age 65. All employees receive a bridge benefit of \$300 per month to age 65, and a lump sum severance payment of one day's pay per year of service.

We feel this is a fair early retirement package, and we feel a program effectively met its objective.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 20, An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act, be now read a second time.

**Mr. Solomon:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say a few words about Bill No. 20, Mr. Speaker, and make some reference in greater detail than I'm prepared to do

this afternoon. But we have had in the last number of months an amazing performance by the government opposite with respect to how they treat civil servants. They have, in this Bill, provided an opportunity — and I quote "opportunity" — to civil servants to take early retirements. But what they have neglected to inform the public about, and of course other civil servants that are still working, is the great cost that is incurred . . . The great cost incurred by this Bill, not only to the large amount that will be underfunded in terms of the superannuation plan, but the great cost, the human cost, that the government is responsible for, in terms of these people who have many, many years left to contribute to the communities in which they live, that are being taken away by the government.

And I think that this superannuation amendment and the actions of the government that they have taken with respect to denuding these people and taking their opportunities away is regrettable. At this point, Mr. Speaker, I would beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### **Bill No. 17 — An Act to amend The Corporation Capital Tax Act**

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Mr. Speaker, the corporation capital tax is basically a tax on the wealth of the corporation. The tax applies only to large corporations operating in this province; corporations with taxable paid-up capital of less than \$10 million are not subject to the tax. As a result, fewer than 800 companies pay the tax, and most of them have their head offices located outside of Saskatchewan. In 1987-88 the corporation capital tax will generate an estimated 51.9 million of dollars in revenue.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, increases the corporations capital tax rate for trust and loan corporations from 1.2 per cent to 3 per cent, and this rate is retroactive to January 1, 1987. The tax rate increase will result in trust and loan corporations paying the corporation capital tax at the same rate as is currently being paid by banks. We believe that this is only fair, as most trust and loans corporations are now beginning to provide the same services as banks and compete directly with them.

Corporation capital tax rate increase will generate approximately 2.2 million in 1987-88. I move second reading of an Act to amend The Corporation Capital Tax Act.

**Mr. Solomon:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Bill 17 is a Bill, in my view, that does not go far enough. The minister has indicated that the tax rate on corporations will be increased, that there will be less than 800 corporations in the province that will be affected by the Bill. He indicated as well that there were projections suggested in the estimates that will produce revenues to the province of \$51,900,000. I suppose that figure would be an interesting figure if it was taken in isolation, but when you compare it with the actual funds raised — were in 1985-86 less than \$31 million — and you take with that, Mr. Speaker, the fact they estimated, not \$31 million in revenue for the last fiscal year but nearly \$56 million, yet they are now increasing the tax and only projecting

less than 52 million. I think we have to be looking a little more closely at the statistics, and I'd be willing to raise these issues in more detail when we take a closer review of the bill.

But in terms of second reading, Mr. Speaker, what we see here is an effort on the part of the government to take more money through the tax system to offset what they have been the author of. And what they have authored in this province is a record of fiscal mismanagement, a record of broken promises, and a record of indications to the people of this province that they will receive tax breaks — yet they are given tax increases.

I have a great deal of things I'd like to say further to this Bill, Mr. Speaker, and therefore I would beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### **Bill No. 18 — An Act to amend The Tobacco Tax Act**

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — This Bill increases the tax on a package of 25 cigarettes from \$1.02 to \$1.17 effective June 18, 1987; and the tax on one gram of fine-cut or pipe tobacco goes from \$1.65 to \$1.90. The tax structure for cigars is also being modified. The tax increases from 13 to 15 cents for cigars retailing for less than 20 cents; the tax on cigars retailing in the 21 cent to 40 cent category decreases from 33 to 30, and the tax on cigars retailing in the 41 to 60 cent category decreases from 60 to 45.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the tax on those cigars that retail for more than 60 cents changes from 60 to 75 per cent of the retail selling price. This means that those individuals who can afford to purchase the more expensive will pay more tax as the price increases. These tax changes are expected to yield an additional \$9 million in '87-88.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act to amend The Tobacco Tax Act.

**Mr. Solomon:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to just point out to the Speaker in the House, and the minister, that although a tobacco tax, if levied in a fair manner, is a responsible tax, what this government has done in the last year alone — actually since the first part of 1986 — has not increased just this last budget increase by 15 per cent the tobacco tax, but has in effect raised taxes on tobacco on a package of cigarettes in 18 short months by 52 per cent.

And I think what that does, in terms of this government's record, is clearly indicate again the total fiscal irresponsibility of the government. They are spending dollars far, far greater . . . in far greater numbers and quantities, Mr. Speaker, than they can manage. They cannot keep track of what they are doing, and therefore they are levying taxes at an unprecedented rate, not only in the corporation level, but at the E&H level and, of course, the tobacco tax as well.

There's a number of things I'd like to say as well on this Bill, and I'll save those comments, Mr. Speaker, until a later date. So, therefore, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### **Bill No. 19 — An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act**

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Mr. Speaker, when the opposition NDP are opposed to increases on tobacco, I know that they will be opposed to an increase in the sales tax.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I just listened to the hon. member from Regina North West. Obviously the member from Moose Jaw didn't hear him.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, implements the increase in the sales tax rate to 7 per cent, which I announced in the budget speech. The increase in the sales tax rate will generate an additional \$100 million in 1987-88. The increase in the rate was required in order to help provide adequate funding for the services this people, or the people of Saskatchewan, desire.

(1445)

Even with this rate increase, Saskatchewan still has one of the lowest sales tax rates in Canada. We also, Mr. Speaker, have the broadest tax exemption base for individuals of those provinces which have a sales tax. Sales tax exemptions are provided for such essential foods . . . items as food, drugs, and medicines. Also included in the exemption base are clothing and footwear, and electricity for residences, farms, and recreational facilities, all of which were exempted by this government during our first term in office.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, farmers are exempt from sales tax on input costs such as farm machinery, fertilizer, pesticides, and weed control chemicals. Sales tax exemptions provide substantial tax savings to Saskatchewan residents.

As part of the government's cost reduction exercise, it has also been necessary to cancel the mobile home refund program, and section 4 of the Bill repeals this program.

I move second reading of An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act.

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

**Mr. Solomon:** — Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government was elected on the basis of promises made to decrease taxes. And I'll go through those in great detail in a few moments.

But what they have done today, and through the budget, is introduce three tax Bills, in particular the E&H tax Bill, which are basically sticking it to ordinary and middle income people in terms of their consumption of products. It's a consumption tax. It's a highly unfair tax.

It's an increase, Mr. Speaker, of not 5 per cent or 10 per cent or 15 per cent, but it's an increase to the people of Saskatchewan of 40 per cent. That means that people who are now suffering because of the fact that a number of utility rates are increasing and goods and services are increasing, are now going to be faced with increased

suffering because they're going to have to pay a 40 per cent higher provincial tax on those items that are being taxed provincially.

Mr. Speaker, the government opposite has preached fiscal responsibility at every turn. And at every turn, they have practised unrestrained spending. They have . . .

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

**Mr. Solomon:** — They always say to the people of Saskatchewan: do as we say, but not as we do. And what they have done, Mr. Speaker, is they have burdened the taxpayers of this province with a deficit that is the fastest-growing deficit, not only in Canada or western Canada, but the fastest-growing deficit in North America. That's the legacy this government is leaving to the people of Saskatchewan.

They talk about . . . the party opposite, Mr. Speaker, talks about less government. They're the party of less government, yet they practise, through their actions, more government. They talk about less political patronage when they were in opposition, yet when they're in power, Mr. Speaker, they practise increased political patronage; unrestrained political patronage and nepotism. They provide jobs to their friends at rates that are 30 and 40 and 50 and 80 per cent greater in terms of salaries, and of course the qualifications are either equal to or less than what the people who held those positions earlier were. They have doubled the number of political hacks in their operation to 183, and that's costing the taxpayers of Saskatchewan almost \$10 million.

The PCs opposite have preached less taxes. They have in previous election campaigns, Mr. Speaker — and I happen to have here some examples of what they have said in writing, and I'd like to share this with the House if I can — they have promised to eliminate the 5 per cent sales tax on clothing and utility bills, and I quote, Mr. Speaker:

This measure will be the first phase of a new PC government's commitment to the complete elimination of the sales tax in its first term of office and its commitment to ease the burden of inflation for Saskatchewan citizens.

**An Hon. Member:** — Who said that?

**Mr. Solomon:** — Well this was said in Mr. Grant Devine's own pamphlets in the constituency . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order.

**Mr. Solomon:** — I'm sorry, the Premier of Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Okay.

**Mr. Solomon:** — The Leader of the Conservative Party's pamphlet in the constituency of Estevan, and he talked about the great things they were going to do. He promised tax reductions; he promised an elimination of the 5 per cent sales tax. In this Bill, Mr. Speaker, we don't see the elimination of the sales tax, we see a 40 per cent increase which I find totally abominable and totally full of deceit

and hypocrisy.

I have another leaflet, Mr. Speaker — the member from Kelsey-Tisdale. And the name on the there is the MLA for the district, Mr. Neal Hardy. And he promises here in his leaflet that there will be a 10 per cent across-the-board cut in personal income taxes — 10 per cent cut.

The 2 per cent flat tax, Mr. Speaker, is not a 1 per cent or a 5 per cent or a 9 per cent increase on personal tax rates. The 2 per cent flat tax is, in effect, Mr. Speaker, roughly 14 to 15 per cent increase on the personal rate that we pay on our income tax forms. That is a 10 per cent cut? That again, Mr. Speaker, is a promise made by the members opposite, and a promise broken.

The member from Kindersley, Mr. Bob Andrew. Vote Bob Andrew, it says here:

Real Programs for Real People. Eliminate the 5 per cent sales tax on clothing and utility bills. This measure will be the first phase of a new PC government's commitment to the complete elimination of the sales tax in its first term of office (Mr. Speaker) and its commitment to ease the burden of inflation for Saskatchewan (people).

. . . the first term.

We're now well into the second term, Mr. Speaker. We haven't seen . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order, please. There's a little bit too much interference from both sides of the House.

**Mr. Solomon:** — Mr. Speaker, the commitment was made to reduce the E&H tax, the sales tax — eliminate it in the first term. What we see here, Mr. Speaker, is, well into the second term, this government not decreasing the E&H tax but in fact increasing it by 40 per cent.

And who does that hurt? Does it hurt the wealthy and the powerful friends of the members opposite? Not very much. Who it will hurt, Mr. Speaker, are the average Saskatchewan taxpayers of this province and the average Saskatchewan families and those that are of less economic status. They are going to be paying the increased charges, the increased consumption taxes to this province, not because there is a disaster like a tornado, creating a massive cost on government's back. No, they're responsible and are now going to be put on the hook for this massive tax increase because of pure fiscal mismanagement and political patronage that this government has authored in the last five years.

What I believe, Mr. Speaker, will happen, is that the people of this province will view this latest tax grab, the culmination of tax bill amendments, as the largest tax grab in the history of this province. They view it as a betrayal of trust, a betrayal of promises made and promises that obviously were not made. And what they will do, Mr. Speaker, I maintain and I predict, is express in very clear terms at the next opportunity, that is the next by-election or the next general election, how they feel about this.



What this government has done is increase taxes for a family of four in this province by \$2,000 a year in the last five years, Mr. Speaker. This budget alone will increase personal income taxes to a family of four alone of \$1,000. They have doubled the big tax grab, the biggest tax grab in the history of our province, doubled it from one year to the next.

And I think that is just totally unacceptable. I believe it is hypocrisy at its prime example and, Mr. Speaker, I maintain and I predict again that the people of this province will not stand for it.

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

**Mr. Solomon:** — Mr. Speaker, I have another member of the front benches, the member from Maple Creek, in one of her leaflets she promises again — the member is Joan Duncan — promises a 10 per cent across the board cut in personal income tax.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. I am sure that the hon. member can find a vast array of quotes about all kinds of taxes that most governments have. However, we are dealing with The Education and Health Tax Act, and I would ask the member to restrict his comments to that tax, because if we start talking about other taxes, you can appreciate that there really is no limit.

**Mr. Solomon:** — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the advice. I know that if I was to have a little bit of leeway to speak about all of the tax increases that they have forced upon the people of Saskatchewan, I likely could be here for many hours, but I'll take your advisement accordingly.

Mr. Speaker, I have another copy of a leaflet from the MLA from the constituency of Melfort, and I won't talk about all the promises that they made and he made in his leaflet that he's broken; I'll talk about the one that's pertinent to this Bill.

He promises a Progressive Conservative government will phase out the sales tax.

Maybe there's a problem here, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the member from Melfort defines "phasing out" sales tax as increasing it by 40 per cent. I'd ask the member from Melfort to please define what he means by phasing out? Does it mean a 40 per cent increase in sales tax, or does it mean the dictionary meaning, phasing out, that means "to eliminate"?

And I'd ask him to . . . and certainly I'd even give him some time today to do that. But he'll speak in this debate, I'm sure, and express some clarity at what he meant in his leaflet.

Mr. Speaker, I have another one here from the member from Melville. The member . . . another cabinet minister in this government.

And as I'm reading these through, you'll note, Mr. Speaker, they're all cabinet members, not private members, who sometimes get carried away in their leaflets and will make some commitments that they are not authorized to make.

These are commitments and promises, Mr. Speaker, that are made by the front-benchers, by the cabinet of this government opposite, and they're breaking their promise with this Bill.

And the member from Melville, Mr. Speaker:

PC policies for good government. We will remove the 5 per cent E&H tax.

Well maybe there's a different meaning in the dictionary. Maybe "remove" and "phase out" don't really mean "to do away with" or "to terminate" or "to get rid of" — maybe they mean 40 per cent increase.

And perhaps one of my colleagues, while I'm speaking on this Bill, could get the dictionary and just perhaps find the dictionary term for "remove" and "phase out" for me. I'd really appreciate that.

And we could read that to the House and maybe compare it to the dictionary that the member from Melville and Melfort and Maple Creek and others have in their literature.

And, of course, Mr. Speaker, we have . . . oop, another one here. This is from the member from . . . formerly from the Regina North, who is now from Regina South. He has run on a number of different opportunities here in different ridings, but he is now a cabinet member as well.

And he goes on to talk about in a newsletter, about The Fuel Tax Act, and the renters' property tax rebate, and all of the tax breaks that were supposed to be provided, but are in effect not being provided but are being eliminated and are being increased.

We have, Mr. Speaker, another leaflet from a front-bencher, the Minister of Environment, the member from Rosetown-Elrose.

And he says right here . . . Now maybe there's another definition in a dictionary somewhere that has a different meaning of it than I understand, and members understand, but he says, and I quote:

Eliminate the 5 per cent sales tax on clothing and utility bills. The commitment of a new PC government is to eliminate the 5 per cent sales tax on clothing and utility bills.

Well, eliminate could mean something other than what it means, and I'd ask the member from Rosetown-Elrose to please inform us and educate us on this new meaning of this new dictionary they've found.

Of course, I have another one. This one was provided by a PC candidate who is now a cabinet member, the member from Swift Current. She is a minister in this government as well.

And she says, and I quote — in her literature, with her picture — and it says:

Authorized by Swift Current Progressive

Conservative Party. Is big government taxation taking more than a bite out of your pocketbook? (she says) A Progressive Conservative government is dedicated to phasing out provincial sales tax and reducing personal income tax by 10 per cent.

I know I wasn't going to talk about that, but it was in the quote, Mr. Speaker. And here we have a commitment and a statement and a question by a current member of this government saying that we're going to eliminate this sales tax — do away with the 5 per cent E&H tax.

(1500)

And she asked the question, "Is big government taxation taking more than a bite out of your pocket-book?" Well with the latest tax grab, with the total tax grab of a thousand people per family of four and as the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden indicated, it will be around \$100 million increase just in the E&H tax alone. That's \$400 per family of four, the E&H tax increase alone. They, Mr. Speaker, they will be saying the same thing: is this big government taxation taking more than a bite out of our pocket-book?

Well, Mr. Speaker, the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden, the Minister of Finance, have not just taken a bite, but he has both of his hands up to his elbows in everybody's pockets in this province. The tax man has come, and he's taking more money out of the pockets of ordinary Saskatchewan people in one budget than the five previous Conservative budgets put together, which is amazing. And I think that the people of this province are going to be quite concerned about that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have here — I indicated that just to make it clear — the member from North East indicates, to make it clear we have here — let me just count them. One Premier; another cabinet member — that's two; another cabinet member is three; the member from Maple Creek is four; member from Melfort is five; member from Melville is six; the member from Regina South is seven; and the member from Rosetown-Elrose is eight. So we have eight cabinet members, including the Premier, which is half of the cabinet of this government, who have made promises, in writing, that are here for everyone in this province to see and read — not just to hear, but to see and read — that they are going to eliminate the sales tax, or they're going to phase it out . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Or remove it.

**Mr. Solomon:** — Or remove it. Now we have a dictionary here, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to read out for the members — the member from Melfort who is here today, and other members that I've talked about in this little literature — what the definition of "eliminate" is. Now they've promised to eliminate, not in two terms but in their first term, the 5 per cent sales tax.

And, Mr. Speaker, eliminate . . . The dictionary that I have here is *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Eliminate — it means to remove, get rid of, expel, ignore, get rid of quantities, and so on. That's what eliminate says, Mr. Speaker. Now I don't see any word here that says increase

by 40 per cent or by any kind of percentage increase. I don't see any reference in this dictionary under the word "eliminate" to perhaps say the opposite of what it means.

Now there is opposite words, and I think that's what we are dealing with here. I also have "to phase out" . . . the word "to phase out" in this same dictionary, and what we have here is . . . now this is the word "phase," but we all know the definition of "out." Out is the opposite of in, so we'll leave that. I'm sure they can understand that word and the definition of that word. But the word "phase," which is the verb, is to carry out — to carry out in stages. That's what the dictionary meaning of phase is.

So if you promise to phase out the 5 per cent sales tax, it seems to me that in this dictionary, we should be experiencing in this province not an increase of 1 per cent or 20 per cent or 40 per cent as we see today, but in fact, Mr. Speaker, a decrease — that is a phasing out or a carrying out in stages. And now maybe the members can contradict this information. I'd sure like to get that from them.

Of course, I also have the definition of the word "remove," which is another word they've used in their commitments. Now "remove," the verb, is to:

take off or away from place occupied, (to) convey to another place, change situation of, get ride of, dismiss . . .

Now maybe I'm not reading clearly. I don't seem to read on this definition that remove means to increase. Perhaps it is, but I don't see it here, and maybe there's another dictionary. I'm told, Mr. Speaker, that there is another dictionary — it's the Conservative dictionary. And it's the Conservative dictionary of promises, a Conservative dictionary of commitments, and a Conservative dictionary of five-year plans.

And of course, the dictionary that I'm referring to is the one that they have authored and they've put together very meticulously and very diligently, and they've packaged it in a 20 to \$40 million advertising campaign, and of course all it is, is smoke and mirrors. It's there, but it's not there. Whatever they say, they do the opposite. Whatever they promise, they break. Whatever they suggest, they deny.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, what we have here is, in this Bill, not a smoke and mirrors problem. We have a real, real problem — a \$400 per family of four increase in the E&H consumption tax alone. And that, Mr. Speaker, is going to be a very severe hardship. Now I just wanted to preface my remarks to the real remarks I'd like to make later, the additional remarks, because I'd like to take some time to review closely what the Minister of Finance has said on this Bill. I also want to review other materials that I have, and I want to consult further — I have consulted with a number of individuals and businesses already — but I want to consult further with additional people and other businesses to provide, Mr. Speaker, a rounded argument, from our point of view, with respect to this Bill.

In summary at this point, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to say that the E&H tax increase of 7 per cent from 5 per cent is

unfair. It's unfair to the people of Saskatchewan who will be purchasing goods and services that are necessary to survive in this province. And believe me, it's becoming more and more difficult to do so.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the increase is a direct result of the gross mismanagement of this government opposite, and I will be getting into that in more detail. And, Mr. Speaker, finally I think that it is an effort on their part to break promises that they made. And the effort, Mr. Speaker, I give them an A on. They have promised tax cuts. They have promised elimination, the phase-out of the 5 per cent E&H tax. And of course they've delivered, not a removal or a reduction or a phase-out, they have delivered in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, a 40 per cent increase in sales tax to the people of this province. And I want people of this province and in my constituency to understand that the promise they have made, that half of the cabinet, that I have in writing, and I'm sure the other half have indicated in writing as well, their commitment. They have made these commitments in writing, and they have broken these promises.

It's one thing, Mr. Speaker, for one member of the government opposite to stand up and say something in this House and phrase it around, turn it around and deny it next time. But it's another thing, Mr. Speaker, when you go to the doorstep, and you go to the people in your constituency and you seek support from constituents on the basis of your program that is in writing, and you get elected, and you get that program — you don't just ignore it, but in fact you do the opposite.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that's a betrayal. I think and I believe, Mr. Speaker, and this is supported by thousands and thousands of letters and calls that we've had as opposition, that the people of this province are angry. They are indignant with the way this government is treating them. And I maintain, Mr. Speaker, that when the next election rolls around, this government will not be around any longer.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Education Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 5

#### Item 1 (continued)

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I want to make some final points with respect to community colleges before leaving that subject and these estimates. And I want to note first of all, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister of Education simply failed to answer any of the questions I asked during the estimates last week. He made particularly no reference to why the amalgamation of technical institutes and community colleges is being hurried through in a matter of weeks

resulting in a fundamental change in an adult education system that has evolved over the last 20 years.

On the matter of personal enrichment courses and the government's plan to eliminate personal enrichment courses in the community college system, I simply say to the Minister of Education that we obviously have a very different view of the value of personal enrichment courses to the education system. The New Democratic Party, Mr. Chairman, is very interested in planning changes for the future in education. But we want to do it, and will do it, in consultation with community groups, unlike the government who have rammed these changes through in a matter of weeks without consulting any of the community college boards affected.

If the future, as the Minister of Education likes to say, Mr. Chairman, is going to resolve around having more leisure time, then we on this side of the House ask: why eliminate all leisure time educational programming in this province? The minister likes to joke about these personal enrichment courses, Mr. Chairman, and diminish them by constantly referring to courses of basket weaving and aerobics. It's not the elimination of basket weaving and aerobics, Mr. Chairman, that is concerning members on this side of the House. It's the elimination of a lot of courses in the arts and in practical home skills that's of concern to us.

And before leaving this subject, Mr. Chairman, I just want to give the minister a few examples of the courses that he's eliminating. He's eliminating painting, drawing, photography, film processing, pottery and ceramics, drama, set design. Does he not consider that those are useful and appropriate courses for the community college system to be offering? He obviously doesn't. He's eliminating other basic courses, Mr. Chairman, like cooking and woodworking and dance, which we consider to be of value even if the Minister of Education does not.

Now the minister said in his reply to my remarks last week that these courses only make up 3 to 4 per cent of the community college system. They make up in many community colleges 3 to 4 per cent of the budget, but not 3 to 4 per cent of the courses offered, Mr. Chairman. I say to the Minister of Education that in lots of rural colleges they make up 25 to 30 per cent of the programming.

And I want to tell the minister what we on this side of the House consider to be the value of some of those programs. First of all, Mr. Chairman, the personal enrichment programming often opens the door for many people in communities who don't have a lot of experience in the regular adult education system and begin by taking a personal enrichment course, and then go on to take university classes or adult upgrading. It's a way essentially, in many cases, of reintroducing people to a positive experience with the educational system.

We on this side of the House, Mr. Chairman, also think that those courses are an excellent way of enhancing rural life at little expense to the taxpayer. And I want, Mr. Chairman, to give the Minister of Education an example of what was happening in Prince Albert with respect to these courses.

Prince Albert offered 500 community interest classes in its college system — an average enrolment of 10 to 12 persons in a course, so that in fact approximately 6,000 people were taking these classes. It only cost the Prince Albert community college system \$77,000 to put those classes on for 6,000 people — only 4 per cent of the college budget.

Much of that money, Mr. Chairman, was returned to the local community in the sense that people who were taking these courses purchased local materials — purchased materials locally that they needed to use in the courses. We maintain, Mr. Chairman, that there was no significant benefit to the taxpayers of this province to eliminate personal enrichment courses, but there was a significant educational value to the community in maintaining those classes.

(1515)

Now, Mr. Chairman, I want to move on to another aspect of the community college cuts and decisions that the minister has made, and focus for a minute on the loss of local autonomy that is coming about as a result of the changes that the Minister of Education is making to the community college system.

The loss of the local community college boards, now in Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw, and Prince Albert — boards that you have chosen to eliminate, sir — means the loss of an advocacy group in each one of those communities on behalf of those communities to represent the needs of those communities. Instead, you're choosing to run this system out of Regina, a system that was run out of the local communities. And that community-based decision making process was central to ensuring that community college programming would be responsive to local educational needs.

A wide range of contact committees was set up as a result of that local-based decision making. And in many cases now that contact . . . that community contact system is being destroyed. Local autonomy, we maintain on this side of the House, meant flexibility for the local college system. As a result of having a local board, the board was able to deliver and adapt and adjust and change programs quickly and easily — something that will now not be possible with a central board run out of Regina.

It's our fear, on this side of the House, that the community college system in the four major urban centres will simply become extension divisions of the new institutes in each of those major urban centres.

And I want to give, Mr. Chairman, another example to the minister of the value of local autonomy. Because local autonomy in the four major urban centres, through the community college boards that operated there, meant that the staff in those centres was accountable to a local board. And as a result of that, there was sharper and more immediate fiscal responsibility.

And this can be seen clearly if you look at the result, Mr. Chairman, of the spending that has been brought down by the community college system.

If you ask yourself the question, Mr. Chairman, did the community college system in the four major urban centres stay within its budget allocation each year, and you compare that with the question of did the Department of Education, the main line department based here in Regina, stay within its spending estimates each year; if you look at the *Public Accounts* and ask yourself that question, the answer is yes, the community college system always stayed within budget. And we maintain that that was because there was a local board ensuring fiscal responsibility and ensuring that the staff would stay within budget.

And when you ask yourself the question, did the Department of Education here in Regina stay within budget, the answer is consistently no, it didn't, because it became a large bureaucracy under a minister who didn't have control of his department.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I want to move from the question of local autonomy with respect to community colleges to looking at the decision-making process with respect to the amalgamation, with respect to the minister's decision to force community colleges and technical institutes to become one super institute. And I want to say to the Minister of Education that he cannot possibly justify a situation in which there was no involvement at all of the local community college boards that were going to be affected by this decision in the decision-making process.

In fact, this decision was implemented before there was any democratic process involved at all, including an opportunity for debate in this Assembly. You, sir, have forced through the amalgamation of the colleges and the institutes in the four major urban centres without any effort to consult with the local community college affected.

Now, Mr. Chairman, in the case of Prince Albert we saw an example of the government taking a system that had evolved over a period of 20 years and that was community-based, and eliminating that community-based control, and doing it within a matter of weeks. And at the same time we see, along with this amalgamation, Mr. Chairman, a decision by this government to dramatically alter the boundaries of the community college system, and to alter them in a ludicrous way.

And I want again to focus on the example of Prince Albert with respect to these boundary changes. People now, Mr. Chairman, in Buckland, one kilometre north of Prince Albert, are going to have to arrange community college classes and contacts with the community college in Nipawin. They won't be able to draw upon the resources of the community college in Prince Albert. In fact, Mr. Chairman, the residents of 52 towns and villages around Prince Albert will lose access to the programs being offered at the Prince Albert Regional Community College.

And we think, Mr. Chairman, that that is just ludicrous. It is foolishness, Mr. Chairman, for people who live in the vicinity of the communities of Prince Albert and the communities of Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, and Regina not to

be able to draw on the services of the community colleges in those four urban centres.

And we say, Mr. Chairman, that the boundaries ought to be re-examined by this minister. And in the case of Prince Albert, you ought to reinstate, Mr. Chairman — the Minister of Education ought to ensure that people who lie in the boundaries originally served by the Prince Albert Regional Community College will still be able to draw on the services of that college, and I ask the Minister of Education to reverse his decision to essentially exclude those people from being able to draw on the services of the Prince Albert Regional Community College.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I want to focus specifically, in closing my remarks on community colleges, on the Prince Albert situation. And the Minister of Education has claimed, Mr. Chairman, that in his remarks, as I've been speaking, that no, it's not true, people in the Prince Albert area will be able to be services by the Prince Albert Regional Community College.

He can then perhaps explain to members of this Assembly why it is that one of the board members of the Prince Albert Regional Community College, who recently resigned, gave as one of her reasons for the resignation, and I quote:

As soon as this legislation (meaning the legislation to amalgamate institutes and colleges) is passed, I will no longer reside in the Prince Albert Regional Community College area, even though I live only 25 miles from here. This I find unacceptable and very impractical.

And that's a quote from Irene Kustiak, who was one of the board members.

And, Mr. Chairman, I want to read a couple of other direct quotes to the minister from the Prince Albert board, in terms of what they think of the decision making process that he has implemented with respect to the elimination of local autonomy for the community college system throughout the major urban centres, and particularly in Prince Albert.

I want to quote, in fact, from one of the members of his own party, Graham Boyd, from Prince Albert. He served on the board, and he's been an active member of the Progressive Conservative Party for some time. Mr. Boyd says:

I cannot remain a part of a great organization (referring to the Prince Albert Regional Community College) and continue to try to reason with a deaf, dumb, and blind government bent on a misguided course of destruction of an important aspect of our post-secondary education system.

And that's a direct quote from Mr. Boyd.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to read the Minister of Education another quote, and I'm sure all members of the Assembly will be interested in this one. And this is from Ernie Stefanuk, also a member of the Prince Albert Regional Community College board who resigned. He says, Mr.

Chairman, with respect to the decision making process and the lack of consultation that the Minister of Education implemented:

We found out, despite what we were led to believe, that the plans for the amalgamation were laid out, the whole thing was orchestrated, and we were expected to participate in this transition, but merely as rubber-stampers. We couldn't agree to that.

Mr. Chairman, these are just a few examples of why the members of the board of the Prince Albert Regional Community College felt that they needed to resign.

And I want to conclude my remarks with respect to community colleges by focusing on this situation, Mr. Chairman, because the Prince Albert board claimed, at the public meeting that they sponsored, in explaining to their membership — to the people that they're accountable to — why they were resigning, that ultimately what broke the camel's back for the Prince Albert board was that the amalgamation team that was set up to amalgamate the Prince Albert Regional Community College with the Northern Institute of Technology; that that amalgamation team refused to place senior administrators from the Prince Albert Regional Community College into top administrative positions in the new institute.

None of the people from the Prince Albert Regional Community College were going to be in senior positions where they could make decisions, and I say, sir, that that decision was undertaken consciously by your government to keep those people from being influential in the new system that you wanted to set up, and that you wanted to have complete control of.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I want to conclude by asking the minister a very specific question. The Minister of Education, I might say for those listening for the first time, hasn't managed to answer a single question that I've asked him in estimates to date. Every time I ask him a question, he goes on a one-half-hour to one-hour ramble that has nothing to do with the question asked. So this time, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to ask a very, very specific question.

The Prince Albert Regional Community College board, which resigned three weeks ago, was fighting for three things, sir. First of all, it was fighting for local control and for governance of adult education programs that were going to be offered in the Prince Albert area. The Prince Albert Regional Community College board rightly rejected the notion that you offered of simply becoming an advisory board. They wanted to have real power. They wanted to be assured of local governance. We on this side of the House support their request for local governance, and we ask you, will you support their request for local governance?

The second thing they were fighting for, I say to the Minister of Education, is that they wanted to be assured that the rural area around Prince Albert was going to be included in any plans for a newly amalgamated institute and community college. You denied them that request.

My question to you is: will you change your position and grant their request that the rural areas around Prince Albert will be included in the newly amalgamated institution?

And third, the third thing that they were fighting for was job security for the staff of the community college in Prince Albert, which you once again refused to give a commitment on.

And my question to you is: will you agree to each of their requests? — local governance, the inclusion of the rural area around Prince Albert in the new institute that will service Prince Albert, and job security for the community college staff involved. Will you agree to these three requests from the Prince Albert Regional Community College Board, and further, sir, will you ask that board to reconsider their resignation and to take over responsibilities for local governance of the newly amalgamated institute and college that you are setting up in Prince Albert? Will you agree to that?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, in reply to the question that had the 20-minute preamble, I will do my best to be as precise and concise as possible.

**An Hon. Member:** — I'll time you — 3:30.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Okay. The hon. member from Saskatoon South says he'll time me. Okay, the little hand is just between 3 and 4 and the big one's at 6. Will that help you?

The hon. member has somehow suggested, that when it comes to Prince Albert Regional Community College Board, that we did not consult with them and that we did not recognize the uniqueness — because they have had some unique features in the way they've run their system up there. I acknowledged that when I met with them. I acknowledged the fact that they have the longest history in terms of community colleges in this province. I acknowledged the fact that they, unlike other community colleges, have some members appointed and some elected. I also acknowledged the concern that they had, and a very real one as you raised here, relative to if you live a mile out of Prince Albert, you know, that somehow we would drive you away from the city of Prince Albert and the courses there — I acknowledged that concern. And I acknowledged any other concerns they raised in this way.

(1530)

And in fact, although the hon. member quotes from the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*, at least I presume that's where he's quoting from because I have seen some of those same clippings, he failed to tell the whole story. He failed to talk about those clippings in the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*, for example, this one in June, early June, 5 June '87, where the lead paragraph says:

The Saskatchewan Department of Education has moved a long ways from its original position on amalgamation of technical institute and . . . community colleges.

Because in fact we did recognize that there was some legitimacy to their concerns as there were to some others in the system. And the point the hon. member fails to recognize is: how come, if the situation is so bad in Prince Albert, why is it that that process that somehow to him seems so bad in Prince Albert has worked very well, for the most part, in Moose Jaw, in Regina, and in Saskatoon. How does he explain that, Mr. Chairman, how does he explain that?

But just to show you that we have nothing to hide and, in fact, that we did meet, consult, and look at their options in good faith . . . Mr. Chairman, if I could have a page please, I'd like to send a copy of a letter I sent to Murdine McCreath, the chairperson of the Prince Albert Regional Community College Board on June 4 of '87, and I will send a copy over to the Advanced Education critic. And I want to refer to some parts of this letter to show how inaccurate the hon. member is in his assessment.

I would doubt that he has even met with the board; I would doubt that; I would absolutely doubt that. I would like to know if the hon. member has met with the board, and if so, tell us. And I'll tell you why I asked that, is because the other day I asked you to table the survey they did on governments at technical institutes. Have we seen it, Mr. Chairman; have we seen it? The answer is no; the answer is no. They're afraid to bring it out, Mr. Chairman; they're afraid to bring it out. They've never brought one constructive idea forward yet, and I would look to and welcome constructive ideas.

But to back up what I said, and what the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* reported in that we were prepared to go some distance to meet the unique features of Prince Albert, here is what we offered in this letter; here is what we offered, Mr. Chairman. Here is what we offered because we recognized the need for community input. Here is what we offered, Mr. Speaker.

First, I proposed that the current board of the community college remain in place for a period of up to 18 months to provide for continuity of programming in Prince Albert while the new institute becomes operational. Now does that sound like we're somehow trying to force the board members, force them to resign as he has somehow suggested? Allow them to remain in place for 18 months, we said.

Once the 18 month phase-in period is completed, I propose that we establish a Regional Advisory Board for Prince Albert and region. Membership will include present members of the college board, plus regional representatives. The Board will have the following powers:

It will advise the Board of Directors of the new institute on the appropriate array of programs and services to be provided in Prince Albert region.

It will offer guidance and community input to the Institute board with respect to local concerns and interest.

Now it seems to me any fair-minded person would say,

that sounds reasonable; the community interest will be met; continuity will be met; programming concerns of an ongoing nature will be addressed.

And further, Mr. Chairman:

A member of the Regional Advisory Board will be appointed to the Board of Directors of the Institute to represent directly the interests of Prince Albert and region.

So what we're saying there, Mr. Speaker, so that community interest is met, not only can they have a regional advisory board, not only can they stay in place for 18 months, but one of them can sit on the new institute board to represent Prince Albert and area. But the hon. member somehow suggests that this wasn't good enough, that we didn't consult, that we didn't try to walk the extra mile. I say we did when it comes to community and community representation.

But we went further than that, Mr. Speaker. Because there was a unique situation there of elected representation along with appointed representatives, I further added in my letter:

The practice of electing community representatives to the college board will be continued for the advisory board if this is desired.

Now, Mr. Speaker, is that not fair? We said to them, you've had elected members in the past, and if you wish, you can have elected members in the future.

And he talked about the issue of jobs and job security for the employees there. And what did I say? And in fact I had made previous reference to this issue in a previous letter. And I picked it up in this letter again by saying:

... every effort will be made to find jobs for as many as possible.

I expect most of the instructors to be offered jobs, and a good number of the administrative staff as well.

In fact, Mr. Chairman, this is one of the reasons why we have worked very hard, walked the extra mile with that board, because from the outset we had two important and vital concerns. Number one is, we wanted to do what was right by the students and young adults in that area. And number two, we wanted to do right by the staff that was there. And as things were progressing in other centres, by the foot dragging that was going on, opportunities were being lost that might have been available to those staff if such had been the case.

And I'm happy to report that as it relates to the issue of job security, almost all of the staff will be given jobs at the new institute. And secondly, executive staff have been offered management positions at the same salary in the new institute.

Now I ask you, would any fair-minded, rational person not agree that we (a) met and consulted with them on many occasions — myself on one occasion with the full board; on another occasion with some members of the

board. My officials were there weekly, if not more than weekly.

I can tell you this much, Mr. Chairman, I myself did not meet with any of the other boards at all to the degree that I had to meet with this board. And I met with them because I wanted to do this in good faith. We wanted to make sure we were doing right by that community and right by their staff and right for the students.

And that's why we offered up all of these things, whether it relates to job security, community input, ongoing course programming, the straight geography, as if you live a mile outside of town, it doesn't make any sense for you to drive 50 miles when you've always driven a mile in. That just makes good common sense.

But the added advantage for that person who now drives in a mile, to use the hon. member's example, is that when he walks into that institute today he doesn't have access merely to the Prince Albert community college programming, he has access to the entire system. And what a tremendous advantage that is. What a tremendous step forward.

And in fact, Mr. Chairman, I'll go on to say further that I will bet you that when this legislation comes forward, when this legislation comes forward — the day that we give it final approval and royal assent in this House — that is going to be a landmark day in the history of education in this province. And I fully expect, I fully expect that the opposition, once they've examined the very positive nature of these changes, that they will vote with us on this.

Because I think the hon. member from Saskatoon University, I think down the road when James Andrew, his young son, is going to be going to college or to technical institutes or taking programming, he'll stand there proudly and he'll be able to recount to his son that yes, James, I was a member of the legislature, and I voted for that legislation to set up this kind of programming.

And we're already starting to see, we're already starting to see, Mr. Chairman, the results of the kinds of thrust that we would like to see in this province and what people told us they wanted to see. And I refer to today's *Leader-Post*, today's *Leader-Post* on page A3. The headline goes, "Courses beamed across province," and it talks about:

Students in 15 Saskatchewan communities, including Regina, will be able to take history and English courses from the University of Saskatchewan without ever setting foot on campus.

(Courses that are going to) be beamed by satellite to Regina, Estevan, La Ronge, Kindersley, Lloydminster, Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Swift Current, Tisdale, Weyburn and Yorkton, as well as Saskatoon.

Now I say, what a step forward! This is what we're talking about as over the years we see unfolding the ability to offer, not just in Regina and Saskatoon or Moose Jaw and Prince Albert — when it comes to the institute — but

across this province, through this distance education, through the wonders of satellite technology and fibre optic technology, courses right in the communities.

And the hon. members make a great to-do about communities. Well what better way to keep a community together than to offer programming right in to it, so they don't have to drive 2 and 300 miles and spend \$6,000 on room and board. We're already seeing the fruits of effort.

And I applaud the University of Saskatchewan board of governors and the extension department there, Bob Brack and others who have been involved in STELLA, the pilot project. And I look to more of this as we put our distance education initiatives together, Mr. Chairman.

I want to pick up on the hon. member's comments about . . . that somehow because there's a new structure in Prince Albert the programming won't be there. And what does the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*, July 24, say? Headline, "Few changes in program when NIT/PARCC (which is the community college) merge".

So why is the hon. member trying to tell the member of the legislature, Mr. Chairman, that there's somehow going to be massive changes when the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* — correctly reporting, I might add — suggest that there will be few changes in terms of the programming.

Now this selection perusal of the newspapers of the day, to make your case in point, is a fine political sort of gambit, if you like, Mr. Chairman, but it's inaccurate — quite simply, inaccurate.

The only changes, Mr. Chairman, are going to be these, and we're not ashamed of them because they're what the community college trustees association, they are what the community college chairmen, they are what the community college executive offices have been telling us.

You darn right, some of the hobby courses are going to be gone. They are going to be gone from the institute programming. But they are not going to be gone from the community, because I have more faith than the hon. member does in the people of Prince Albert and area — and more faith in the people of Moose Jaw and area, and Saskatoon, and Regina — because I know that if the community interest is there to have courses in photography or aerobic dancing or basket weaving or whatever it is, that the local community will meet the need, just as they did in my other's day and before her and my grandmother's day.

And I'll tell you why we're moving out of those programs, because once again the hon. member was inaccurate. There might be 500 programs at Prince Albert as it relates to hobby courses, but you are wrong when you suggest that somehow the hours exceeds more than 4 per cent, because it does not. There may be 100 courses, but when you look at how many hours are being taken, you still come up with 4 per cent. And I know 10 years ago it was quite different.

But times now are different and people have said, yes,

hobby courses are useful, but more importantly we want to have access to the more sophisticated programming like institutes courses and like university courses. So the member is clearly wrong on that fact, Mr. Deputy Chairman, clearly wrong.

The people have told us loud and clear we ought to get away from the hobby courses — they are like an albatross around our neck — and get into more university, more institute, and more adult basic education. And, Mr. Deputy Chairman, that's exactly what we're going to do, because the people want it.

And he's talks about us not having consulted. I ask him, other than this survey that yet remains a mystery to us all, did he go out across the province this past winter and meet with 550 associations, groups, and individuals? I say, no, Mr. Chairman. And he flashed a couple of letters in here from Prince Albert and area people.

And I had many, I will admit, suggesting that somehow this amalgamation was wrong. And I had a chance to send them our blueprint for the future and respond. But he suggests that's the only kind of letters that came in. He doesn't talk about the letters like this one that I got in May of this year whose name I won't refer to. It's a simply two-sentence letter:

I do not (and he underlines it, Mr. Deputy Chairman) I do not support the Prince Albert Regional Community College in their effort to resist amalgamation. I support your government in your efforts at improving adult education.

So once again the hon. member, for a political motive — and I accept that, this is a political arena — has only got one side of the story. It's been filled quite simply, Mr. Deputy Chairman, with inaccuracies. And I know the hon. member is an honourable man, and he doesn't mean to be inaccurate, he simply doesn't have all the facts.

And the facts, Mr. Speaker, are, as this amalgamation proceeds as it does, that the people of Prince Albert and area will be better served than they were before. And that doesn't mean to say that they weren't served well. But the reality is, as I've said in this place time and time again, the world is changing.

(1545)

And to put that in perspective for the hon. member . . . and I feel sorry for the NDP party that they want to cling to the past, Mr. Deputy Chairman. They are afraid to look to the future, and that's unfortunate. Because to not make some changes would be to ignore reports like this one — a research report called Innovation and Jobs, prepared by the Economic Council of Canada. And what did it say, Mr. Deputy Chairman? Well it talked in this article, and it was published in the *Leader-Post*, Friday, July 17, and if we look down the road to 1995:

Ten per cent or more people working in fishing, hunting, oil, coal, retail, finance, education, accommodation, and food services will be re-employed in other areas.



Re-employed in other areas, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, I ask you: what implications does that have for our educational system? How are we going to make sure that these people can be re-employed in other areas? Have we got an adult education system tooled up to meet that kind of demand?

Twenty-five per cent of those in metal fabricating and machinery industries will have to retrain;

They will have to retrain — 25 per cent. How do you ignore . . . how does the hon. member propose to deal with hard, cold facts like this from a very prestigious organization? I mean, you can't put your blinkers on and say no, I don't want to accept any change; I must pursue the same blind path; that I must attach myself to the same old, blind, ideologic rhetoric.

Or what about this fact in that same report:

Eleven per cent of those in finance, insurance, and real estate will be displaced;

He offers no solutions about these realities that face us. He wants to cling to the past. Or this fact:

The number of operating robots will rise from virtually none to tens of thousands.

In this article it makes one very compelling . . . there is one very compelling phrase, Mr. Deputy Chairman, that says it all. And it goes like this:

It also urges Canadians to get educated.

End of quotation, Mr. Deputy Chairman. And you really can't put it any better or any simpler than that. It urges Canadians to get educated.

It further goes on to say, though, and this is the important, I suppose, light at the end of the tunnel because a lot of these job losses are displacement and need for retraining sound like we're faced with a doomsday scenario, Mr. Deputy Chairman. But what it goes on to say is this, and this is why we are positioning ourselves and restructuring our adult education system:

. . . the report does predict that economic growth will continue to provide new job opportunities.

And that's what we're talking about, Mr. Deputy Chairman, is making sure that we've got the training and the retraining and the skill upgrading and the skill training programs for these new job opportunities that are going to arise. We've got to be ready, Mr. Chairman, for what's going to happen between now and 1995. We cannot sit idly by and pretend that it isn't going to happen. We can't cloak ourselves and draw erroneous conclusions from inaccurate, factual, or, in fact, not having all the facts. You cannot . . . That's not the responsible course.

And I have said, and I say again: we know, based on every measure, and I've talked about all the reports that other jurisdictions have undertaken — whether it be the University of Saskatchewan or SCCTA (Saskatchewan

Community College Trustees Association). I mean, the hon. member talks in his hobby courses about how we're going to threaten the communities, and that somehow I decided this unilaterally. I mean, I ask him: how does he ignore the 105 recommendations of the Saskatchewan Community College Trustees Association report? I mean, he talks about I didn't consult with the system. I mean, to not make these changes would be to ignore their report and their recommendations.

I say to you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, and to the hon. member: it is he who is out of touch; it is he who has failed to consult; it is he who fails to realize the implications of a changing world economy and what it means to Saskatchewan, and what it must mean in terms of us tooling up our education system.

And I say to him, and I say this in all sincerity: I am quite prepared to, when this legislation comes forward, to debate it and to listen to constructive criticisms or constructive options that he might put forward. But if we're going to continue debate that we should cling to the past versus move forward, we're going to get nowhere. I am quite prepared to debate how we move forward, whether we should go this way or that way, or use this process or this process. I think that's what this forum is all about.

And I extend to you, hon. member, and to all your colleagues, that I am a reasonable and fair person; that we were prepared to listen to options from the Prince Albert area as we were from the community college trustees association. The same offer goes to you. If you have some constructive proposals that you would like us to examine, even at this late date, I am prepared to look at them. I am prepared to look at your survey and see what it says.

I am prepared to look at and give consideration to constructive proposals that you have to deal with a changing world economy. But until you recognize that the world is changing, little is going to be accomplished in this forum. Little is going to be accomplished. And I say, come with us. I think we can use this to be a constructive time. In fact, I would look forward to that.

And as it relates to the Prince Albert Community college specifically, I've given you the letter that laid out, very explicitly, my offer to them. I think any fair-minded person would recognize that we walked the extra mile. We met; we consulted; my officials met.

And I guess the question I would ask you is: why is it that a process that works so well in Moose Jaw and Saskatoon and Regina somehow didn't work so well in Prince Albert? And I don't think we should accept the blame for that, Mr. Deputy Chairman, as the hon. member has tried to suggest.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to say to the minister: I've read carefully the letter; I thank him for sending the letter across. The letter, Mr. Chairman, does not offer local governance to the Prince Albert Regional Community College Board, which is what we on this side of the House want, and what that board wants.

What it offers that board is basically two things: first of all it offers them essentially an advisory role in the system to the new super-institute board; and secondly it says that they can have one member on that new super-institute board.

And we say, on this side of the House, after a board has spent 20 years building an adult education system in Prince Albert with a large amount of community input, it's an insult for you to come along, sir, and to turn around to that board and, first of all, without consulting them at all, tell them . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Just wait . . . without consulting them at all, tell them that it's all over — tell them that amalgamation is a foregone conclusion, and then afterwards, Mr. Chairman, then in the face of massive opposition from the community of Prince Albert, to modify your suggestion a bit, and suggest to them that instead of the amalgamation going through without them having any say in it at all, that they can form an advisory board and that they can have one member on the new super-institute structure.

And we say, on this side of the House, that that is totally inappropriate. No wonder they resigned. We say to you, sir, very simply, that you should have said to them that local governance, in the case of Prince Albert, has historically worked for the last 20 years, that it can work into the future, and you should have asked them to take responsibility for the newly amalgamated institute and community college in Prince Albert. That's the bottom line, on this side of the House, that we support. That's the position that you should have supported.

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

**Mr. Prebble:** — Mr. Chairman . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I didn't ask you a question. You talked for more than half an hour, sir. We've had enough of your remarks in this Assembly. We'll go on to technical institutes.

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

**Mr. Prebble:** — Mr. Chairman, I want to turn the subject to technical institutes. And I want to say to the minister, by way of opening, that yes, the New Democratic Party is interested in planning for the year 2000. Mr. Chairman, we believe that many of the courses in the technical institutes that you have chosen to cut are needed now, will be needed in the year 1990, will be needed in the year 2000.

You have launched an unprecedented attack, first of all, on many of the training programs in the health sciences in our technical institutes. We on this side of the House say that you have launched that attack because you are planning, now and as long as you are in government, to consistently erode the health care system of Saskatchewan, to launch an unprecedented attack on medicare in this province. That's why the training spaces in the health sciences in our technical institutes are being cut back.

We, sir, on this side of the House are interested in having a health care system that will need our needs now, and that will meet our needs in the year 2000, and it is you that

are out of touch with the people of Saskatchewan and not us, sir.

Now, Mr. Chairman, in terms of some more general remarks on the technical institute system, I want to say to the minister that he has tried to claim that the cuts to technical institute programming are not budget driven. He's made that claim a number of times in this House, and I'm sure all members have heard it. And, Mr. Chairman, I don't believe that claim, and I don't think any members on this side of the House believe it.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that your cuts are budget driven and that you are making the instructors in the technical institutes of Saskatchewan pay for your deficit with their jobs. That's what you're doing, sir. You're making the instructors in the technical institutes of Saskatchewan pay for your budget deficit with their jobs.

Now we say, Mr. Chairman, that if the government's cuts are not budget driven, then they're even more foolish and unfair, Mr. Chairman. I say that only an insane general would lead his army to the slaughter in a way equivalent to the manner in which the Minister of Education has decimated the technical institutes in Saskatchewan.

We say, Mr. Chairman, that your decisions with respect to technical institutes were undertaken again, as they were with community colleges, through a major lack of consultation with instructors, with students, and with trade advisory groups. And the Minister of Education asked me earlier whether I met with members of the community college board and staff in the city of Prince Albert. And the answer to him is yes, I did meet with many members of the board and many members of the staff in Prince Albert. In the same way, I have undertaken a tour of the technical institute system in this province and met with many of the instructors who were fired, many of the instructors who will continue to work in our technical institute system. And without exception, Mr. Chairman, those instructors have told me that these cuts were undertaken without any consultation with the program heads affected or the instructors who were going to be impacted, and I say, Mr. Chairman, that it's a disgrace that the Minister of Education has undertaken cuts in this manner.

And I say to the minister, why has the minister refused to appear before the students in the faculty at each institute to account for what he's done? Why didn't he have the courage, Mr. Chairman, to go to the students and the faculty at Wascana and at STI and at Kelsey and tell them face to face why he was eliminating their jobs and why he was eliminating student positions in each of those institutes? He didn't have the courage to do it. He left it to the local principals, many of whom he was planning to either retire or fire in the next few days to deliver the bad news instead.

Now we say on this side of the House, Mr. Chairman, that the minister has claimed that he is building new centres of excellence at the technical institutes — new centres of excellence. We say on this side of the House, Mr. Chairman, that the centres of

excellence that the Minister of Education claims that he's establishing aren't centres of excellence at all.

For example, Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Education says that Wascana is going to be the centre of excellence for the health sciences. But I say to the minister that he is not expanding any seats in the health sciences on the Wascana campus. All that he is doing is cutting back health sciences programs at Kelsey Institute, keeping most of the ones at Wascana at the same level that they were last year, and then falsely claiming that he's creating a new centre of excellence for health sciences at Wascana Institute.

At STI, Mr. chairman, the minister is claiming that he is creating a centre of excellence in business administration. Yet when you look carefully at what's happening, all that is essentially happening is that office education programs at Kelsey and at Wascana are being cut back, and there is no expansion, essentially, of business administration programs at STI whatsoever other than to accommodate some of the students that are being forced to transfer to Wascana to take their second year at STI.

So, sir, first of all we on this side of the House say that your claim that you are establishing centres of excellence at our technical institutes is a false claim. What you are in effect doing is, at a single institute which you claim a centre of excellence is being established, you are retaining the programs that existed there last year while you slash the programs in that same field of study at each of the other institutes.

(1600)

And we say, sir, that your cuts in technical institutes in the health sciences programs, as I mentioned earlier, are directly related to your cuts to medicare. You eliminated the dental therapist program at Wascana because you were eliminating the school-based children's dental care plan.

You have eliminated certified nursing assistants at Kelsey because you are undertaking cut-backs in home care and cuts to rehabilitation services in this province. And you have cut back 80 spaces, 80 student spaces, from the diploma nursing program at Kelsey because you are implementing and undertaking already substantial cuts to the hiring of nurses in the hospital system in this province.

Mr. Chairman, we on this side of the Assembly say that what the government has essentially done with these cut-backs is destroy the morale of faculty and staff at each of the technical institutes in the province of Saskatchewan. You, Mr. Chairman, are "preparing for the year 2000" by firing or laying off at least one-third of the staff at Kelsey, and that's the kind of preparation that the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister of Education, can do without.

The cuts, Mr. Chairman, that you have chosen to implement in the Department of Education all came out of teaching staff on the front lines who are working with students. You didn't cut anybody in your bureaucracy based here in Regina — not that we were looking for that. Mr. Chairman, not more than 20 positions came out of the

bureaucracy in Regina.

Mr. Chairman, 142 position, 142 front-line positions came out of the technical institutes in this province. And that, Mr. Chairman, has resulted in reduced access for . . . a reduction, a total reduction of 1,100 student spaces, with many other students being forced to travel and relocate in order to take their second year of study in a new centre since you've cut their program in the centre where they were studying.

Mr. Chairman, I want to make one more general remarks about the cuts in technical institutes before asking the minister some specific questions. And that is, I want to make the point from an educational point of view, that the combination of lay-offs and early retirements in the technical institute system means the loss of many of the very best teaching staff that the institutes had.

The early retirements at places like Kelsey and Wascana have cost each of those institutes some of their most experienced instructors. The people who were forced to take early retirement by your government were generally the people who had the most teaching experience in the institutes. And then you combined that . . . the government combined that with a series of lay-offs that eliminated most of the people in the technical institute system with recent industry experience, with recent industry experience.

So what we saw as a result of the actions of this government is a combination of the loss of the most experienced teachers in the system, and the loss of instructors with the most recent industry experience.

And I want to give an example of what the impact of the early retirements alone meant at Kelsey, in terms of teaching experience. At the June 10, 1987 retirement luncheon held at Kelsey, Kelsey lost 1,008 years of teaching and administrative experience in a single blow as a result of your early retirement program at Kelsey; 1,008 years of teaching and administrative experience was lost at Kelsey in one month as a result of the actions of your government, Mr. Chairman.

Now I want to ask the minister in light of these general comments, some specific questions with respect to cuts in the health sciences. I want to focus on three program cuts in the institute system to begin with. The cuts, sir, that you chose to make through the elimination of the certified nursing assistant program at Kelsey; the cuts that you chose to make in the dental therapy program at Wascana; and the cuts that you chose to make in the dental assistant program at Kelsey.

You've eliminated the dental assistant program at Kelsey, you've eliminated the dental therapist program at Wascana, and you have also chosen to eliminate the certified nursing assistant program at Kelsey. Three cuts, sir, that we maintain that are directly tied to your cuts to medicare. And I want to focus on each of those and ask you some specific questions about them.

First of all, your elimination of the certified dental assistant program at Kelsey. This was a program, Mr. Minister, that graduated . . . this was a program, Mr.

Chairman, in which 85 per cent of the people who graduated last year got jobs — 85 per cent got jobs. There were 237 people who had applied for the fall of 1987 to get into this program, Mr. Chairman — 237 applicants for approximately 40 positions. So there was lots of demand for the program. It was a good job record in terms of graduates of the program.

Now Doug Hildebrand of the advisory committee to this program has pointed out to your government that as a result of the cuts that you've undertaken to the dental assistant program, only 40 to 45 students a year will now be graduating as dental assistants in the province of Saskatchewan. They'll all be graduating out of the program that continues to exist at Wascana. The need for dental assistants is at least 75 dental assistants a year, so we'll be 30 dental assistants short.

My first question to the minister, then, is where those other dental assistants will come from. He has in effect, Mr. Chairman . . . what the government has chosen to do is take a program with an excellent job record where graduates did well, and he has chosen to cut that program at a time when there are frequent shortages for certified dental assistants in this province, particularly in rural Saskatchewan. That program cost only \$200,000 a year to operate.

And my simple question to the minister is this: in light of the fact that this program had an excellent job record, a long waiting list of entrants to get in, and in light of the fact that it had an excellent record in terms of graduating students, can you explain to me, sir, why you chose to completely eliminate the dental assistant program at Kelsey Institute?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Chairman, going back to the very beginning of the hon. member's remarks and some of his observations, and to make sure that we're all working with the correct information, and I know the hon. member doesn't like me to give the answers and the facts . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . He suggested that I should sit down. And I can understand why they don't like to hear these answers, because in fact they are very rational and reasonable and fair and do make sense, and do acknowledge what's happening in a changing world.

He clearly wanted to restate the NDP's position as it relates to governance. That's in the fact of still yet not tabling this so-called survey. And I have said all along that I would be prepared to look at and give that survey consideration if we could only see it.

But let's look at what he's really saying, Mr. Chairman. He's saying that a system that we use at the University of Saskatchewan — the board of governors that represents the entire province, the entire province, Mr. Chairman — is somehow not going to work as it relates to the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology. He is trying to suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the way the board of governors operates our universities isn't in the best interests of the entire province. I say it is, and I say their decision to offer distance education programming in 14 centres across this province is exactly consistent with the best interests of this entire province.

Why is it that one board of governors can represent our universities and do a good job in terms of representing the interests of the entire province, but yet somehow a single board of governors can't represent the entire province when it comes to our institute? His logic falls me there, Mr. Deputy Chairman. And I would suggest it's an insult to the board of governors to suggest that they can't somehow represent all corners of this province. And it's an insult to the people from each of the four regions where we have a campus to suggest that they somehow can't adequately represent the interests of their area on this new board of governors.

So I ask the hon. member why is it that the University of Saskatchewan board of governors model is okay, yet somehow that same model when applied to the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology is not okay? Could he tell the public and me, quite frankly, why it cannot work in both instances? Would he explain that logic that I can't comprehend to me.

As it relates to whether we had regional advisory boards, or what form of extra regional representation, the reality is this, the facts are these, Mr. Speaker. The Prince Albert college came up with an option. SCCTA came up with an option, and I believe there was one or two other options that were put forward by various community colleges. When I met with the community college in Prince Albert, that board, I said, I will look at your option; I give you no guarantees. You will know of course, because they were members of SCCTA, that they have put forth an option.

And I said, now if I accept an option other than yours, then I don't want this to be a case of sour grapes. And maybe because we didn't accept their option, and we took more the SCCTA model, that perhaps sour grapes was to some degree behind the resignations. Certainly, as I said earlier in the letter I tabled in this legislature, we walked the extra mile. We have put in place an option to ensure representation. So I think that lays to rest the Prince Albert board question, if you like, and the whole issue of governance. And that . . . and those, Mr. Chairman, are the facts tabled in this legislature.

Now he further went on to suggest, in reply to my suggestion, that the NDP does have a blueprint when it comes to post-second education. Well we've seen that blueprint, Mr. Chairman, we sure have, in the form of a memo from the NDP premier of the day, Allan Blakeney, to the then advanced education minister of the day, Doug McArthur.

And what did that blueprint say, Mr. Deputy Chairman? Well it said, Doug, my buddy, show me how you're going to cut funding the universities because we know enrolments are going to go down, and how are we going to deal with the resource-based economy?

When the reality of the day is enrolments were going up, the knowledge-based economy is on us, and in fact what we needed to do was not starve universities as the NDP did, but in fact put more funds into them, and that's exactly what we've done.

He said that I . . . the one thing he was correct on . . . or

incorrect rather, is that this blueprint that we come up with was not budget driven, he says . . . or he says it was budget driven, rather.

He says that somehow all of what we have done, the meetings that we held, the consultation that we held, what we heard from the universities, what we heard from the community colleges, what we heard from people across the province, in all of this we had some ulterior motive. All what it was designed to do was slash budgets and slash staffing and slash programming.

Well I want to tell you, Mr. Chairman, I want to tell the members of this Assembly, and I want to tell the public in this province that nothing could be further from the truth — absolutely nothing. And I challenge the hon. member if he's got some specifics, to back up that accusation to lay them before the people of this province and this legislature.

Because I will say it again — I will say it again, as I've said when I had the press conference and met with the system, if you like, the day we announced and released the new blueprint, it wouldn't have mattered — it wouldn't have mattered if we were going to get a budget increase this year of 300 per cent. It wouldn't have mattered if we were going to get a budget increase of 25 per cent, or 5 per cent, or 125 per cent. These changes had to be made if we were going to acknowledge the future. And I say that absolutely sincerely.

And I also say absolutely sincerely that when it comes to education, you can always use more money. What we're talking about here is using the money we've got, better. And I'm proud of what we could do with three-quarters of a billion dollars in this province. I'll tell you — and the people that are trustees across this province, and boards of governors, and faculty and staff, and teachers — they're proud too.

(1615)

So I repeat again, it wouldn't matter what the budget number was, these changes were predicated on what we heard across this province, plus the hard realities that we face, and are going to face in the future.

And I know what your blueprint is, and I know what your party's blueprint is. It's a blueprint that says: starve universities; don't acknowledge change; don't put the programming and retraining needs in place for the future; carry on with the past. You guys are homesick for the past. My sense is, the people out there are homesick for the future, and we're going to provide that for them.

He further went on to say that what we had done in terms of our cuts, to use a typical example . . . And even the hon. member, because he's a good guy — I say that; he is a good guy — doesn't even believe his own rhetoric. I mean, how can you stand before the public of Saskatchewan and say that somehow, because we're spending three-quarters of a billion dollars on education, that we're going to decimate the system? I mean, you don't even believe that, and yet you use those words.

If you wouldn't overstate the case, your positions might

have some more credibility. You're inaccurate. I mean, by any measure, is decimation . . . I mean, it's nonsensical to use that term, and you know it.

He says we've decimated, he says we've decimated, Mr. Chairman, decimated the technical institute side. Okay. Well how does he say we've decimated the system when . . . And I repeat some of these facts again. How can you say you've decimated the system when in the last five years we've seen a 28 per cent increase in training seats, Mr. Chairman? A 28 per cent increase. A new campus in Prince Albert. Now how does that square with decimating the system?

Did they build a new campus in Prince Albert, particularly for the Northerners? No. Did they, Mr. Chairman, offer a system, an education extension system where we could deliver institute programming into rural Saskatchewan? No, there was not a formal extension program run from the institutes when their government was in power — there was not.

What about funding? We've increased the funding over the last five years, Mr. Chairman, by 52 per cent to our technical institutes. Now how does the hon. member — honourable, reasonable, sincere member, prone to flights of fantasy when it comes to his rhetoric once in a while — how does he square that with the term "decimation"? How does he square that, Mr. Chairman? Or, if you look at the K to 12 system, the same number is 60 per cent increase. And I could give you a similar number for the university system. How does he square that with the term "decimation"?

And he referred specifically to STI. Well what's happening at STI for the year '87-88? He pooh-poohed my suggestion on the approach we're using there, which is to set up centres of excellence, instead of every campus trying to be all things to all people, and in fact, diluting quality — not every campus being able to afford the latest in equipment and that kind of thing. We're going to have them concentrate on areas of expertise.

He says, somehow this is another figment of our imagination, that there are no new programs. Well what are the new programs, Mr. Chairman, and members of the legislature, for '87-88 at STI? Well what have we got? WE got upgrading and updating courses in various areas as requested by the apprenticeship branch industrial clients, etc. We've got carpentry updating; scaffolding; cement finish updating; fireproofing steel; electrical updating, including basic electronics, code updating, and programmable controllers; gas instrument technician courses, first and second level; upgrading the journeyman cook; electronic trouble-shooting course; power engineering; compulsory inspection for total-loss vehicles; industrial welding, including several sophisticated forms of welding.

But it doesn't stop here, Mr. Chairman. We've got computer software packages courses; microprocessor trouble-shooting program, an area of high growth I'm led to believe; driver instructor preparatory programs; industrial instrumentation technology. I'm having trouble with some of these words, Mr. Chairman, because these are the jobs of the future, and they don't roll off our lips

like making buggy whips, which is where the hon. members are still — in that generation. We've got industrial instrumentation mechanic apprenticeship program.

But it doesn't stop there, Mr. Chairman, because in the future this is where we are going to go as well — Modicom personal computer training, full meal preparation course; computer assisted design programs for industry, certificate evening programs, and office administration, accounting, data processing and administration. To recognize that those people who have got jobs in the daytime want to get upgrading at night, and that's particularly relevant when it comes to the females in the job sector — particularly relevant, Mr. Chairman.

We've got summer programs in recreational areas — computer camp, etc., designed for elementary and high school students. Does that not sound like an exciting future? Computer camps for our students, summer programs in recreational areas.

I can see James Andrew, down the road, saying, dad, I'll tell you, that course you put in place there 20 years ago, that computer camp for high school students, that was a good deal. I'm glad you supported that in the legislature. Because this is what we're talking about down the road. This is what we're talking about — opportunities for our young people.

I haven't even finished the list as it relates to STI, and I haven't started on the new programs for Wascana or NIT or Kelsey because the list goes on and on and on. And yet you say that this is nothing but rhetoric; there's nothing to back it up. And I say you're wrong again. You're inaccurate and you lack information, and more than that you don't have any faith as we do in guiding and directing the future and in working with the system to realize that there has to be these new courses.

I mean, you can cling to the past for all you want. And you mentioned the issue of health sciences specifically.

Oh, but first of all, before I leave STI, you said there's nothing new been added. I forgot to tell you — an additional 42 seats in accounting. An additional 42 seats in accounting . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Exactly. And your party was saying all along that the students that were taking accounting wouldn't have a course and a space, and all the rest of it. I'll tell you what, you were fear mongering and that's the worst kind because you are spreading misinformation. That's the record, that's the facts — 42 spaces.

And then there's the case of the instructors that you rightfully raise. And I'll tell you what, and I'll say it again, if you think that laying off people, or even making changes of any sort is ever easy, you're wrong again. But I'll tell you what, making change may not be popular, but if it's right, this province is going to continue to do it. And this is right.

And as it relates to the instructors, to show you that we aren't some callous, hard-hearted Tory government that doesn't try to accommodate its people, because we recognize it as the heart and soul of the system, what is the

story on those instructors that were laid off? What are the facts? Well these are the facts. And now the member from Moose Jaw North, I want you to hear this as well. The hon. member from Moose Jaw North and the member from Saskatoon University who asked the question. I want you to hear the answer. I want you to hear this answer.

The question was: you know, you fired all these instructors — which is untrue, because they were lay-offs, not firings — and you have no regard for them. Well what's the story on these instructors that were laid off, Mr. Chairman? What is the facts?

Well the facts are these: that every one of these instructors who was laid off and who wanted to be re-employed is re-employed with only one exception. And my officials tell me that they're hopeful that they can be successful on that one as well. Now how's that for a record of fairness, reasonableness, and compassion, and recognizing, more importantly, that those instructors do have a place, albeit with different courses, and accommodating them.

And I am proud to stand here and tell you that fact. And I hope that puts to rest this bogey man about somehow decimating, to use your rhetoric again, the system. That is another fact that you can file in your research notes there, Mr. hon. Member.

And let's pick up now the issue of the health sciences which you raised. Let's pick up the issues of the health sciences. Well what do we have there for facts, Mr. Chairman? Here are the facts; here are the facts, Mr. Chairman. In some cases, 60 per cent or even 75 per cent of the graduates were not getting full-time jobs in their specialties.

Now is that fair or reasonable to those students to say, open the floodgates; come on in. It doesn't matter what the course is in health sciences; come on in, it doesn't matter whether there's three-quarters of you may not get a job in that area; come on in anyways. Spend your \$10,000 a year getting an education and then, whoops! when you're done, no jobs in that area. No jobs because some of the jobs of the future are as I pointed out earlier.

Now are you doing those students a favour? Now you want to cling to the past and suggest that all is well and that there are jobs there. But the reality is, hon. member, there are no jobs in some of those areas.

But don't take my word for it, member for Saskatoon University. What did the Saskatchewan Nursing Assistants Association report, page 79, and I believe this report was put together in 1986, Mr. Chairman.

The Saskatchewan Nursing Assistants' Association released the report on utilization of certified nursing assistants in Saskatchewan, which advocated that overall institute admissions to nursing assistant programs be, and I quote now, Mr. Chairman, from the report, be "... sharply curtailed to bring supply back into reasonable balance with demand." End of quotation from their report.

Now the hon. member is trying to suggest that he knows something more than the Saskatchewan Nursing Assistants' Association. The Saskatchewan Nursing

Assistants' Association own report said that admission should be "... sharply curtailed to bring supply back into reasonable balance with demand." What they're saying is there's no sense feeding in 500 people if there's only jobs for 100. That's what they're saying, Mr. Chairman.

Now he doesn't want to acknowledge that fact. He just want to cry, cut-backs. Well I don't suggest for a minute, Mr. Chairman, that we haven't reduced program seats in some areas, but for good reasons. For good reasons. Who are we doing a favour if there are no jobs? Or in some instances, the people themselves saw that, I've read into the record here before, examples of courses where we had 14 spaces and only five took it. Well what was the sense of having 14 spaces tied up and there's only five wanting to take it?

The question that they should be asking, Mr. Chairman, is this: what are you doing to provide the training spaces and the training opportunities for the jobs of the future? That should be the question in this legislature, not, well why are you cutting these? I know there's no jobs there, but why are you cutting them anyways? They're clinging to the past, Mr. Chairman, absolutely and unequivocally clinging to the past.

And I'm not happy for those nursing assistants who go through the system, spend maybe 10 or \$20,000 a year and end up with no jobs. I'm not happy about that.

And the hon. member raises from his seat about the dental assistants. Well what is the issue as it relates to dental assistants? Well the issue as it relates to dental assistants, Mr. Chairman, is this. The program is not somehow disappearing, as the hon. member might lead people to believe. It's being consolidated at Wascana Institute, and rightfully, yes, the Kelsey program is being closed. So is there going to be a program? Yes, there is going to be a program.

The dental assistant program at Kelsey is being closed and consolidated at Wascana Institute for some very good reasons I might add. One, Wascana trains both dental assistants and dental hygienists, and is the centre for excellence for health, including dental sciences training.

Secondly, and importantly once again for a reason that recognizes the make-up of society today, that these professions very often have many women in them, and we want to accommodate the life-style today of the modern woman.

And so Wascana's curriculum permits flexibility for part-time enrolment to complete the training over two years, particularly to try and acknowledge those students who have heavy family responsibilities. And yet, if you recall in this House, Mr. Chairman, during this estimates, he's trying to suggest somehow these changes are anti-woman. Well, I'm telling you that we have, in fact, acknowledged the women in society and not just given it lip-service like those people did when they were in government. We've acknowledged it. That's why we've got evening training programs, and that's why we've consolidated this programming at Wascana.

And I want to give you another reason, Mr. Chairman, that Wascana's facility and equipment are considered among the best in Canada for training dental auxiliaries.

He wants to have duplication. We want to have it consolidated where there is the best program whether we've got a curriculum that meets the modern times and the modern needs, particularly of women, and women with family, Mr. Chairman. And I think if one was to go further, we would probably find a report along the way of an advisory body that said, as well, it should be consolidated.

And the hon. member can argue with me whether we should consolidate at Saskatoon or consolidate at Regina, but for these reasons, Mr. Chairman, we've consolidated it, and we've consolidated it in Regina.

I stand by these changes, Mr. Chairman, because they make sense. They're in the best interests of the individuals. They're in the best interests of the young adults that are in these programs.

(1630)

And I have every reason to believe that the health sciences, including dental assistants, will serve our province well in the future, Mr. Chairman. I have absolutely no reason to believe otherwise.

And one other point I would like to lay on the record, because in all this talk of cut-backs the hon. members have almost, I think, left the impression, certainly with some in the media, that there are no health science courses going to be offered, and no seats available across Saskatchewan.

Well what is the record, Mr. Chairman? Yes, there have been cut-backs for the reasons I talked about — no jobs down the road. But what are we really talking about? Well the reality is, in '87-88 nearly 1,000 training spaces will still be in place in this province, Mr. Chairman — nearly 1,000. And yes, you're right, last year the similar number was 1,082.

Now how does he square that with his talk of decimation? You can't. His comments are incredible; they're inaccurate; there is misinformation in them; he doesn't have the fully story. And the reality is, Mr. Chairman, it's my job to provide the full story. I grant you that. And these are the facts, these are the facts on whether you're talking about making sure we have the courses of the future, looking after our staff, making sure we have health sciences covered off. I think the hon. member will agree the government deserves full marks in every area.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to say that the rhetoric coming from the other side of the House is really inaccurate when it comes to the reinstating instructors. It's a good example of the double talk and the inaccuracies flowing from the government side of the House these days.

But I would like to address my question to the minister, and my question is with regards to the Alvin Buckwold Centre in Saskatoon. Can you minister tell me how the

interaction preschool program was funded in the past, and can you tell me in general terms, briefly, the function carried out by interaction preschool at the Alvin Buckwold Centre?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — As relates to the preschool programs . . . and I think the hon. member already mentioned specifically the Alvin Buckwold School, and there may have been I think three others that fell in the same category. The funding there in the past . . . And just for everyone's information, what we're talking about here is some individuals aged perhaps 3, 4, 5, who might not be able to sort of pick up the traces along with other ones when they enter grade one, some special programming for them to make sure that, or to perhaps enable them to slip into the grade one, into the regular system with ease. In the past the funding there was on a special basis if you like, or a pilot project basis, in a direct-line basis from the department for those children.

For this year I'm advised that the funding now will come from out of the school board's funding, if you like, or the division's funding, as it would for other operating other programs. So it's the usual kind of avenue now as opposed to the pilot project special funding basis previously.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Yes. Can the Minister tell me, will that change in the funding process, as you mentioned it did go from the board of education through Alvin Buckwold Centre in Saskatoon to the interaction preschool, will the change in the process of the funding now going through the local school board facilitate any changes in the staff in the interaction preschool program at Alvin Buckwold Centre in Saskatoon?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — We don't expect any changes in staffing. But as the hon. member can appreciate, I think we don't control the division and how they organize their affairs. But if the enrolments are there, and all things being equal, I would think that staffing would be unaffected. But I can't speak unequivocally for them.

**Mr. Upshall:** — In this program, they have children with special needs — and your age category is out a little bit; it's running from three months to 20 months or thereabouts . . . teaching basic skills. They now have employed developmental therapists, they're classed as, with special training into giving these children the necessary training to — anywhere from toilet training to sitting properly, just the basic life skills.

Now I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, because the funding is now going to go through the local school board, will the people involved in that teaching, in that interaction preschool, have to have a teaching certificate?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Chairman, I must admit to the hon. member that I am not conversant with what the certification requirements are now. But all I can say to you, once again, is that we don't anticipate any particular changes. But then again, you know, we're not . . . local school boards, as you can expect and appreciate and respect, and as they would expect, have local autonomy and we don't try to tell them how to run their affairs. And I wouldn't pretend to do so in this instance, but we don't

anticipate any great changes, whether it be in staffing or in the certification required by that staffing. But I say that with the caveat that I've attached.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Well I think there is a potential problem because we have people employed who have special training and combined years of experience of 20 years managing this program. And I think with the system already overloaded, a four to five months backlog, unless it's a special case, you can appreciate that the children in this program need the experience and they need the training that the present developmental therapist can give them.

Now I would like you, through your people over on that side, to assure me and to assure other parents of special-needs children that the training . . . the people involved in training, the developmental therapists involved in the interaction preschool . . . Now you can stand there and say, well, you're not sure.

But the point is, if there is a technical requirement for those people to hold teaching certificates thereby replacing the present staff, then you can appreciate the fact that we will be put back many, many years in the development of this program — a pioneering program in Saskatoon and in this province. They are teaching basic skills; they are setting up home programs, home visits. As I said before, they provide follow-up consultation with children going into preschool programs or day care programs.

I would like you, Mr. Minister, to assure the people and the children involved in these programs, that those developmental therapists, with all their expertise and all the knowledge they have to give these children, will be maintained in that position regardless of whether the school board is managing the funds or whether it comes from the Department of Education to the Alvin Buckwold Centre, as it did in the past. Can you assure that those therapists will not be replaced by people simply because they need teaching certificates, and set this program back 20 years?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Well the hon. member has asked me to do something over which I have no control. And if I was to sort of come down with a heavy hand and say, I'm from Regina and I'm in the legislature here and I know best; local school board, here's the line and here's how I want you to tow it; and the hon. member would have criticized me for interfering in local autonomy. I mean, that's the reality of what he's suggesting.

What I am saying to him, and what I will say to again, is, as I understand it, by every measure the pilot program — and I think it was undertaken in four locations — was a success. I have every reason to believe that those school boards, too, view that pilot project as a success. And hence, I have every reason to believe that their good judgement, and because of that, will lead them to deliver the program, all things being equal, in a matter not dissimilar from years past. And to give the hon. member more assurance that that, I cannot.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Mr. Minister, in that case, if the case presents itself that the people with the expertise, through



some decision by the school board, are replaced — let's say that the school board, because of some technicality that . . . which I think there may be, that they may have to have a teaching certificate. If those people are replaced, can you assure me that the Department of Education will then go back and fund the interaction preschool as it was funded in the past, to ensure that those people with the expertise remain there?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I will give the hon. member this commitment and this assurance, because I think we can strike a reasonable balance here relative to his inquiry and yet respect the local autonomy. If you sense a deterioration in quality, then you raise that with me and I will have my officials look into it, and we can make appropriate representations and draw that to the local official's attention, you know, given that we would not make an unfair assessment.

Similarly, I have instructed my officials if they sense in their daily goings on and through special education, etc., etc., if they sense in their own minds a deterioration in quality, they have assured me and I have in fact instructed them that I would want them to make some assessments and make some determinations of whether that is the case or it is not. And I think it's in no one's best interest to see deterioration into quality, and clearly that's the case.

At the same time I'm not going to judge someone guilty when we know them to be guilty of nothing. I don't think that would be fair. As I said before, I've got a fair amount of faith in the reasonableness and sensitivity of that local board and . . . I mean, I have no reason to suspect that they won't maintain it much as it's been maintained in the past. But if you, along the way over the course of this next year sense otherwise, or my officials, then I'll have it investigated. I think that would be fair ball.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Yes, Mr. Minister, I think that would be.

I just have one final question. Would you say that replacing present staff with new staff with teaching certificates would be . . . would you consider that a deterioration of the service? Would you personally, and your staff, consider that a deterioration of service?

(1645)

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, it's difficult for me to make a judgement based on a hypothetical situation because I think what everybody is interested in in the end of the day is that the same kind of quality that we enjoyed in the pilot project continue. And I suspect there's a number of factors that if you alter this one or change that one or move this one or whatever, that could, ultimately, have some effect. Same might be positive, some might be negative, and the end result may well be that the quality is the same.

I guess we're interested in the output. And, as I said earlier, I have every . . . I've got a fair amount of faith in the judgement of that board, and I guess . . .

If I'm missing something in your questioning, that perhaps you could raise with me, either here or privately if you like, and if you have some reason to suspect or to question

the judgement there . . . Has there been something to lead you to that conclusion? Am I missing something, I guess, is what I am saying.

**Mr. Upshall:** — I just have — I just am looking into the future, and I'm worried that changing the procedure by which funding is given could, through some technicality, mean that the people that are already there will be replaced. And I just want to say that I will be monitoring the situation.

The people there, at the Alvin Buckwold Centre, are very uncertain as to what's happening these days, and I think they need some reassurances, as do the people involved with children with special needs.

So I'll take your assessment of monitoring the situation at face value. And I can assure you that if there's any change in staff, that you will never hear the end of this to me unless it's a significant improvement, and you would have to be going a long way to find better people than you have there right now.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I don't disagree with his observations.

**Mr. Koenker:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Minister, I would like to ask for your comments on your government's understanding of the Saskatoon Board of Education's request for funding for seven new schools in Saskatoon within the next five years, and how you see that unfolding in terms of government commitment to neighbourhood schools and funding for them.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — The first comment I would like to make just to reassure you and school boards, I suppose, across the province is our commitment to neighbourhood schools remains unchanged. In fact, the whole process of prioritizing and determining which project should be build first, second, that kind of thing, remains unchanged as well. I think it's a system that for the most part has worked well for some several years in this province.

The decision making is left up to neutral groups, if you like, not disinterested parties, but neutral teams that go around and evaluate every request. And I know at the end of the day there's some . . . I mean whether a project is number 29 or number 30, perhaps there's some subjectivity in their evaluations, but I know they try to be as objective as possible, as do the officials in the department.

And I know, too, that in any given year we receive probably something in the order of 200 requests for projects of which we can never build them all, but we do as well as we can with the amount of dollars we have.

One thing that we are toying with — and this isn't policy yet but it's something that we are toying with — is trying to look to a greater degree than we have in the past of some kind of five-year planning process — approval in principles, perhaps; something along that line so that everyone can plan better, they and us included.

And I know that's not without its pitfalls either, but it's

something that I'm prepared to give some fair consideration too. And you may want to pass that along to school boards if you, in fact, meet with them. And it may well be that in the next six months we've got that nailed down in some more detail than we have this day. I think it addresses in part, you know, your question's relative the planning process in general.

So I would say these two things, generally. Number one is: the commitment to neighbourhood schools is unchanged, the prioritization process is unchanged. But, yes, we are looking at using a five-year planning window and some twists and some variations on that.

**Mr. Koenker:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm aware of the uncertainties of the funding process. I'm also aware that the public school board has, as I understand it, a five-year plan.

And I guess my concern is for the Erindale area of Sutherland — five of the seven schools proposed in this five-year plan are for Erindale. They had hoped to commence construction this summer on a new school for Erindale. And are you aware that that now means that some 300 children will have to be bused this school year to other schools in Saskatoon?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Well we're . . . we're aware of the situation as it relates to Erindale, and we're making all possible resources available in terms of accommodating the needs there, whether it be portables or whatever, or transportation allowances in terms of busing — that kind of things that we have in terms of policy and programming already in place.

But of course I suppose the preferred solution would be to . . . as I'm sure you would agree, is to be — have construction under way on the \$3.8 million project. And that's not an inconsiderable sum, as you can well appreciate, 3.8 millions of dollars.

I, too, wish we were building that and, I suppose, many others, because the list is endless, I think is a fair observation I could make after being in this job for six or eight months now.

I don't want to raise expectations unnecessarily or, you know, put false hopes in place, and I can tell you this much, that Erindale project is a very high priority.

I can't say much more than that because I might be raising false hopes. It's not an insignificant sum.

We recognize the demographics and the pressures that Saskatoon is facing. In some ways, I suppose, it's an enviable position. There are a lot of cities across Canada that wish they were growing and had the dynamics that Saskatoon does have. They do not.

But certainly it places pressure on our system and I'm advised that it will be dealt with and school will go on. At this point in time you and I can't stand here and announce the preferred solution, I suppose, but the schooling needs will be met, I can tell you that.

**Mr. Koenker:** — I guess my question, Mr. Minister, is how

the schooling needs will be met? I don't have any question as to whether they will be met, but how they will be met, I think, is the concern for the people at Erindale. And I think that the need is transparent at this point. It's projected by the public school board that by next fall, by September of 1988, there'll be some 700 children needing busing.

And a school obviously can't be in place now that it hasn't been approved for construction this year. It can't be in place by September of '88. Then the concern is compounded in the fact that that whole north-eastern section of the city is projected to grow by some 50,000 people in the next decade. Therein lies the need for five elementary schools, a high school or a collegiate as well.

And so I think it behoves us as individuals responsible for the funding of these schools not to have the false economies of busing children when we know that the needs are going to be there. They're just transparently there. And I'm wondering what guarantees you can give us that we aren't just talking about one school for Erindale, but in fact that the public school board's plans for the Hindmarsh school, for the Broad Acres school, for a third and possibly a fourth elementary school, and for a start on a collegiate will begin before the end of this decade. It's not just one school that we're talking about, given the growth that is not just projected for that north-eastern part of the city, but is actually taking place there.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I guess I can say again that I too wish that, I suppose, all 200 projects that we get every year we could approve. That probably wouldn't be responsible government. I suppose it might make every community happy, but the reality is on close assessment by our evaluation teams that sometimes those interests haven't always been evaluated in the best long-term view. How we are going to address this — and sure it may well be second best, and I don't disacknowledge that — is through the use of relocatables and portables and busing. And, yes, we too recognize that that's the second best and it's most expensive in the long haul.

But just to keep the entire Saskatoon picture in perspective, the hon. member will know that the Forest Grove elementary project, well over 3 million again, is going ahead. And once again, I don't want to raise false hopes and expectations that I can't deliver on. But your assumptions about what might not be or what might be built by '88 is predicated on the basis that there may be no alterations on the program array over the next six or eight months. And past history has proven that sometimes some school divisions, even when they get approvals, change their minds, and that sometimes frees up money elsewhere.

Now I don't know whether this year will prove to be that way or not, and that's why I'm being very careful and guarded in my comments. But all I can tell you is we recognize the dynamics and the demographics of Saskatoon. We have approved the major project, and the schooling needs will be met.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:02 p.m.