

## EVENING SITTING

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure  
Education  
Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 5

## Item 1 (continued)

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Chairman, as we are approximately half-way through our Education estimates, I would like to take some time at the beginning of tonight's session just to draw together the overall theme that my colleagues and I have been emphasizing. We've received repeated calls, Mr. Chairman, from people involved in education, and from parents and from students, and all the calls and the concerns that we've heard have a common theme. People feel that the youth of Saskatchewan are being betrayed. There's a betrayal of education in Saskatchewan. They feel that what's happening is that this government is cutting back in education to pay for its mismanagement in other fields.

Now when I talk about mismanagement, Mr. Chairman, I refer, of course, to the \$3.4 billion deficit. If there was no deficit, I don't think that we would have to even start to be concerned about cuts in education and health. But as we see this deficit here, the government is asking everybody to participate in it.

Now I want to make the point that the members on this side do not believe that the deficit was caused by the health field or people in the education field or by the social services. It's when we look at the way the government has been spending its money, the money that they've not collected, money that they've given away to the oil companies, \$1.5 billion, \$248 million not collected from Weyerhaeuser, \$20 million given away to Peter Pocklington, money spent on patronage appointments such as the \$30,000 to Gordon Dirks, and of course it comes right down to small details like air plane trips for their cabinet minister to a family wedding.

I want to give a brief overview of the record in education that we've heard of over the last seven months. The first and perhaps the most devastating and longest — the cut that's going to cut the deepest over the long run — was quite likely the cuts to the school boards — that is the 1 per cent decrease in funding to school board grants and the broken promise of the five-year educational development fund which has now been taken back and replaced with a 10-year plan. The 1 per cent cut in school board grants has resulted in loss of staff by some school boards, and other boards had a loss of programming, other cases the increase in mill rates. Of course, the loss of staff results in higher student ratio which of course transfers right down and has a bad effect on the students that we are trying to serve.

Many boards have had to make sudden adjustments to plans as a result of the broken promise of the five-year EDF (educational development fund) program. They had responded very positively to the program; the boards liked the program as it was set up. They are wondering

now if they — because they have to abandon ship on the five-year program — they are wondering what's going to happen to the 10-year program, and they want continued assurances that the 10-year program will stay in place and not be cut altogether or moved or changed to a 20-year program or something like that.

Boards have found that they have had to abandon ship, as I mentioned; they have had to cut programs midway in some cases. In order to overcome some of the difficulties, some boards have had to borrow money, others have cut personnel that they have hired specifically for EDF, and some have just gone into a bookkeeping system where they've gone ahead with the program and just labelled the budgeted items as accounts receivable, which means that they would be in extreme difficulty should this program be cut again or should the promise be broken again.

Now you might ordinarily say, well we promise, we promise you. The government has promised that there is a 10-year program, and you're asking everybody to understand that there are difficulties, but it's not completely and easily . . . easy to believe that promise. See, you also promised to make health care number one in Canada, and now what is happening to it?

I could list promises, Mr. Chairman, and I will a few for the record. In the case of health care, the drug plan has been decimated, the children's dental plan has been cut, and we know that there are thousands of people on the hospital waiting list. There was a promise to cut personal income taxes. Instead, what do we see? Flat tax from 1 per cent and raised again this year. They promised to eliminate the sales tax, and what did we get this year? We got a 2 per cent hike — a 2 per cent hike in the provincial sales tax. There was a promise to eliminate the gas tax. Well we had that for a while, but now we've got a 7 cent a litre tax added on with the promise of repayment. There is a promise . . . We did have an original promise of a balanced budget. Well everybody knows what kind of a farce that particular promise has resulted in.

So the theme that we're showing, the members on this side are showing, Mr. Chairman, is that the youth are being betrayed by having to take from education what should be taken from other places. And I mentioned earlier the 1 per cent cuts to the school boards and the extension of the EDF fund, the cut-back in the EDF fund, the promise, a five-year promise extended now to a 10-year promise.

School boards have also had difficulty by having had promises of capital funding withdrawn, and to name two schools in Saskatoon, the Erindale school was a promised school, and in Prince Albert, the Riverside school was promised, those things have now been cut back.

The department itself and the management of the department itself is of concern to educators because they've seen that there's been a break in the continuity of the department staff. And when we look at the break in the continuity of the department staff, it also reflects the direction, the total direction and the change in direction of the entire Department of Education. The shift in

emphasis is from having people with education experience in the Department of Education to people with fiscal experience in the Department of Education. Three out of the top four administrative aides, administrators with the Department of Education, are without Saskatchewan educational experience.

Here is what a letter says from an individual, a school principal in Lloydminster. This is what a principal says about this particular change. He says:

Surely your department needs a historical prospective in order to have a good sense of where it is going, and also the manner in which they (meaning the department employees) were released shows that there is a large measure of either insecurity or arrogance on the part of the decision makers.

The concern extends beyond just the people in the department because there is a great concern about what could possibly happen to the core curriculum. I mentioned this earlier in the estimates debate, the seven years of development that is gone, the team confidence that's been built up, and people are now asking the question, with new people and with new direction, we want reassurances that what has been developed so far will not be lost.

We spent considerable time, Mr. Chairman, talking about the cuts to the technical institutes, the 142 tech staff laid off, the 1,100 student seats that have been cut. I will be dealing a little later this evening with other problems at the technical schools specifically, in this case, with the Northern Institute of Technology.

There's been considerable talk and concern raised regarding what's happening at our universities, Mr. Chairman. A two-year budget freeze — that amounts to being 10 per cent behind the cost of living over two years. This is the first time ever that I can recollect that there's been a limited enrolment in the College of Arts and Science — the first time.

Our students are being asked to pay more. There's been a 10 per cent hike in tuition fees. This increase in tuition fees and the possibility of increased tuition fees in other post-secondary institutions amount to a deterrent fee on education. We now have a deterrent fee on prescription drugs; we have a deterrent fee on education.

Universities, of course, being faced with the lack of funds . . . In my city, we find that the school of human justice and social work is being chopped. This is also happening in the city of Saskatoon. Now those personnel are needed, Mr. Chairman. Prince Albert is a centre of incarceration; we have five prisons in Prince Albert, and the people, the training, is needed. The people need the professional training to be able to do an excellent job and to continue improving in their qualifications.

Of course, one of the most devastating things that happened, Mr. Chairman, was the cuts that took place to the community college programs. The whole thing was disguised as a re-organization, but the result is really a loss of educational opportunities and educational

experiences.

There is an exception by the people of Saskatchewan, across this province, to keep education as a pillar of the overall provincial program. Now we have heard a lot of rhetoric about expansion of the technical system, and we've heard a lot about positioning for the 21st century. But the trouble is, Mr. Chairman, the words and the language does not square with the action.

Now I want to bring to the minister's attention an item from his own publication, and it talks about "Principles of a New Agenda" in his own document, *Preparing for the Year 2000*. And I kind of like what is written in some of this, Mr. Minister. But what I would really like to see is that there was a good follow-up on it because there are some things that are happening that just don't jibe with what's written in here.

Now right from page 5 of this document, and I quote, says:

An adult education and retraining become more of a necessity for future employment, access must be provided more equitably to all groups and regions in the province.

And, secondly, it says:

Adult education is one of the main bulwarks against erosion of our social and cultural heritage. We must reinforce this role . . . highest priority must be given by all adult education institutions to reinforce analytical, conceptual and reasoning skills.

Nobody's going to argue with that or the previous two statements; and:

There must be an expanded focus on the needs of older workers for retraining.

And then, there's telling sentence:

Education must become a lifelong endeavour.

Now I ask the minister, how can you square what is said there, what is quoted there, how can you square that with the programming cut-backs in the community colleges and with the programming cut-backs in the technical schools? How can you promise to do one thing, and then at the same time, do another?

Yes, "Education must become a lifelong endeavour." But what they do then is they cut back in the person enrichment courses, and I think if you're saying that and cutting back on the personal enrichment courses, that's deception of the lowest and the worst kind.

When it comes to the technical school budgets, all you have to do is look at the dollars. You used to spend in the vicinity of \$80 million annually on technical schools; now it's down to \$60 million annually.

(1915)

Now I know we've heard some arguments: well, we're going to redesign the curriculum or . . . and we're going to be talking about retraining initiatives, alternate training methods. But all in all still what happens is we're withdrawing funding from it.

Now let me just itemize a little more, in a little more detail, about the cuts to community colleges and the community college program.

How does it not relate to lifelong learning to have cut all of these courses, a list of about 50 long . . . but I would like to mention some of them. Courses in small animal care, culinary skills, building programs, gardening, miscellaneous courses, courses in painting and photography, in pottery and ceramics, in drama, in needlework, spinning, and in sports. Now are these regarded as not being valuable?

They were implemented, Mr. Chairman, first of all, by community demand. They were paid for largely by tuition. All the community colleges had to do was to provide the delivery service. That was the big part of it — provide the delivery service. Now that mandate is gone. I ask the minister, how can he explain that you cut those courses and at the same time you believe in lifelong learning?

These courses were instrumented and instigated on the values of . . . First of all, they were community based. People asked for them and they only asked for them if they figured they needed them and if they wanted to participate in them. They captured the interest of the people involved at that time. And when a course is asked for by an individual, that individual has ownership in it, you know that that person is much more likely to successfully achieve in that particular course.

Many of these courses formed the basis for development of some small businesses. In some cases, cottage businesses, one-third time, a quarter time, but it all added to the economy of the country; particularly it added to the tourism value of our province. When people come into the province and they come into a small village or a town or city like the one I live in, they often look for something authentic that was made right here in Saskatchewan. The skills to make those things were largely developed through the community college.

Now that is gone. Of course there are many people who have expressed that this was an outlet for them — a very positive, therapeutic outlet — particularly people in the rural areas.

And last of all, Mr. Speaker, it was a way of helping us develop our culture. Now it may get a little philosophical to say that the culture is what people do with their spare time here in Saskatchewan, but when we found that a program like this was helping develop something very positive . . . People were developing skills which they would then pass on to their neighbours, pass on to their children. Ethnic groups were finding that they had a outlet here to develop their cultures, often through these programs which they could have sponsored through the community colleges.

Well, Mr. Chairman, what I've done then is outlined in general terms some of the concerns of the people of Saskatchewan regarding education. People are feeling very strongly that what's happening is that we are taking from Saskatchewan education, taking from Saskatchewan children to pay for government mismanagement. And I had mentioned earlier the source of the mismanagement, and the proof of the mismanagement. The proof of the mismanagement is the \$3.4 billion deficit, the deficit that needn't be as large if the 1.5 billion had been collected from the oil industry; if people like Weyerhaeuser were asked to pay up the \$248 million for the pulp mill; if 20 million hadn't been given to Peter Pocklington; if people like George Hill weren't earning the excessive amounts of over 100,000, and patronage appointments like Gordon Dirks at \$30,000; or flying cabinet ministers to weddings.

Mr. Chairman, I want to deal now very briefly with an item regarding the take-over and the loss of local control at the community college in Prince Albert. The minister himself has stated that the community college was doing a good job, and even though he and people in his department have acknowledged that repeatedly, he still insisted on taking control of the community college and insisted on ensuring that there was loss of local decision-making in Prince Albert, as there was in other places where there were appointed boards.

I want to repeat what a former board chairman of the Prince Albert Community College said — board member and a former PC supporter. And when he was speaking to a meeting of close to 100 people who were gathered to hear and listen to the board, and he mentioned his very deep concern as to what was happening. And here's the way he described the college:

This college was one of the best administered educational institutions in our province. We received an annual grant this year from the government of just over \$500,000, yet the budget was over 7 million.

So the board was managing to generate money far in excess — 14 times the amount of seed money that it was getting from the government.

And he goes on to mention that over 1,700 student enrolments in university classes were conducted in Prince Albert last year, Prince Albert and district. And he says:

They did not received one red cent of direct government money or assistance to mount these programs. In fact the Department of Supply and Services charged us (meaning the Prince Albert Regional Community College) . . .

They charged them \$70,000 rent for the space that those classes occupied in the building.

Now this is the board that was taken over by the Department of Education, whose responsibilities were taken over by the Department of Education for, as I now would quote the minister, because he wishes to position for the 21st century. Well it's needless to say that there

was considerable bitterness as a result of this, Mr. Chairman, and this particular board member went on to say in his remarks:

I cannot remain a part of this great organization and continue to try and reason with the deaf, dumb, and blind government — a government bent on a misguided course of destruction of an important aspect of our post-secondary education system.

Later on he said in his delivery:

They are destroying our system of ending locally-controlled boards and supplanting centralized government control, all so they can get their hands on that federal money. That is what this issue is all about. This issue is about a bankrupt, impoverished provincial government prostituting itself for money. They are stepping on this college, on our community, on our principles, and our success in order to get at these federal funds. At the same time they are trying to sell us on a new concept of a better system of adult education, a concept (he says) we know amounts to nothing but a bunch of crap.

Mr. Chairman, it was with a lot of sadness that we went through when we were dealing with this and it was with a lot of frustration, and I along with my colleague, the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake, spent many hours trying to be supportive to the board and encourage them to make contact with the minister. And this particular board member went so far as to not only make repeated, repeated contacts with the community . . . with the department, but he went directly to his party people who he knows personally. And he said in his address, he says:

I had requested and had personal meetings in Regina with the Progressive Conservative party's policy committee and its chairman, the executive director of the PC party and the president of the party and as well as the Minister of Education. I know that serious reservations exist within the PC party over the centralization policy being forced on us by this stubborn and ill-informed minister.

I was told that the party had recommended that autonomy be retained but the minister overrode the recommendation. They wouldn't listen to the community; they wouldn't listen to the MLAs; they wouldn't listen to the board; they wouldn't even listen to their own party.

I wonder, Mr. Chairman, whether we're fit to govern, whether this government is fit to govern.

The response we got, Mr. Minister, when we asked the question in the House here, was that this entire thing was called an unfortunate glitch. Mr. Minister, and further it says . . . And once again the rationalization was where to position. We have to do it because otherwise we won't be able to position ourselves for the 21st century. I wonder, Mr. Minister, with an unbending approach like that, and the minister's positioning for the 21st century, it's a good

thing, and it's fortunate that he's not positioning us for the 22nd century.

Mr. Chairman, I want to talk briefly now about governance at the technical schools. There was some discussion in educational circles earlier this year about looking at different forms of governance. And in response to that, the minister had a series of discussions. I'm not sure if that was the primary focus of his meetings and his discussions. But the members on this side of the House also asked the question: is this a good time to look at reorganization of our technical institutes and reorganization of . . . and particularly our technical institutes?

In Prince Albert the timing of this was right this particular spring, because any time prior to that the school was still very much in the start-up stage. It would have been simply too disruptive to talk about a change in administrative structure and in governance prior to that. So at the time . . . come this spring then, we decided that we were going to undertake a study. We asked the question, we asked whether there was . . . a question whether there was a desire of the people in the Prince Albert community, in the Saskatoon educational communities, whether there was any desire to change the form of governments. And we put out a survey and as a result of the survey we came up with this type of a result.

There were three responses that dominated, Mr. Chairman. By far, the most single benefit that the people who answered the questionnaire saw was that it would allow the technical . . . that if we went to local autonomy, that they would . . . it would allow technical institutes the flexibility they needed to design and implement programs to meet the very specific needs of a local area.

Secondly, they felt that local control was important because it would enable technical schools to distance themselves from partisan politics at the provincial level. And there's not much wonder as to why that particular statement, result, came about. One of the respondents, and I would like to quote him, stated this:

The institutions may become learning institutions instead of arenas for political gains. Programs could be designed around the needs of people in the province, not designed to buy votes for the least amount of money.

And the third advantage that they saw for local autonomy was that it would substantially reduce the time element involved in getting decisions made.

(1930)

Well, Mr. Chairman, we went through that procedure at the same time the minister was having his consultations. The consultations that he was having were closed-door consultations. We asked people in the community to participate in this particular exercise, and we directed it, we targeted it at the audiences of school board members, selected school board members, people working at the community colleges, people working and administering in the technical institutes, the people from the business community, particularly with the chamber of commerce.

And these are the results, the results that I showed you, and they were all indicating a very strong preference for local control — local governance, independent governance, and local control. Prior to us having completed our results, we found that the minister had made an announcement, and the announcement came out that there was going to be a new super board that was going to be instituted for the purpose of overseeing the workings of the community colleges and the technical institutes in Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, and Regina.

We still have concerns about that, Mr. Minister. We have had repeated concerns about that, and I have made repeated representations. So have people in the . . . the school board members prior to the . . . pardon me, the community college board members prior to resigning. And at this stage, we've found that because of the uncertainty created in this particular case . . . One example that I'd give you is where we're used to having 50 to 60 classes fully enrolled by this time, university classes enrolled through the community college, we're only at about half the enrolment — things being very uncertain.

Now that has been a record of what we have done, Mr. Chairman, in these estimates — once again, I repeat, showing the mismanagement that has resulted in the Department of Education as a spin-off of the mismanagement of the entire provincial fiscal scene . . .

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

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — . . . \$3.4 billion in debt. And who's being asked to pay for it? Taking money from education; taking money from health; taking money from the children so that . . . so that we can pay Peter Pocklington; so that we can pay for the \$248 million that Weyerhaeuser should be paying; so that the oil companies can go scot-free with \$1.5 billion — not the least of which to mention is the Minister of Finance's . . . the Minister of Justice's trip to a wedding, courtesy the people of Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — I now want to turn, Mr. Chairman, to some discussion regarding the Northern Institute of Technology. I want to place on record, Mr. Chairman, that there was a decision by the former government to build a technical institute in Prince Albert. The decision came down in 1981.

This decision was abandoned by the present government, by the previous administration, the administration from '82 to '86. It was abandoned for a period of over a year. The projected cost of that building at that time was to be 18 million. Later on, a year and a half later . . . Oh, I should mention that there were architects that had been hired; I should mention that there were arrangements made for the purchase of land; and that the opening of this school was projected to be '84 or '85.

This project was abandoned temporarily. And then, due to some political heat and . . . The government decided at

a later time to proceed with this. They decided also to upgrade this technical institute to a \$22 million building. In order to complete this thing, they had to spend quite a considerable amount more than 22 million. The record now shows that they're in the 35 to \$36 million range — just a minor bit of overspending.

Let me tell you what happened. Because of the late start and because they saw an election coming in October of 1986, they forced the people working on the program to develop programs under conditions which I don't think anybody should be forced to work. The people, the workers, responded in a tremendous fashion, for which they are to be congratulated, and put some programs into place. They had to have it in place because this was an attempt, of course, to elect Sid Dutchak and Paul Meagher in the city of Prince Albert.

However, because of the attempts and the way the attempts were run, we know that that whole thing backfired. It was backfired that the school could be used to re-elect Sid Dutchak and Paul Meagher. You all know Paul Meagher. He's the one that the Premier looked to for good advice on political strategy.

Now it backfired largely, Mr. Chairman, because of the method that was employed. There was a lack of open consultation with the people in the community, the people who are to be host to the institute, and the people in the community who have been used to participating in the planning.

There was a lack of listening, lack of listening to people who could provide good advice and responding positively and their lack of responding positively. The concern of the community was expressed, Mr. Chairman, but the advice was ignored.

Now I refer you to some advice that was given to the principals' advisory committee, a closed committee, but some advice that was ignored. This is a closed committee. But a member of that committee said this:

Firstly, we and others were promised that priority would be given in hiring to local individuals; if the skills and abilities were available. To date, I note that of some eight senior administrative positions that have been filled — only one job has gone to anyone from our region that being the resource centre only. The firm promise of at least one Vice-principalship from our community has not been actualized.

I repeat this. "The firm promise," he says, "of at least one vice-principalship from our community has not been actualized." Now this was advice given in 1985 — November of 1985. And to this date, that advice has been ignored. And you wonder why there may be some types of problems at the Northern Institute of Technology.

I bring this to your attention, Mr. Minister, because I think the bad experiences of the past should not be repeated. And I think that after having spent \$36 million, which is a very high expenditure, the public of Saskatchewan and the people of Prince Albert and the students of Saskatchewan want high performance.

Now I desperately want success for that school, and I think you want success for that school. And I'm asking you to set up a monitoring system that can be effective. The difficulty has been that all the advice that was given was all filtered through department only; no local advocates with power to give good advice. Not like on an ordinary school boards where if a child gets into difficulty with the teacher or the principal or the system gets locked into it, he can go to the school board. But this doesn't happen here. You've only got one way to go, and that's up the pipe through the system, and it gets filtered, and that's why we are ending up with difficulty.

Now if you are saying that a school board — a super board — run out of Regina will be the answer, I'm afraid it won't be. Our experience tells us that administration out of Regina to a distant port like Prince Albert, even Saskatoon, simply doesn't work. And we've got ample experience telling us that. Students and the members of the community just have no advocate to go to.

So I ask you the question, Mr. Minister, will you give consideration of some sort to establish some type of meaningful monitoring agency? I ask you that question. Will you establish some type of meaningful monitoring agency and some agency with an authority, with some authority so that the difficulties of the NIT (Northern Institute of Technology) can be overcome and can be dealt with?

Now you might say, "What are the difficulties?" Mr. Minister, I don't know if you've had an opportunity to look at the record of the Northern Institute of Technology and compare it to the community college record, and then I don't know if you've looked at ways of making adjustments, but I would ask you to do so.

I refer to, Mr. Minister, some statistics that I've got from the Northern Institute of Technology and some statistics which I've gotten from the Prince Albert Regional Community College. And I want you to listen to these very carefully because it's quite a telling tale — cold hard statistics, as you have used on occasion today. Now these statistics are dated June 22, '87. I think they'll give us the general picture. There may be one or two numbers that are slightly different here, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, as of today. If you have better figures, Mr. Minister, if you have more recent figures that are more accurate to these, I would appreciate having them and we'll debate them.

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

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — But I want to draw a comparison between the courses offered under the present system of the Northern Institute of Technology and what the programs are offered by the community college. When the community college offered these programs, they were all 10-month programs, all 10-month programs. The programs that the Northern Institute of Technology are offering are, by and large, shorter programs, and most of these programs are put in during September and October of the previous year. Some of them were brought in, perhaps, a little earlier . . . were taken over by the institute a little earlier. There may be one or two of them that were taken a little later. But take, for example, the

business program for accounting clerk. Active learners to date, eight; number of graduates, none. That's of June 22 — none.

What did the community college in Prince Albert deliver in its last year of operation? They delivered 12 graduates — 12 graduates. Not eight, not none. 12. Now in this course, this course I'm talking about, according to the community college calendar, is supposed to be a 29-week course. Not a 10-month course, a 29-week course.

Clerk-typist, 13 active learners. How many graduates? None. How many graduates did the Prince Albert Regional College come up with? Thirteen in its last year of operation. That's a 27-week course.

Let's look at cosmetology. The community college graduated 13 out of 25 students in its last year of operation. What has the Northern Institute of Technology graduated for a 33-week course? One student out of 28. One out of 28.

Now, Mr. Minister, let's look at carpentry. The community college graduated eight out of 25. The NIT has graduated, so far, five out of 31. Electrical, five out of 14. Welding, the community college graduated eight out of 17 students for a 10-month course. These people, the NIT, has graduated eight out of 29, so far. That's a 30-week course. Small vehicle and motor repair course, a 31-week course. Graduates how many? Four. Out of active learners, 24. That's of June 22. Now the community college was able to graduate 15 out of 24.

(1945)

Mr. Chairman, the total number of graduates to date out of the technical school, unfortunately and very sadly, is only 33 as of that date. Now I expect by today that they have increased by perhaps 10 — that's my estimate.

Now the difficulties here have to be looked into. I know that the staff is sincere in what they want to do, but there is something plugging the system. It's the law of effect that I'm concerned with here, Mr. Chairman, not the philosophy. The law of effect. And the law of effect tells me that that school is not performing, not nearly as good as the Kelsey or the Wascana at this stage, and it's not even performing as well as the Prince Albert Regional Community College delivery system is. I think it needs to be looked into and I want you to look into it.

I want you to establish some kind of a monitoring system where people can go and students who have concerns can go and report directly to it and expect something to happen.

I want you to address the question, Mr. Minister. I want you to address the question of trying to establish the reasons for this. I'm certain that any educator will try to . . . will explain to you that the reasons are probably multiply based, and I will accept the reason already of this . . . of there being start-up problems.

And I appreciate those, and I've gone to you directly with concerns that I had. And I think that there is only a certain

amount of that kind of problem or that kind of excuse that you can use.

But it has to go a little further. You've got to ask yourself the question: to what extent can we remain a competency based system exclusively? To what extent? Are there instructors available? Are there enough instructors available for students to come whenever they need it? Whenever they need help?

There may be other reasons, Mr. Minister. I invite you to stand up, and I invite you to give me a commitment. Give me a commitment that you will set up some kind of a monitoring system that is missing, and some kind of a monitoring system that will assure the students that want to enrol there that they will have a success rate equal to what was had before, and equal to what is available at Kelsey or at Wascana.

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

**Mr. Chairman:** — Why is the member from Saskatoon Centre on his feet? He indicates he will be answering. He indicates he will be answering.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

There were a number of points raised by the hon. member over the last 50 minutes, and in the next 50 minutes, I think we can probably cover most of them off. In fact, I look forward to doing it.

Just to reiterate again, the hon. member from Moose Jaw North said he's been sleeping through it and he didn't realize it was 50 minutes. Well, it was. And I can see why you slept through it because . . . Anyways, all kidding aside, Mr. Chairman, although there was a lot put forward, I think much of that has been debated in this House probably on a number of occasions already.

The only point I want to make . . . And the hon. member opened his remarks up with the hobby classes, the personal enrichment stuff. I mean, I just repeat again, we expect the communities to pick those up.

The reality is, over the last 10, 12 years, the numbers of hours devoted to community courses . . . college programming on those had gone from like 75 to 80 per cent of their total hours down to 4 per cent. So I think the record speaks for itself there.

And so going all the way from what was said there, and a number of points he closed with relative to the new institute, the Northern Institute of Technology, I suppose I'm somewhat disappointed to hear a member from Prince Albert and area criticize what many would view as the most modern technical institute in North America. It's been admired and visited by many, copied by some. Not that it hasn't had some start-up problems, because it has. But at the same time, much of what the hon. member presented was either irrelevant or not factually correct.

And I'll just read one particular point into the record. There's been 1,146 learners, if you like, served by the institute, albeit — because it is still in its infancy as an institution — 383 completed, a goodly number of those

treaty and non-treaty Indian.

And I think little is served by criticizing what, as I said earlier, what many regard as a very very fine, modern, up-to-date institution, the competency— based learning system there, and one that will serve the people of this province well into the future.

The hon. member suggests, and because of what arguments he puts forth — that for the most part are not valid at all, Mr. Chairman — that we should have some kind of monitoring agency, and if there was some hesitation in my getting up to respond, it was because I wanted to give that some consideration, at least as much as I could in terms of discussion with my officials here. Because I've said in this House before, that if there are some proposals coming from the NDP that warrant consideration and merit some consideration, I'm prepared to give it to them. And I appreciate them raising this point about monitoring agency.

I guess at first blush, the comment I would make is: (a) I have a fair degree of faith based on what they've been able to do in a relatively short time. And based on that, their track record so far, I'm not so sure that would justify a monitoring agency. Secondly, in the new institute structure, I mean as we give them autonomy and rightly so, it seems to me what do you have a board of governors for. I mean, do you not trust the board of governors that runs the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina? I don't know as there's any useful purpose being served by a watch-dog, but I'll file it away and make a mental note of it. But right off the top, I'm not so sure that it's all that relevant.

The hon. member made reference to their survey yet to be tabled. I don't know as we heard any new arguments there relative to the governance issue.

But I would like to table something in this legislature, Mr. Chairman, because the hon. member referred to it and it hasn't been tabled in this legislature. And I think because the formation of the new institute, which is part of the restructuring of post-secondary education in this province, and because this document will in fact serve as a blueprint for our adult education initiatives for the next two decades, and because it addresses issues that we have not spent much time on yet in this legislature but maybe will in the future, and I think of things like literacy and distance education, some of those initiatives as we lay out here that we need to do more consultation on.

I want to lay on the table, and the page here, I think I've made access to another 63 copies so that we can have each member receive one of these blueprints, because I think when we pass the legislation in this House that this blueprint lays out, it's going to be a red-letter day for all of Saskatchewan. And I think all will be served by having a copy of that very, very fine document.

And I may have referred to that document in this House earlier, but I want to say again to you and to the members of the legislature, both on the government side and the opposition side, and I want to say this in a non-partisan and sincere way, in recognition of the very professional job that was done by many of the officials that are seated

here around me tonight, as well as some 550 associations, groups, and individuals that provided the input that later became this blueprint, and I want to acknowledge publicly the very, very fine work. We could have put out a document, I suppose, that was 100 pages long because there was that much information came into us, but we distilled it down to the document that you'll have before you shortly.

I want to congratulate all my department officials for the very fine job they did, whether they be at the executive level or the secretaries who on very many occasions worked overtime to type and retype drafts, or the many people who took time out of their busy schedules to come to evening meetings and afternoon meetings to provide us with their input and guidance. And I don't want to dwell on this, but I'm very, very proud of that document and it's going to serve our province and our adult learners over the next two decades. It's going to serve them well.

The final point I would make, and it's in response to an issue that was raised before supper, Mr. Chairman, by the hon. member for Regina Lakeview relative to St. Pius X school in Regina and a question of asbestos there, and we, at least the officials here, had no information on that. We have since consulted with other departmental officials, and I would report to the hon. member that as a result of concerns from the parent teachers association re asbestos fibres in the ceiling finish, the occupational health and safety branch did check the school on April 27, '87, and other than minor cracks in a couple of spots, they reported essentially no problems and that no work was required other than minor painting in two spots.

I also can tell you that we've had subsequent correspondence with them in June — late June, June 29 — and we are in agreement that the school will be monitored by occupational health and safety branch, monitored into the future to make sure that the situation doesn't deteriorate unknowingly. And the last line of the letter from our supervisor of facilities planning, the last paragraph goes like this, and I think this is the kind of assurance the hon. member from Regina Lakeview is looking for:

We wish to commend you and your board for your concerns with respect to health safety, and we are also pleased to advise you that we can concur with occupational health that the school does not have an asbestos problem at the present time.

And so I think in the interests of health — and I think that's the hon. member's rationale for the questioning — no problem there. And if there was, these two spots that needed painting over, that's been looked after as I understand it. But more than that, further monitoring will be undertaken. And I think that substantially answers the questions that the hon. member from Regina Lakeview raised earlier in estimates today, Mr. Chairman.

(2000)

**Ms. Simard:** — I would like to just follow up on that statement by the minister. I thank him very much for providing me with that information. There's one . . . The last sentence in the letter, the one he quoted to me about,

“the school does not have an asbestos problem at the present time,” causes me some concern because the implication is that it might have an asbestos problem in the future.

So that leaves me concerned, and I would like to ask the minister a further question, Mr. Chairman, and that is how often will the school be monitored? And will the Department of Education ensure that the school will be monitored on a regular basis — on a frequent basis and on a regular basis? And number two, I'm wondering why as a policy we are allowing asbestos in our schools anyway, when we're removing it from places like the armouries, and the old SaskTel building, and the provincial correctional centre. Why do we leave it in schools where there are children? If a problem were to arise unexpectedly in between inspections by the occupational health department, the damage may already have been done to the health of our children. And that causes me some concern.

So I would like an assurance from the minister, number one, that the place will be monitored very frequently and regularly; and, number two, that the department review their policy with respect to allowing asbestos in the schools in Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I'd like to give the member every assurance, and the constituents and their parents involved. The occupational health and safety folks from Labour and our own people are satisfied that there is not a problem, that it's not likely to be a problem at all. The school board will monitor the situation, if you like. Nobody has any reason to suspect it will be a problem ever in the future. I mean, I don't know what more I can say, other than it's had a clean bill of health.

And I know there's a certain fear associated with asbestos and asbestosis. But in this case, there's no lingering, nagging doubts even that it will become some problem in the future, particularly. But because of the emotionalism of the asbestos issue, the school board's going to keep a watch on it. And I suppose they're there on a regular basis as anybody. And I guess I have no doubt that they will do as they've said.

**Ms. Smart:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister . . .

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

**Ms. Smart:** — Mr. Minister, the time has come to talk about libraries, something that I'm very interested in, having been an employee of the Saskatchewan Public Library since 1972.

I notice with some interest that you've passed out this document that you call the blueprint, *Preparing For the Year 2000* on adult education in Saskatchewan.

And I'm sure it's not much of a red-letter day for my many colleagues working in the field of librarianship because there's not very much mentioned in this document about libraries or the role that libraries will be playing in the future.

You do mention it under, “Distance Education Council,”

but there's no other mention about the role of libraries in this blueprint. And that's a shame because you want to talk a lot about moving into the 21st century, about the information age and the knowledge-based industries and the knowledge-based economy. And we believe very clearly that libraries have a very big role to play in the future in this whole area of being information centres in many creative ways, and we think that they should be centre to any sort of blueprint for the future of adult education in Saskatchewan and mentioned much more specifically in a document like this than you've been able to do.

You've mentioned very often in the legislature your interest in change and in seeing change take place, and the fact that we mustn't any longer dwell on the past, we must move to the future. It seems as if everything that existed in the past somehow has lost its value for you, and you want to go on to the future out of some kind of a vacuum, or some kind of a sense of change that's been mostly destruction. And for those of us who've been working in libraries and for whom libraries are very important, this kind of approach is almost frightening. I think it would be probably quite within the feeling of the library community for me to say it is frightening.

I would like to quote Francis Morrison, who has been the chief librarian of the Saskatoon Public Library for a long time until she retired in 1980. Francis Morrison has said, "We have to know the past to plan wisely for the future." Very important words for us when we look at libraries because libraries have been the storehouse of knowledge in the past for a long time.

And you give me mixed messages because you talk about change, you talk about moving into the information age, then you talk about how much you value books, and that books are the heart and the soul of libraries. Books go back a long time in history. Books have been important in the past in the world since almost the time of history beginning.

Valuing books, of course, is not unique to contemporary Canada. And I would like to quote from an article that was in *The Globe and Mail* which I found quite moving. And I would like to quote it because I would like to take some time to talk about libraries being important to me and to many people in Saskatchewan over a long period of time. The very first libraries date back to at least 3000 B.C.:

... the Greek rule of Egypt ... treasured the written word ... founded the greatest literary collection of antiquity — the library of Alexandria ... for 700 years, one generation of scholars after another amassed and recorded the knowledge of the ancient world.

Collecting information about the past, however, was only one concern ... Through generous research grants, they encouraged the greatest minds of the age to generate new knowledge.

... the results were astounding ... (They) wrote a book outlining his theory that the earth revolves around the sun and is not, as was currently believed, the centre of the universe. Archimedes

worked out most of the mathematical laws governing levers, pulleys, gears and hydraulics.

There are other theories like:

Eratosthenes proved that the earth is round by accurately calculating its circumference ... (and they) predicted that by sailing westward explorers would discover new continents.

... while the library flourished, so did learning and scientific research. The one problem was that understanding and knowledge remained the possessions of the privileged few. Most people had no idea of the discoveries being made in the library.

(And) when the library fell prey to Roman invaders in 48 BC, the people of Alexandria looked on indifferently as Julius Caesar's troops burned 40,000 volumes.

That was certainly a change.

Partial restitution was eventually made, but the library suffered even greater losses during a civil war in the third century, when an entire wing was destroyed by fire.

And that was another change. That was another change — a very destructive one.

What was left endured until 415 AD when it was razed by a mob of overzealous Christians who equated learning and science with paganism. The loss was incalculable. Not a single scroll was left.

That was change. And the world was left with the library at Alexandria ...

**Mr. Chairman:** — Why is the minister on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I wonder if I might have the leave of the Assembly to introduce some guests, Mr. Chairman. I apologize to the hon. member for interrupting her speech, but some out-of-town guests I'd like to introduce if I could.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Thank you, hon. colleague and other members of the legislature. I'd like to introduce through you, Mr. Chairman, and to the members of the legislature in the gallery opposite myself, a couple of nephews and a niece of mine, Ryan and Michael Hall. A couple of nieces of mine, or nephews of mine rather, visiting us from B.C., here on some holidays and along with some other members of my family, Candace Hepworth, another niece of mine, and along with my daughter and some others. And I would ask all members of the Assembly to welcome them to the proceedings here tonight.

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure  
Education  
Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 5

Item 1 (continued)

**Ms. Smart:** — In terms of the history of libraries, change has not always been creative. And change is something that we have to look at as both a negative and a positive force.

In the wake of the destruction (of the library at Alexandria) scientific research ebbed and the world was plunged into 1,000 years of darkness. The knowledge gathered in Alexandria was lost until the Renaissance, when scholars again developed an interest in the past. European libraries dusted off their copies of Alexandrian texts, and scientists began building on the foundation laid by Alexandrian researchers.

The information age is not new; the information age has been going on for a long time.

It is impossible to say where the world would be had the spirit fostered in the library of Alexandria endured. However, one thing is certain: the destruction of the library did send intellectual curiosity into a coma that set back the development of the human race a millenium.

Today, libraries are the custodians of our cultural heritage. By supporting them we ensure that our accomplishments are passed on to future generations.

It's very important to reflect on those words as we look and see what's happening in the libraries in Saskatchewan today, with a 10 per cent cut from the regional budgets.

I just want to share some of the general statements about library service in Saskatchewan . . . because the first public libraries Act was brought in in this province in 1906, just after the province became a province. It was one of the first pieces of legislation enacted in this House. They do go back a long time in this province, they go back a long time in history.

And they're based on the principles which have a certain lasting value in our society.

Library services, a common good (the trustees say) with demonstrated social utility that includes both cultural and economic benefits for the community, and public libraries are a necessary part of any society's educational, social, or industrial policy.

Library service must be founded on the concept of intellectual freedom and equality of opportunity. Library policies must work to prevent the stratification of society into classes of information rich and information poor.

And when you talk a lot about the need for this to be an information age, I think what's very important to realize is that that information must be available to everyone, and that's been the basis of the public library development. And you, as the Minister of Education, are responsible for the university libraries, the libraries in the schools, and now the public library system.

People listening and watching may not be aware that as a result of Bill 5 that was passed last Christmas, the Saskatchewan Library, the central library in the province, has been disestablished and put under the Department of Education — and I want to ask some questions about that in a little while — but it's part of my reason for being quite concerned about what's happening to libraries and my reason for making sure that I've expressed clearly the policies and the philosophy of libraries before we go into the questions specifically about what's happening to libraries in Saskatchewan.

Library service (the library trustees say) is as fundamental as social services, universal public education . . . it's provision acceptable standards ought to be required of local governments.

And in terms of the set up of libraries in Saskatchewan, we have municipal libraries in Regina and Saskatoon, and regional libraries with their large city libraries in Moose Jaw and North Battleford and other centres in Prince Albert and Yorkton. They make up the regional library serving the public. And the Saskatchewan Library, which you've disestablished, provides technical support services and collections of materials with a wide but thinly spread population, back-up materials in foreign languages, and other materials.

(2015)

That structure was developed over a long period of time in Saskatchewan, as I say the first public libraries Act was in 1906. Other developments occurred in 1967 with the library enquiry commission and the setting up of the one-library service . . . one-library system.

The Saskatoon Public Library Board in its presentation to the Local Government Finance Commission said this about libraries — words that are very important to me and to many people who have been supportive of library development over the years in the province. The board, the Saskatoon Public Library Board, was asking the commission to assess large urban public libraries in the light of their essential position as educational, informational, cultural and recreational forces in local communities. They supplement the elementary, the secondary, the technical and the university education, and as the resources and curricula of educational institutions become more sophisticated and diverse, so must those of the public library.

Fundamentally public libraries are a life-long learning resource and as such provide important research resources for informal and unstructured intellectual pursuits, as well as being a backup for all the formal educational institutions, they provide the opportunity for life-long learning.

That's a fairly progressive vision of a library. It's not a backward look at all.

It's a look of vision for the future and a way in which libraries can be developed. Libraries offer a neutral ground, free of partisan politics, where a diversity of ideas may be explored and studied.

On a practical level, public libraries usually have the facilities, including meeting rooms, to bring people together. The result is that the library is recognized as a vibrant community forum with information or recreational reserves immediately at hand.

This transformation of libraries from reading centres to community forums is a natural and compelling evolution brought about by society's recognition of its needs to cope with a growing and intense barrage of information and with the technical changes necessary to access burgeoning ideas.

The libraries have been supportive of the development of progressive ways of accessing information, and why you would not mention them in your adult education blueprint, and why you would cut their budgets by 10 per cent for the regional libraries and 30 per cent of the provincial grants for the public libraries in the cities, in beyond me, when libraries have constantly put forward progressive and exciting visions of how they can function and be central to the information needs of the whole community.

In times of economic hardship such as we're going through right now, the libraries are used even more by people than they are in good times. Many people who are unemployed are using the libraries to get information, and they serve people in many, many ways. Many seniors in Saskatoon and in other centres use the libraries constantly, but with the cut-backs that the libraries have suffered, library boards have had to reduce the service that they've been able to provide to people. They've had to reduce their material budgets; they've had cuts in salaries and hiring freezes; they've had the reduction of maintenance and other services, cut-backs of hours of services in libraries, and the reduction of interlibrary loans.

So I'd like to turn now to what I've already mentioned, and that is the disestablishment of the Saskatchewan Library. It's my understanding in the regulations that sections 3, 6, 7, and 8 are superseded, and these sections of the library Act, I would like to ask you about in more detail.

Section 3 of The Public Libraries Act, 1984, refers to the Saskatchewan Library: "A central library for Saskatchewan is continued." That section has been superseded. What is the status of the Saskatchewan Library now in your understanding?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Chairman, and hon. member, it was interesting to have the hon. member share some of the history as it relates to a library at Alexandria

— what, some several centuries ago, I think that would be — and a useful perspective for all of us.

I suppose I'm particularly heartened when I hear the hon. member talk about the implications of the information age because I would suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, and all other members of that opposition, that this is the first time we've had a member of the opposition NDP recognize this changed era — the knowledge-based economy. The others have tried to cling to the past, and I think we're going to get somewhere here in this library examination in our estimates because this hon. member, who has experience in a library system, has some sense of the information age, and what libraries can be, and what libraries have been.

And the hon. member from Saskatoon University maybe would do well to pay attention to what this hon. member has said because his job could be in jeopardy as critic.

In so far as the status of the library, Saskatchewan Library, I can tell the hon. member this, that nothing has changed other than the library is, in terms of an administrative sense, if you like, comes under the umbrella of this new and strong Department of Education. Otherwise it's, I suppose, business as usual, albeit there is some very exciting things that have been happening.

And just for the record, the hon. member made reference to the blueprint, *Preparing For the Year 2000*, and she was looking for more reference to Saskatchewan libraries and the library system across the province in that document. I want to assure you and others in the library system that any failure to mention the important role of libraries is simply because when that document was being put together we were not all one department at this point in time. But I can assure you, as I've told the library board and the Saskatchewan Library Trustees' Association, I'm looking for them to play very much a leadership role. And in fact, our Provincial Librarian, who has joined us here tonight in estimates, is very much actively involved in helping spearhead the literacy campaign. We're going to be looking to people like those who have been involved in the library systems who have already some goodly amount of experience when it comes to literacy initiatives, to help us in that . . . probably be represented on that literacy council, and as well to help design and deliver programming in that area.

As well in distance education; I think it may well be that we'll see the libraries in a very global sense have to take on some . . . have some input and some guidance there as well.

With that bit of background . . . Or I should add one other point, and I forget the exact words the hon. member opposite used, but I, too . . . I suppose if I had a soft spot in my heart or a pet project in this portfolio, it would be to do with libraries and books, and the modern equivalent of books, if you like, microfiche and microfilm and all those kinds of things, and computerized access systems, those sorts of things. I say that because, I suppose, if I go back to my childhood, I recall vividly how important books were to our home and to my parents, and the importance that they stressed upon ourselves as children to avail ourselves of books.

I recall to this day the crates that we used to get these books . . . First of all, the excitement of going through the catalogue, or the library catalogue, as to what was available and what could be shipped out to rural Saskatchewan. Picking out those books, and of course, not always the selections that you wanted were shipped. Some were; some weren't. And the excitement of that crate . . . I think it was a grey box or a black box — and I'm probably going back in time even before our Provincial Librarian — and the excitement of that crate arriving. And looking through it and seeing what mysteries were in there, and the various kinds and categories of books. It was always a very exciting time in our house, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

I'm a great advocate of reading and of books. I suppose that's why literacy is as well going to become a theme that you're going to hear more about from this department and this government and this minister. And so I, too, agree with the hon. member, in so far as her view on the importance of books and libraries, and what they mean as we move into this knowledge-based economy particularly — and more importantly then ever.

To frame the initiatives of our government over the three or four or five years as it relates to libraries, for you and for members of the Assembly, to give us a starting point for these estimates, I would give you this perspective. We have a plan and it's an exciting plan, and much of it has been fulfilled, although you never stop, of course. It's just a dynamic process. But let's pick up the three sorts of areas: libraries or learning resource centres in our K to 12 system; the regional library system; and then let's talk a little bit about our universities and our university libraries.

Because I think as I put this in perspective for you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, you will see that, although one never wants to stop and rest on one's laurels, there's been some very dynamic and some very, very exciting things happening throughout those three sectors.

First of all, in the K to 12 system, when we put in place the excellence fund or the education development fund, as we expected, these many school boards and the trustees and the teachers across this province, one of the things that they recognized as being a high priority in terms of spending those dollars was spending them in our learning resource centres — re-equipping, or equipping, or rebuilding. And a great deal of that education development fund, that excellence fund money, has been spent in our school system on that category. I mean, certainly it was spent in other areas too, and I outlined some of those in a previous session in this examination of estimates in the Department of Education. But certainly across this province, learning resources, learning resource centres in many, many, many of our schools in many, many school divisions use that special fund to bring their libraries, as you and I might have known them in our day, up to top-notch quality. They were able to update their collections and acquire new books and filmstrips and videos which are part of that new technology — if you like, of the information age.

And as well, of course, they were able to hire, in some instances, teacher-librarians, library technical services,

those sorts of things, establishing computer library services. I mean, I myself have visited many schools and in a lot of these learning centres, there's the computer there and these young people are there, just clicking away on them, and so at home with them. And of course, it's going to be so important to them in the world of the future, these computer library services for cataloguing, indexing, and in tracking material, searching out material.

And so great strides have been made over the last two, three years particularly since my hon. colleague, the member from Swift Current, in conjunction with our Premier and this government, put in place that excellence fund for our school boards to do, among other things, update their, what you and I might have called the library.

Moving now to the regional library system, once again if one looks at the record of funding there, relative to inflation, those kinds of things, I too would like to have always, of course, seen more money, but the record is a good one. It's one we can be proud of. And in fact, Saskatchewan's library system gets high marks across Canada when these national meetings are held, for our accessibility and for the quality of our services and for the speed with which those services are rendered to our public. And so we can hold our heads high.

(2030)

But we weren't about to rest on our laurels, Mr. Chairman. And as the hon. member will know and as this blue book shows, this year we set up a special one-half million dollar fund to buy, specifically, books and library materials for these regional libraries across the province.

But we went farther than that, Mr. Chairman. We, in putting together this fund, this special fund for books because they are the . . . In many ways, as the hon. member, I think, talked about, they're the heart and soul of the library system. But because we all too recognize that northern Saskatchewan hasn't had access to the same degree that much of the rest of Saskatchewan has had, nor has much of rural Saskatchewan had the same kind of accessibility and resources as have the cities of Regina and Saskatoon . . . So we put this special fund together, albeit that Regina and Saskatoon weren't eligible for the funding. We put the money where it was most needed. And in so doing, we said to those libraries in northern Saskatchewan that, you will receive double the amount that the rest of rural Saskatchewan will.

And I can tell you, because I've met with the trustees and the library board, that they were very grateful for those moneys. Because what had happened, Mr. Deputy Chairman, is over the years with all the constraints that we always inevitably seem to be facing in the world of budgeting, book budgets sometimes — not sometimes; too often — came out on the short end of the stick. When budgets were being made, there was always a provision made for new acquisitions, but where one might normally have liked to have had two or three times the level, they were constrained because of prioritizing. And that's why this fund is conditional, because we want it to go to library materials and books in particular, and I think you're going to see this, as I have been told by many of the

trustees and board members. They're particularly grateful for it. Certainly a half million . . . I mean you could always use two and a half million or three or whatever number, but it's certainly a step in the right direction, very much so, and I think, Mr. Deputy Chairman, indicates as it does, I'm sure, to the hon. member that we value that regional library system; we have even greater plans for it in the future. And it needed a little injection here on that side and that's what we've done in this budget.

And quite frankly, if I was wanting to, I suppose, be very, very political in this debate tonight, I could say to the hon. member that as a result of the amalgamation of Saskatchewan Library, the K to 12 system, and post-secondary education, is straight administrative savings there was something in the order of a half a million. And I suppose I could argue it's that half a million that's being put in place to buy books for people of northern Saskatchewan, in fact across the rural areas of this province, Mr. Chairman. And we're extremely proud of that fund, albeit that it doesn't represent mega dollars in the \$3 billion budget.

The third area that I would spend some time on for members is the university system — very important obviously in every sense of the word, whether you're a student or a researcher, that we have top quality libraries. And significant dollars have been expended by ourselves in conjunction with the boards of governors and the administration in terms of the decision-making at both the universities, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

I draw to the members' attention in the legislature recent headlines that we've seen over the last three or four months, in fact: "U of R library updates system," a recent headline in a daily newspaper. Another headline: "World-class library U of R,"; "Fund benefits U of S library." Great strides have been made and some very innovative strides, Mr. Deputy Chairman, in terms of funding our university libraries. I myself, along with some others, perhaps, in this legislature were at the University of Regina when UMI (University Microfilms International), along with the University of Regina and ourselves jointly co-operated to access this microfiche. Two million dollars bought over 200 millions of dollars of microfiche print material, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

And the hon. member referred to the libraries, and back in the days of, I guess Caesar, etc. I suppose that he would never have imagined that we would have . . . that you could put volumes and volumes and tomes and tomes of print material on this microfilm and various forms of microfilm, Mr. Deputy Chairman. And they've shown me over there, the storage cabinets. And this is an impressive collection. And I, quite frankly, wish I could read more details of it into the record, but I might not be using the House's time wisely. But in some areas with this microfiche, Mr. Deputy Chairman, they've been able to access, to access . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

The hon. member from Saskatoon South might do well to listen to this. The hon. member from Saskatoon South has suggested that this microfiche acquisition by the University of Regina's garbage . . . and they'll be happy to hear that. Because I want to tell you what it's all about, if you'll sit still long enough to listen.

What we have done here is access over \$200 million worth. And the hon. member referred to the days of Caesar . . . And I want to tell you what that bought, Mr. Deputy Chairman. I want to tell you what it bought. In some sectors of English literature and history and some of those various sorts of fields, it has enabled them, and I don't have the exact fields in front of me tonight, but it enabled them to purchase virtually everything that's ever been written in recorded history. What a tremendous resource for this university to have — tremendous resource.

And I raise this tonight, Mr. Deputy Chairman, because so often, so often what is reported and what is raised by the opposition is all this talk of cut-backs, cut-backs, cut-backs. And unfortunately the real story never gets told. It never gets told about acquisitions like this.

And I'll tell you, it's very exciting. I'm very proud of it. The university is very proud of it. And Ernie Ingles, that's the librarian, he never stops thinking about new ways and exciting ways to acquire literature and resource materials. And I, quite frankly, think we're going to see more exciting initiatives in that area.

As well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I look at a headline here, "Assiniboia School Division gets electronic encyclopedia". What a far cry from the books I suppose that you and I used to page through. Now they've got it on these computerized disks and that sort of thing. All part of our excellence fund.

And I give hon. members in this House this perspective tonight to show you that whether it's the regional library system, the K to 12 library system, or the university system, exciting things are happening in this province in terms of having our library system as up to date as possible so that our people have access to the best.

There's even been recent announcements in recent days about how rural people will be able to access the U of R. Very exciting. I mean it strikes right at the heart of the whole question of accessibility, and I think we're going to see more of that, Mr. Chairman.

And I give that background, and it's maybe not quite as thorough and cerebral as the history of Alexandria, but I have no doubt our citizens will be just as proud of what we have today as they were in seventh century B.C., I suppose.

**Ms. Smart:** — Mr. Deputy Chairman, I have questions to ask the minister about many of the items that he's raised, but I'd like to go back to my question about the Saskatchewan Library. And the reason I want to go back to that is particularly because the Saskatchewan Library was the corner-stone of the public library system in Saskatchewan for many years.

And you're right when you talk about how it got high marks, because when I came out here in 1972, there were many, many people coming from all over North America to see the development of the library system in Saskatchewan — the public library system.

Now you have disestablished the Saskatchewan Library, which used to be known as the provincial library, and you tell me that nothing has changed except administratively. I have worked in large institutions, and I know that an administrative change can be a very fundamental change.

This section of The Public Library Act has been superseded — section 3 referring to the Saskatchewan Library. You tell me nothing has changed except administratively.

My question still is: what does it mean when you say that the central library has been disestablished and that the Saskatchewan Library, which is still in the estimates, it's supposed to act as the central library for Saskatchewan, as one of the points? Is it still acting as the central library for the public system in Saskatchewan, or has it been disestablished and superseded? What is the status? And can you explain to me what you mean when you say nothing has changed except administratively?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, I wonder if I could get you to elaborate your question, or to restate it. We're not really clear on exactly what it is you're referring to.

**Ms. Smart:** — According to Department of Education regulations, the Saskatchewan Library has been disestablished, and under The Public Libraries Act, 1984, sections 3, 6, 7, and 8 are superseded.

Section 3 refers to the Saskatchewan Library which is described as the central library for Saskatchewan, and among its tasks are to act as the central library for Saskatchewan. It was always the pivotal focus for the public library system, the regional library system in Saskatchewan.

If it's been disestablished, if it's been superseded by section 3, what is its status now? Isn't that clear? It's your regulations that have disestablished it. What does that mean? Why did you do it?

It was in The Public Libraries Act of 1984, the Saskatchewan Library, and you put out regulations that disestablish it. At this time when we're moving into the information age, the knowledge-based economy, we've disestablished the central library in Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, we're not — and we're going to check with other officials — we're not familiar with any regulations that have been forthcoming relative to the matter to which you refer, unless there's something that we're missing here.

Mr. Chairman, if I can, I think the essential question that we're talking about here is with the amalgamation and, etc., etc., is Saskatchewan Libraries still alive and well and healthy, etc., etc. And in a functional and administrative sense, all I can say to you is yes.

And we'll do some digging ourselves to see if . . . and trying to get familiar with what you've been referring to. But I think the question you're coming to in terms of disestablishing, to quote whatever document you're

reading from there, all I can assure you is that functionally, administratively — although yes, it's part of the Department of Education — it's business as usual.

**Ms. Smart:** — Mr. Minister, I'll table the documents tomorrow in the House that I'm referring to because they're very important. They concern this whole question of the autonomy of the Saskatchewan Library. We'll leave that question for now.

(2045)

I'd like to go on then to just talk briefly about the Saskatchewan Library board, which is established by the same Act, under section 9. I understand the appointments of the Saskatchewan Library board members are all up this month in August, and my question to you is: will they be re-appointed or new appointments made? And what role are they going to play now that the library's been amalgamated?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I'm aware, yes, that the re-appointments or the appointments are due — are soon to be due. Cabinet obviously has not yet considered that.

My expectation would be that we will have a Saskatchewan Library board insofar as who it will be, I think, as the hon. member probably knows, some of them are appointments from some of the various interest groups. And I suspect that too will stay the same.

There was some discussion when I met with the library board about some duplication, more as it relates to the way it's worked out with some of the current personnel between the Library Trustees Association and the library board, where we've got some members sitting on both. And not that that's necessarily a bad thing, but some of it's partly by accident and partly because of who they represent. And it may well be that, because I tendered with them the idea at the library board meeting about perhaps consolidating their meetings or, you know, anything that we could look at, as well, to maintain our efficiencies and not jeopardize their roles — and yet, if there was some cost savings to be had, I'd be interested in having them.

But I don't see their role changing. Some of the people, perhaps. I can't comment on that particularly. And I guess the final comment I would make is, cabinet has not yet considered it, but all of what I've given you would be my expectation.

**Ms. Smart:** — Well we'll get back to that topic again when I get the regulations about the disestablishment of the library.

Let's move then to the book purchase grants for the regional libraries — the \$500,000 that you made available. I understand they're going to get the money in September, in one payment. This grant is available for one year only. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — It's once only and one year to spend it. And I don't want to raise false hopes and expectations. This is meant to be an injection, if you like, to get some of those book budgets bounced back up.

But I don't want to handcuff myself, nor do I want to leave you with the impression that I'm going to back away from and not be proactive down the road in subsequent budget years with what we're doing in the regional library system. At the same time I . . . Given the weakness in grain prices and oil prices and potash and uranium, I don't want anybody to start going out there and planning this as part of a base budget. But don't draw the other conclusion absolutely either, that there might not be initiatives in the future. But so everybody plans and plans without . . . with no surprises down the road, it's viewed as a one-time grant, and with a year to spend it, and that kind of thing. So that's the perspective I'd like to put on it.

**Ms. Smart:** — Well that's a perspective that is very worrisome to librarians. It reminds us of the libraries in some parts of Canada where people were given money for one year and they were told: you bought books last year; why do you need them again next year.

The book budget for a library must be a continuing amount of money that the libraries can count on for buying what you've described yourself as the heart and soul of libraries — the book resources.

I'd just like to question the money around the book purchase program. It's my understanding that the regional libraries are getting \$1,500 for each branch library, for each bookmobile, and for the headquarters. Does that add up to, for example, Chinook Regional Library, which I think has 37 branches and one bookmobile — and if I'm not right, I'd like to be corrected on that — that amount of money would amount to \$57,000? Is that what Chinook library is going to be getting in the book purchase grant?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I am advised that that's the rough figure, yes.

**Ms. Smart:** — The amount of money that Chinook would've gotten under the formula for funding the libraries, had you not cut — the \$700,000 — my understanding the amount of money Chinook would've had was \$60,000. So there's a slight cut there.

Lakeland Regional Library, as I figure it, is getting \$63,000 under the book purchase grant and was entitled to \$68,000 under the formula. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I'm not sure I've got the right dimension to your question, but I'll explain how that's going to work.

It's \$1,500 per branch, except for northern Saskatchewan where it's double. And that's to recognize the larger need there. And so depending on the number of branches and bookmobiles . . . if you've got 30, then it's 30 times 1,500; if you've got 79, it's 79 times 1,500. And that's how it's arrived at.

The other perspective I've been wanting to give you, or else the first points you raised, is this was a special fund, a special injection if you like, to top up some book budgets that had become a little anaemic. I mean, book budgets are there year in and year out, but what we were wanting

to do is play a little catch up here, if we could.

Because as I said before, sometimes when you're looking at budgeting, it's easier to, for example, cut back on the book budget because you don't want to sort of have to let go of staff or some of those other hard decisions. And I don't disagree with that in terms of prioritization, I suppose, as they're always difficult. But we made this conditional so that, in fact, it would be used for books and those sorts of library materials, and that's the basis for it.

**Ms. Smart:** — So that the libraries can go ahead then, cutting back staff and having to deal with the other questions, and you're not concerned about that.

With Palliser Regional Library, operating out of Moose Jaw, I figure that they're getting \$42,000 under this book purchase grant and that, under the formula, they would've been entitled to \$50,000.

Now what I'm talking about when I say the formula versus the book purchase grant is the amount of money they would've got if you'd kept it even at zero budgeting, instead of the 10 per cent decrease. Palliser Regional would've gotten about \$50,000 and, under the book purchase program, only 42,000.

Now you're saying that Palliser's getting \$42,000 to buy books this year. They still have all those other expenses that they have to deal with.

I see the librarian consulting with you, so I would like to know if my figures are correct.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Here's some numbers that I think the hon. member may be looking for. We could run through them all. I think we've picked off the odd one. Chinook . . . And this is the premise, as I said earlier, \$1,500 per branch and bookmobile as of the end of '86. So Chinook would come out with 58,500; Lakeland will come out with 64,500; Palliser, which has 25 that are eligible, works out to 39,000, or maybe it's 26 that are eligible there — one of those two numbers. Parkland comes out at 85,500; Southeast, I think the number there you might want is 87,000; Wapiti, 82,500; and Wheatland, 61,500; and that comes to a grant total of 478,500 which is obviously very close to our one-half million dollar designation.

The 21,500 that's still remaining . . . We take then the seven northern libraries: Buffalo Narrows, Ile-la-Crosse, LaLoche, La Ronge, Montreal Lake, and Pelican Narrows at \$3,000 each — that's 21,000. And that's about as close as you can come to arithmetic on a half a million dollars, spreading it over seven northern libraries and the very many branch and bookmobiles that exist in the rest of Saskatchewan.

**Ms. Smart:** — So you said 39,000 for Palliser. And under the formula for Palliser, had they gotten the regular amount of increase under the formula, they would have got 50,000.

I think Palliser region among many is really concerned about the cuts, because . . . I would like to just read you the letter that you yourself received from Palliser

region — quite a long letter describing what that cut meant, that 10 per cent decrease.

All purchases of films, videos, records, microfilms, art prints and archival material have been put on hold for 1987. Two thousand eight hundred and sixty-six staff hours have been cut for 1987, reducing access to library service. The library's publicity budget has been cut in half; appropriate maintenance procedures have been cut for 1987; reduced maintenance on our building will result in an accelerated deterioration of our major asset.

For the first time the library must consider restricting certain types of interlibrary loan requests because of increasing postal costs. Staff development and training allocations have been reduced by 40 per cent, making it difficult for employees to remain current on professional and technological developments in the industry. Insufficient funds have been reserved for professional and legal costs, which will affect our ability to negotiate a collective agreement, which expires the 31st of December, 1985. Inadequately funded reserves will mean that the library is unable to replace vehicles, should a replacement be needed. And our automation project, which would greatly improve efficiency, must be put on hold.

I just wanted to point out the variety of services that make up the public library system, or regional library system, and what it means when they're cut back in the amount of money that they get.

And I don't know how you can justify that kind of cut and that kind of prescription, that the libraries have to buy books with their money instead of leaving the autonomy of the regional libraries to decide for themselves how they're going to spend the money. Under the regular formula, when the regional libraries get their money, it's the library board itself, functioning in an autonomous way, that decides how that money will be spent.

A library is a complex institution. It does involve staff; it involves staff hours and buildings and maintenance and equipment, as well as the resources that go into it.

And we would like very much to see strong collections in all the libraries, of course. But when you rearrange the granting of money, and you say a certain amount of money must only be spent for books, how do you justify that when the libraries are trying to maintain an autonomy and make up their own decisions as to how the libraries will spend the money?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I think the point that the hon. member made at the end is the point that bears some elaboration on. And the reality is, as I understand it for the reasons that you outlined, is that boards are autonomous and they do prioritize and they do decide how much money will be spent on books this year versus buying buses, versus gas, versus salaries, versus whatever — the point being, there are no regular formulas. I'm not so sure I understand how you can draw conclusions about regular or formulas that one might apply when, for the

reason that you just stated — because they are autonomous — there is no regular formula.

(2100)

Now if you're asking me if I'm denying that there were some reductions in the base budget, if you like, I'm not. The rationale for that has been stated on more than one occasion in this House. But I also want to be very clear that because we do consider this regional library system important, and the book side particularly, that has, as I said earlier, that tends to be as hard hit as any — and I could probably trot forward to you the letters that I received in so far as what would happen because of the budget — that that seemed like a reasonable place to inject a little sunshine, if you like.

And I said earlier . . . I mean, and it doesn't matter in any area of education, whether it be the library part or operating grants to school boards or whatever, I mean, I could always use more money. And all I can tell you is that I think to a person, I suppose, other than the Regina and the Saskatoon boards specifically, they've been, they were very grateful for the additional injection of funds with the book fund. I don't what more I can say on the issue.

**Ms. Smart:** — Well I can appreciate that they're grateful, after they took a 10 per cent cut when the budget came down in April, from the regional library budgets, based on the formula. You cut the budget by 10 per cent from a public service, a universal service across this province, a service that's providing information so that people can go into the information age and the knowledge-based industry and all those clichés that you like to use.

You cut the budget by 10 per cent. You caused a lot of hardship in the regional libraries because they've had to cut back on their staff hours, they've had to cut back on their services, they had to do a lot of scrambling to rearrange their finances, and then you came forward in June with the \$500 book purchase grant — a one-time grant for the libraries. And yes, it was a ray of sunshine, and yes, they are very delighted to have the money to spend on their books. But that was not an extra on top of the budget they already had. That was money given to them after the budget had been cut by 10 per cent.

Now I have another question that is very important to the regional libraries and to the librarians and to the library association in this province, and it's this: is the reduced figure . . . is the figure now, minus the 10 per cent, the new figure for regional libraries, is that going to become the base for future increases?

You've decreased the budget by 10 per cent. You've given them this little extra hand-out on the book purchase grant, yes. But that basic formula, that basic amount of money that is 10 per cent less than they got last year, is that going to become the base for any future increases?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Well this revolves around the discussion we had earlier because I can't predict what next year's budget number will be. As I said earlier, I don't want to handcuff myself or to suggest to them that . . . because I want to be fairly proactive on this side for all the

reasons I outlined earlier. And I think I could probably safely say that on the literacy side alone, we are probably going to be . . . I see the library system being very proactive, and our adult literacy initiatives, we could be spending something in the order of half a million dollars there, over and above what you might find in any line in the blue book.

So I don't want to handcuff myself by saying that there might not be increases or decrease down the road. But so nobody gets into trouble with budgeting, that's why this special fund was put in as a special fund for a year rather than to plop it in on top of a base budget where it may or may not be there again for next year . . . So rather than sort of lead anybody on and under false hopes and pretences that we can't deliver on, so that they can plan and so we can plan, that's the approach.

So yes, we've had to tighten our belts. There is a new base budget, if you like, for everybody to work with, and what happens down the road, we'll have to see. As I said before, I see exciting times ahead, and I say that even knowing full well that we are in a period of fiscal restraint, if you like. But as I've said to you before, I see a great role here on the literacy side and distance education, to mention but two.

**Ms. Smart:** — Mr. Minister, the way you're treating the libraries, I see a great deal of stress down the road for the librarians, not a great deal of anything very positive.

You said that you don't want to be handcuffed, but you're talking about public, universal, provincial-wide institutions that have existed in this province for a long time. You may not want to be handcuffed in terms of what money they are going to get next year versus what money they get this year, but the libraries have to know what they are doing in long-term planning. It's that kind of . . . It's the kind of chaotic change that you're promoting that's very destructive, and it's particularly destructive to an institution as complicated and as valuable as the library system in this province. It's unacceptable to say that you don't know what's going to be happening next year with something as valuable in terms of giving information to people, to being part of your plan for the 21st century, part of your vision of the information age. The public library system should be crucial and central to that. It should not be treated the way you're treating it, telling me you don't know whether you want to handcuffed for this year or next year.

I would like to share with you a letter that you may or may not have read, from the Chinook Regional Library . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, you may answer my question. I'll share the letter after.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Well, before the hon. member gets berating me and my being handcuffed, I would ask you: can you predict what next year's wheat crop will be? Can you predict what the price of wheat will be? Can you predict what the price of oil will be? The price of uranium? The price of potash? I mean, if I could do any of those things, I wouldn't be here. I'd be retired, long gone, and a billionaire. I mean that's what you're expecting. Why do we have annual budgets? I mean, the logic track that you presented there isn't all that sensible, quite

frankly.

**Ms. Smart:** — I don't accept that. I think that you can predict a lot more about agriculture than you seem to be wanting to predict. You can certainly predict the input costs a lot more strongly than you're doing. It's not just the price of what you get for wheat, but it's the price of what you have to pay in order to farm, period. And you know perfectly well what's causing those input costs to go up.

I want to share with you the Chinook Regional Library letter, because it spells out very carefully and very conscientiously the problems that the libraries are facing right now. And it was a letter written to you:

During its sixteen years of operation, the Chinook Regional Library has endeavoured to provide quality library service to the resident of Southwest Saskatchewan while remaining fiscally responsible to its funding bodies, (and you really value fiscal responsibility, so the library is doing exactly what you'd like it to do) the Provincial Government and the participating municipalities.

The Chinook Regional Library Executive Committee has worked hard at establishing an accountable relationship with the councils of all participating municipalities. Being a sparsely populated, predominantly rural region, with little history of library service prior to the organization of the Chinook Regional Library, we have had to earn the acceptable of funding public library services. Even so, our population composition has historically provided us with one of the lowest per capita contributions of all the provincially established regions and correspondingly, the lowest total annual expenditure of all the regional libraries.

Within these financial constraints we have slowly developed services. Although we have recognized great needs for expenditures in our annual operations, we have also considered the necessity to incorporate long range development into our planning process. The planning of the expenditure of our annual revenue has always included consideration for current operations, replacement of current assets, and requirements for future development such as automation. We are currently in the process of automating our catalogue and book control system at our headquarters operation. This project has been planned for a number of years, and is financially feasible only through funds that have been placed in our Automation and Capital Trust reserves. Only through careful planning and the establishment of reserve funds have such projects been feasible. We have always had to balance the immediate need for expenditures on annual collection development (that's the books and the resources, materials) branch library opening hours and headquarters operational costs with the future plans and developments that will improve our services and delivery to the residents of Southwest Saskatchewan.

The Executive and Board do not welcome the announcement of a ten per cent decrease in Provincial Government funding. We feel it is imperative to continue to deliver the quality library services we have developed, if at all possible. Some operational costs will be pared but a significant deficit will be incurred for the calendar year of 1987. This deficit can be balanced through the transfer of funds from our Capital Trust reserve but will erode the financial position we have developed over many years of responsible planning.

... A ten per cent decrease in provincial funding or approximately \$60,000.00, would mean a municipal increase of over twenty-nine per cent. Such a request from our municipalities, even in the best of economic times, would certainly spell the end of regional library participation and operation as we currently know it.

When you tell me that you don't want to be handcuffed, are you telling me that you don't value the kind of slow development of services, the kind of very conscientious development of services that a regional library like Chinook represents, where they have tried to put money aside for the automatic projects which will bring them into the 21st century, and all that stuff, versus maintaining their library materials and maintaining their system.

You don't value that long-range planning and that careful consideration of funds, that you can toss them about by reducing the budget by 10 per cent and not telling them what's going to happen next year?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I think all I can say, to not rehash territory we've been over a couple of times, is that the province this year finds itself facing probably the most severe economic challenges it's faced in even perhaps in its entire history.

Even facing those challenges, we're able to find a half a million dollars for a special fund for books for our libraries. I'm proud of it, and most people are very happy with it.

Yes, we could always use more money, but given the difficult circumstances, the fact that we're able to have some additional money there for that book fund, I think it speaks well for our government's view on the importance we place on the library system. And I don't know what more I can say, Mr. Chairman.

**Ms. Smart:** — Well, one of the other problems that the regional libraries have had to face because of this 10 per cent cut is that they have contracts with rural and urban municipalities which have been negotiated for two or three years. And the 1987 budgets which they set were based on their commitments to these contracts.

I'm assuming that you knew that they had those contractual commitments that they had to fulfil, and that they needed the money as part of their overall grant to meet those commitments. Why didn't you help them to honour those commitments?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — As far as I'm aware, and all the advice I have as a result of this year's budget, we're not aware of any contractual breakdowns because of the budget.

**Ms. Smart:** — I want to turn then . . . I am going to make sure that the libraries know about that, and if they do have contractual commitments that have been messed up for this change in the funding, that they can let you know about it.

I would like to turn to the funding for the municipal libraries, Regina and Saskatoon public libraries. Their money has been cut by 30 per cent, the provincial grant that they got. And as you know, and as I know, that is not a very large part of the overall budget for the libraries in the cities, but there is a couple of questions connected with that cut-back in the provincial grant. The Regina Public Library, when it wrote to you, said that:

The board considers this action by the government to be most inequitable . . . a signal that the government has abandoned any effort to achieve a fair sharing of the financial resources that are available for public libraries. This is particularly indefensible in light of the government's previous statements . . . (when they) wrote to the government on April . . . concerning library funding. The reply from the then Minister of Finance, Bob Andrews (this is in 1985) was that the government was waiting for the report of the Local Government Finance Commission to allow the government "to assess library funding within the broader framework of new directions for provincial-municipal financing to reflect the changing needs and circumstances of the 1980's".

(2115)

The Local Government Finance Commission report:

. . . was unequivocal in saying that the funding proportions between municipal and regional libraries were seriously out of balance and immediate action was needed to achieve equity.

Your government has proceeded in the opposite direction with a 30 per cent cut in municipal library funding, and now a grant to libraries outside the usual annual grant allocation process that omits the municipal libraries altogether (because they didn't get any part of that 500,000).

The board is very concerned as to what this policy direction will mean in 1988 and beyond. It implies that the government intends through fiscal measures to destroy the intent of the Library Act which creates a province-wide co-operative library service.

And I'm referring to the section in The Library Act which mandates the municipal libraries, section 25:

. . . to develop specialized resource centres and provide advanced reference services and . . . (that they may) develop special library collections and

services not ordinarily provided in one municipality or in regional libraries. (And the two city libraries are to) co-operate with the Saskatchewan Library in developing province-wide services through inter-library loan, reciprocal agreements and collection development planning; and administer funds received from the Government of Saskatchewan . . . for any other purpose that the board considers necessary to develop library services.

The point that I'm particularly concerned with is that the issue of co-operating with the Saskatchewan library in developing province-wide services, the two city libraries were set up to be specialized resource centres for the total library system in Saskatchewan.

Your cutting back on the funding to those municipal libraries seems to destroy the intent of The Library Act. Why did you do it, and what is your intention in terms of the creating one library system in Saskatchewan if you're not going to support the municipal libraries in being resource centres as mandated under the Act?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Well as it relates to the situation at Regina and Saskatoon, the basis for what we have done in the budgeting here was to try and provide the funding, or the most funding, or additional funding, if you like based on where the need was the greatest. I don't think you being a member of a socialist party would particularly have any difficulty with that.

As I said earlier, in our view, when it came to a special fund for books, the northern part of this province had the greatest need, so we allowed those branches to be eligible for double the amount that the rest of rural Saskatchewan was eligible for.

Similarly, if you look at the book budgets at Regina and Saskatoon libraries in 1986, they spent not quite \$1.9 million on books and library materials, and they serve about 35 per cent of the people.

On the other hand, our regional libraries who serve 64 per cent of the public had only 1.383 million to spend on books and other materials.

So what I'm saying to you, if you looked at the record and made the assessment based on need, which I don't think you have any difficulty with . . . I mean that's what we always strive for in this legislature is to be fair, and divide those who have the greatest needs, the extra help if you like.

So what I was faced with, what my officials were faced with, was we had a situation here were one-third of the population was being served with a book budget of 1.9 million and two-thirds of the population were only being served with a book budget of 1.383 million. I don't think that was fair.

So what we've decided to do, rather than — not that we want to pick on Regina and Saskatoon — but rather than give them more money if you like, given that they're already spending 4 or 500,000 more than two-thirds of the province has access to, we'd concentrate our

resources on the rest of Saskatchewan and try and have them catch up a little bit; and secondly, particularly in the North, double it.

But at the same time, having said all that, I want to reiterate — I mean this wasn't somehow meant to punish or pick on Regina or Saskatoon. But if you're going to do it on a needs basis and spend your dollars where it's most needed, it seems to me those numbers speak for themselves.

I also, though, want to acknowledge, because I wouldn't be fair if I did not, the service — the great service that the Regina and Saskatoon systems have provided this entire province throughout the years.

We ought not penalize them for any success and for all the work that has gone on either. And I want that to be on the record, and I have no doubt that they'll continue to be of great service to all of the province, other than just those who live in or around Regina and Saskatoon. And we ought to be very clear about that, and we owe them a great debt of gratitude.

But I think if you work on providing the special money, if you like, for where the needs are greatest, the priorities we identified were these in this order: the North, number one; rural Saskatchewan generally, number two; Regina and Saskatoon, three. And I don't think, as I said, you being a member of a socialist party would disagree with the fairness of that approach.

**Ms. Smart:** — I think it is important that people across this province have access to the library resources. That's why I was so supportive of the Saskatchewan library system that was set up over many years in this province. One of the corner-stones of that library system was an inter-library loan system where resources could be shared across the province. And the Saskatoon Public Library and the Regina Public Library have built up their collections on that basis and that understanding and that system working, that those resources go out of the city, across the province to people who want to borrow them.

You can't set up the same kind of libraries you have in Saskatoon in every rural area of the province. But you can, through an inter-library loan system, make those resources available. And with the new technology, the high technology, the automation systems that are now possible, those resources can be made more easily available to people.

The Saskatoon Public Library in 1986 lent out — sent out on inter— library loan — over 8,000 items to other parts of the province, and the Regina Public Library almost 10,000. Those resources are going out; they're being shared by the rest of the province.

My question then to you is, in terms of your plan for the future — which I don't see in planning for the year 2000, and I don't see in your prescription that you don't want to be handcuffed for next year in terms of what the libraries are doing . . . So it seems almost ridiculous to ask you a question about where you think the libraries are going to be going in the next year. But is the government going to require that resources be shared in this province? Are you

supporting that concept? When you talk about making resources available across the province, do you support the concept of sharing resources from the city libraries and from the Saskatchewan Library to the smaller libraries and back again?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Yes, I do support that concept.

**Ms. Smart:** — Is funding an automation project, ongoing automation, a priority for the sharing of those resources?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Yes, and as funds are available. I want to just comment on one of the points you made. You made reference to the fact that we can't duplicate what's available in Regina and Saskatoon across the province, and I think it's safe to say that you're correct there. But I would hate to use that as an excuse for us not updating and increasing the collections in the Meadow Lakes, in the Swift Currents, in the Nipawins of the world. I mean, I don't think we should not be proactive in those areas.

And I raise it for another reason, that because of this new and expanded role that we see for regional colleges, as I said earlier, the library system is . . . We have greater expectations for it and we're prepared to put some teeth into our commitments in terms of dollars, as I said, as best we can and as available. So it's very much a part of this dynamic restructuring that's going on, and a very important part.

And I really don't disagree with a lot of what you've suggested in terms of areas that are priorities and need attention. And yes, we will give those areas attention as and when funds permit.

**Ms. Smart:** — Will you be using the regional library system, then, as a back-up for the regional colleges? Are you going to put the money into the regional systems so that they can be part, a stronger part, of a one-library system?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — We fully expect that as we develop our distance education initiatives that our regional library system will have an important role to play there.

And I don't know if I can elaborate much more at this point in time because we're in the infant stage, if you like, of our distance education. And much consultation has yet to go on with some of the major players in that regard.

**Ms. Smart:** — Well let's look at the distance education then. I don't particularly want to get on to it just yet.

But I understand in the distance education, from the blueprint, *Preparing for the Year 2000*, you only mentioned that the Saskatchewan Library was involved in the distance education movement to some extent. But I didn't get any sense of how the library fit in. You say in the blueprint:

To co-ordinate the new education outreach initiative, the Minister of Education will appoint a Distance Education Council. The Council will advise the Minister on the development of the new network of facilities and programs. It will also be

asked to develop a policy on electronic distance education.

What is the relationship in your mind between the regional libraries and this new network of facilities that you're going to set up? Who's going to be on the distance education council? Which groups? And what is the relationship of the distance education council and policy to the libraries?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I picked up your questions in reverse order. The distance education council is not yet appointed, but there will be library representation on it. I want . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Sorry?

**Ms. Smart:** — I didn't hear that.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — The distance education council has not yet been appointed. As I said earlier, it's in its infant stages. But I think I can safely give you the commitment that we fully expect there'll be library representation on it. I want to pull together all the players who have been involved in this, whether it be STELLA, the Saskatchewan Tele-Learning Association, what they've been doing, whoever may have been involved here, to give their best advice, guidance, and input.

I guess a further perspective I might offer with you in terms of distance education, I guess there are models around where you have things centralized as opposed to decentralized. Our view would be that we would go with the decentralized approach or the regional approach. If I'm a bit hazy, it's because we are yet in the infant stages on this. The reality is, I think, for all the reasons that you're outlined, it holds some exciting promise. Libraries will be involved in a very integral way, and perhaps in 2 or 3 or 6 months more the details will have been forthcoming as we get this council up and running.

**Ms. Smart:** — But these are issues that are concerning people now in terms of the budget that you're being presented and we have to discuss. And it really concerns me that you've talked a lot in the House around education, or around a lot of clichés about developing into the new 21st century and your blueprint and the information age, and how we have to come to terms with reality. And yet when I ask you the hard questions about how you're organizing libraries in this province, you don't have the answers. And yet you've got a very good system that you're cutting back. You're cutting back on the library systems, but the funding that you're cutting back on . . . You want to face reality, and yet you won't answer these hard questions about what you're doing.

(2130)

Do you want to stand up and talk? You've just said, Mr. Minister, that you would go with a decentralized model for developing the distant education council, so you're promoting a decentralized model for the development of distance education and of libraries in the future. That seems to me to be in some ways a contradiction with the idea of having an amalgamated library service. You've amalgamated libraries into the Department of Education, and yet you also want to decentralize, and how are you going to do that?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I'll give you as broad an understanding as I can give you at this time. We are going to establish a distance education council, but it will be not mere talk and mere rhetoric because backing that up is something in the order of \$3 million of new money for this distance education, this outreach initiative. I don't want to pre-empt, for example, the advice and guidance and input that I might get from a council that I would suspect would have, as I said earlier, representation from the libraries, STELLA if you like, university extension branches, regional colleges, the new institute, and obviously SaskTel has some interest here. There's the Department of Transportation, I think it is, as well, from a licensing standpoint.

The idea is to develop regionally accessible education outlets utilizing, where possible, existing resources. We don't want to get ourselves in a situation of building buildings, if you like, or whatever where we don't need to. And as I said before, to assure you that this commitment — we're not just going to study the issue to death or undertake paralysis by analysis — there's a \$3 million fund behind this initiative.

But as I said before, I don't pretend to have all the answers; as you yourself or other colleagues have pointed out in your party, we should consult, and this is an excellent example of where we are going to consult with some who have done some fair amount of work in this area, and because of that, I want to draw on that advice and guidance before I lay out a more concrete framework that I have to you tonight.

**Ms. Smart:** — Well, I guess I'm getting mixed messages because partly I'm hearing that you want to continue the one-library system, then you want to go into a decentralized system. You don't know quite what's going to happen with this distance education, and yet you're telling me to read this *Preparing for the Year 2000* — that's got all the answers in it. It hasn't got anything in it except a lot of hype. And you've got to get a lot more specific and lot more real about what you're doing with libraries and with education than what you've been able to do so far.

I want to turn to another point that you made in speaking to the throne speech last December, Mr. Minister. You were talking about duplication of services, and you were saying: I'm never in favour of unnecessary duplication. And certainly in the economic realities that we live with, we must never, ever have unnecessary duplication. Can you tell me then, if you don't believe in duplication of resources, why your government has developed special centres offering a network of advice to business, business resource centres around the province to offer a wealth of business information from convenient store-front locations serving as one-stop information storehouses for entrepreneurs and prospective business people, providing them with the latest management, marketing, and financial information, plus consulting advice on business ideas and problems. The centres also carry many other business, manuals and guides as well as management aids, marketing and statistical data, and facts about government and non-government programs of assistance for business.

Why did your government set up these business resource centres separate from the regional library system which is a public information system already established? Why didn't you take that money and strengthen that regional library system? Why did you put it into business resource centres? We have a business resource centre in Saskatoon with exactly the same information in it as the Saskatoon Public Library just two blocks away. Very expensive business directories and trade directories are duplicated by your government. You want to save money. Why did you do that?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I think, although there may be some small overlap relative to functions that the hon. member might subscribe to, a business resource centre as versus libraries — I think quite frankly you're talking a little bit here about apples and oranges. Why do we have business resource centres? We have business resource centres because under the NDP small business in this province was largely ignored and its development was not fostered. And if there was any help, it was hidden away in some closet, because it's well known the NDP are against small business. I don't think I can say it any more plainly than that.

We put these small-business resource centres out where people can see them, where they can have access to them, where they can find out what market trends are, get help in some areas. And I'm quite proud of the initiatives taken by my colleague from Indian Head-Wolseley in that regard.

Why would we have them? I mean, we have them for small business just like we have ag rep offices to help farmers across rural Saskatchewan. I think what you're talking about here, in mixing business resource centres and libraries, is a little bit apples and oranges. I suppose there's some faint — relative to information surfacing if you like — there's probably some faint overlap there, but I think we ought not confuse their mandates.

**Ms. Smart:** — That's it? To say that there's only a faint connection between a business resource centre and the business section of the Saskatoon Public Library, for example, or the business resources that could be made available through the regional library system, really indicates that your concept of information sharing, your concept of a knowledge-based economy, is not very substantive, it's not very deep.

You would have seen that you could have used the money to fund the libraries and to make them stronger than to go diddling off in every direction, decentralizing all over the place with other resource centres that conflict.

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

**An Hon. Member:** — You're not a happy lady, Anne.

**Ms. Smart:** — No, I'm not particularly happy having to deal with the Minister of Education who talks a lot about coming to grips with reality and then, when you try to ask him questions about reality, he hasn't got the answers.

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

**An Hon. Member:** — Go ahead.

**Ms. Smart:** — I will. I'm just not going to yap over all this noise.

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

**Ms. Smart:** — Another topic that I think we should discuss, Mr. Minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . when I can have some order . . .

**Mr. Chairman:** — I would just like to make a comment here that I have been very pleased thus far this evening with the amorous kind of relationship that we've had. It has been making the life of the Chairman relatively easy, and I would appreciate it if we could continue in that kind of a relationship. So if the member from Saskatoon Centre has a question, would she please continue.

**Ms. Smart:** — Let's talk about another pet project of the minister's, let's talk about the literacy programs. I understand your government has established a special literacy council . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Chairperson, I can't talk above this noise.

**Mr. Chairman:** — Would members from both . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order, please. Order. Would members from both sides please try to contain themselves somewhat, so that the member from Saskatoon Centre can continue her questioning.

**Ms. Smart:** — I'd like to ask you some questions about the special literacy council that you've established. I'm wondering if it has any more substance to it than the distance education council at this point? You are claiming that you are going to use the expertise of the Saskatoon and Regina public libraries, I understand. Can you tell me what groups are involved in the special literacy council? Who's going to control the project?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — The literacy council is . . . we are close to having it appointed. We've released a background paper there, which is our first step on our new initiative relative to literacy. It, too, has some very chilling statistics that I'm not particularly proud of, and that's exactly why we are going to launch this new offensive.

As to who will be there to provide advice and guidance and input again, and whom we will be looking to for our consultations, is once again the libraries, volunteer groups, business, the media, perhaps — we'd like to make this fairly broad-ranging — professionals who work in the area. We are going to try and involve all who may have an interest to help us get this initiative up and running.

**Ms. Smart:** — I've been aware of the literacy problem for some time. We've been working on it in the Saskatoon Public Library for over 10 years. And the libraries are very concerned about what role they're going to play in the development of this literacy programs.

Can you tell me where the funding is coming from for the

literacy programs? What budget is it coming out of?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — It comes out of our budget, the \$3 million education outreach fund.

**Ms. Smart:** — I'm sorry. I didn't hear the answer. Where did you say the funding was coming from?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Education budget, education outreach fund; \$3 million fund.

**Ms. Smart:** — Education outreach funding. I don't think any money has been designated for the libraries for the literacy program. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — In an indirect sense, because we expect them to be involved in this process.

And I . . . I mean, that's one of the advantages, I suppose, of the amalgamation, is that you have to sort of compartmentalize the funding. I mean, if we're getting to an initiative, and they can be involved, and the K to 12 can be involved, the advanced ed, — we're all one team is what I'm saying.

**Ms. Smart:** — Well the libraries are already funding a lot of work and a very great number of resources and in a lot of subjects. They can't take on another project like that without increased funding.

Will their funding be increased in order to provide all those resources for the literacy programs?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — All I can say is that I have every expectation that the literacy initiative will be adequately funded.

(2145)

**Ms. Smart:** — That's not a very satisfactory answer for people who are trying to provide their library budgets. Where do you intend the resources for the literacy programs to be stored and housed and circulated? Where are you going to put them?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — The volunteer initiative; I suspect we would see it broadly dispersed throughout the community. I would reiterate again — I mean obviously I want to have some consultation with the groups I mentioned before, and that's exactly why I'm having a literacy counsel established, to give me some advice, guidance, and input on that. It seems to me that might make some sense, but I would look to them for direction on that.

**Ms. Smart:** — That doesn't mean anything. You haven't answered my question. Where are the resources going to be housed? How can you come up with a special literacy counsel and toot and blow your horn about literacy as you have done since we started talking about education, and when I ask you very specifically where's the funding coming from for the literacy resources, and where are they going to be housed, and how are they going to be circulated, you talk about volunteers doing it. That's going back to libraries in the 1910s in Saskatchewan. That's not progress. That's very destructive change.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I want to take the hon. member through a logic track here that does not a typical of the NDP. On the one hand . . . on the one hand you criticize us if we pretend to have all the answers in the dome, in the legislature here, and that you criticize if we don't go out and consult. That's exactly the line of attack that was used by a couple of your critic colleagues.

Here what we are clearly saying when it comes to literacy, and this is education. There have been a lot of people that have a lot of knowledge, including the library system, out there that might be of some use to us. Why wouldn't we engage in their expertise.

And I'll tell you what — you may not want to consult, you may think you have all the answers, but I'm telling you, I want to avail myself of the knowledge and the expertise that volunteers and professionals and libraries and whoever else might have out there, as we engage in the literacy initiative in our distance education initiative, and I don't apologize for it.

**Ms. Smart:** — All I'm asking is if you know what you're doing and where you're going. And it doesn't sound as if you do. And the thing that is so distressing is that you stand up here and tell us that you've got all these programs going. When we try to ask you about education, oh, you've got this literacy program going, and you've got this distance education program going. And then, when we try to find out where it is, it's smoke and mirrors, that's what it is.

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

**Ms. Smart:** — You haven't got it organized. And it's not good enough for the public library system in Saskatchewan for you not to have those answers more specifically than you have, when you're cutting the funding on libraries, you're setting up alternate resources centres around the province, you're talking about literacy, and you have no idea how you're going to get going on it.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Chairman, two comments I would make here. In the blueprint for the future, *Preparing for the Year 2000*, first couple of paragraphs go this way:

This document provides the policy framework within which the government wishes to pursue future developments in post-secondary education.

Recognizing that many parties share a partnership in adult education, this document does not seek to define a single course of action. Rather it establishes some long-range policy objectives and goals around which institutions can co-ordinate their future plans.

This document also provides plans, provides details, of the government's own plan of action for the next few years.

That is our intent. And to show you that we already are making the first steps in some of these new initiatives, I will provide for the hon. member our most recently released paper entitled: *A New Beginning: A Background paper on Adult Illiteracy and Undereducation in Saskatchewan*.

This is the kind of thing that the literacy council will be — the background paper that they will be wrestling with. This is our first step. I don't think you can suggest that somehow we don't have these things out of the chute. We do. But we do want to take advantage of the expertise that's out there, and I would ask one of the pages to deliver this to the library critic, please.

**Ms. Smart:** — Well, I appreciate receiving that document. I've been involved in a national organization on literacy for some time, and I'm somewhat familiar with the issue.

But the question . . . the part that you've just read out of this blueprint for the future is just exactly what I'm questioning. You say that this document establishes some long-range policy objectives and goals around which institutions can co-ordinate their future plans.

I don't see any policies or goals in here around which libraries can plan anything. In fact, I've heard you say that they shouldn't have any future plans, period. So it's all rhetoric, because you haven't been able to give me that information.

You say, the document also provides details of the government's own plan of action for the next few years. There are no details in here about libraries — none. None whatsoever.

It doesn't establish long-range policy objectives and goals, around which institutions can co-ordinate their future plans, unless they have the money to do so. And when I ask you where the funding is, you say the funding isn't there.

Now when we're talking, we're talking about . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Three million.

**Ms. Smart:** — Yes, but how much for libraries? My question was: how much for libraries? I heard the three million. But you didn't answer my question. How much of that is for libraries? For the literacy resources? Are they going to be the centres for the literacy resources, and how much money is going to go to the libraries?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — As I said before, I have every reason to believe that the funding will be there, and it will be adequate. But I'm not going to leap-frog, or pre-guess, or prejudice what this Literacy Council may — the guidance and the advice and the input that they may have.

And you can ask the question 100 times, and my answer will be the same 100 times. Until I have a chance to consult with the professionals and the volunteers in all these sectors, I can't tell you.

**Ms. Smart:** — Did you, did you consult with the regional libraries when you brought in that book purchase grant?

Did you consult with them to change their funding from — to cut back the \$700,000, to do the 10 per cent cut? Did you consult with them before you changed it to a book purchase grant, if you believe in consultation?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — The very day the budget came down, I had two telephone conference calls with the library system to advise them of the book fund, and to share with them our view, based on the numbers of letters that they had sent to me as to why we had set up this special fund.

As I said earlier, I think, to a person, they were very grateful for it. And so if you're asking me if I was in touch with them as a result of that initiative, yes.

**Ms. Smart:** — I used the word consult. To me consult means you talk to somebody before you do something. You don't phone them up on budget day . . .

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

**Ms. Smart:** — You advised them of what you are doing, and you call that consultation. That's just another example of why I find it so difficult to trust the words that you use and why I call it so much hype, because you've talked over and over again about consulting, and you don't consult, you don't know the meaning of the word, if that's your description of consultation.

**An Hon. Member:** — Hang in there, Anne.

**Ms. Smart:** — Oh, I will. Don't worry.

**Mr. Chairman:** — Order, please. Can we have some order in here so we can finish off the evening in good style.

**Ms. Smart:** — Thank you. I have another question that's a concern to many of the librarians. I want to know whether you have any intention of amalgamating the school libraries with the public libraries, particularly in the rural areas. Is that part of your plans?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — No.

**Ms. Smart:** — So you will not. There is no consideration of amalgamating school and public libraries? Have you been given more information that you want to share with me?

**An Hon. Member:** — No.

**Ms. Smart:** — Okay. The next question . . . So you go on record as saying that you have no intention now, or in the future, of combining the small public libraries with the school libraries in the rural areas? You will not do that? Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Your observation is correct.

**Ms. Smart:** — I'm sorry, I didn't hear that response.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Your observation is correct. What I was checking with my official is . . . I think in one of the northern libraries we have a relationship established with one of the schools. I was trying to be as correct as possible in my answer to you.

**Ms. Smart:** — That's why I talked about the regional libraries and the rural libraries. I know the difference between those libraries and the libraries in the North.

I have another question that's of great concern to the libraries. Are you intending now, or in the future, to bring forth user fees for using the public libraries in the province?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — No.

**Mr. Chairman:** — Order, please. I'd like to call for order.

**Ms. Smart:** — So you're not going to install library user fees, and you're not going to combine school and public libraries . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, it's okay.

I have another question for you, and this regards the school libraries. Can you tell me how many teacher/librarian positions have been eliminated as a result of the provincial funding cuts?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — As far as we're . . . we're not aware of any. And as the hon. member would note, given the autonomy of local boards, it's up to them to decide on the disposition of their staffing.

**Ms. Smart:** — Are you saying then, Mr. Minister — there was an article in the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* regarding the teacher/librarians.

Saskatchewan School Library Association president said countless teacher/librarian positions, including her own, has been eliminated as a result of provincial funding cuts to school libraries.

. . . the beginning of April in this year, school districts learned that in order to save money the provincial government is stretching its school library funding over 10 years instead of five years, as it has done in the past.

What funding was that that was stretched over 10 years instead of five years, and did it have anything to do with the libraries in the province?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — The education development fund, the dollars were intact at 150 million, but rather than being spent over five years, we'll now spend it over a 10-year period, Mr. Chairman.

**Ms. Smart:** — So as the article points out then, it has to go twice as far and spread very thin.

In some schools the entire library program has been cut back or abolished. Do you call that supporting the library resources centres?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — They didn't hear the question. I am aware of no circumstances such as that, and I doubt that any board of education would be so irresponsible as to abolish their library.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:02 p.m.