

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is with pleasure today that I introduce a visitor to Canada who is with us today. I'll begin by introducing those who are with him: Jonathon Wilkinson, Dwayne Havre, and Don Stanger. They are with Jean Claude Liechti, who is visiting us from Switzerland. I ask all members to join with me in welcoming these people to this Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with a great deal of pleasure that I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, six residents from the Sunset Extendicare home, a seniors' home in Albert Park in Regina South. They are seated on the main floor just inside the door. We have six residents and four attendants with them this afternoon. I had the pleasure of visiting most of those people with my wife recently, last October, and I look forward to joining with them in coffee a little bit later on. I ask all members to welcome these guests to the Assembly.

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

**Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you very much. I want to add a note to the comments of my colleague from Regina South. I want to also welcome the seniors and the attendants to this Assembly.

One of the encouraging things in this session, that I don't think I've seen before, is the attendance by seniors from hospitals and nursing homes at the Assembly. I think this is the third time we've had them here, and it's encouraging to see. I want to congratulate the volunteers who take of their own time to make sure this happens.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Sale of Saskoil Shares

**Mr. Rolfes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy and it deals with the recent sale of six and a half million shares of Saskoil.

Madam Minister, as you know, Saskoil is controlled by the government and it sold more than six and a half million new, common shares on the Toronto Stock Exchange. Those shares were clearly undervalued, because the very next day they closed on the Toronto Stock Exchange at \$8.25. On top of that, Madam Minister, Saskatchewan residents who purchased these shares got a tax break of up to \$3,000 under the Saskatchewan Stock Savings Plan.

So the ordinary taxpayer saw the province's equity in

Saskoil decrease, and the ordinary taxpayer had to shell out millions of dollars in taxpayers' money under the Saskatchewan Stock Savings Plan, all to have Saskoil expand in Alberta.

My question to the minister is this: Madam Minister, would you mind telling the ordinary taxpayer of this province why such a generous scheme was a fair expenditure of their tax dollars?

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

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's not so long ago that I heard the complaint from opposite. When the price was up you were complaining. Now the price is down, you're complaining.

Let me inform the members, Mr. Speaker, that when Saskoil was open for public shares, this government made a commitment that they would operate it without government interference, and we've held to that. While the news of the day, as you say, may be that the shares are undervalued, I assure you and this House that Saskoil is a very good investment, and in fact you will see those shares go up within time.

If the member has any indication at all that he would like to invest, I would suggest it is a good investment and it will be going up.

One further point, Mr. Speaker. That did not cost the taxpayers a dollar — not a dollar — as the member has suggested. We didn't buy a potash mine, and we didn't buy an oil company. They invested their money and they will get a fair return on it.

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

**Mr. Rolfes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, your statement simply is not accurate. The Saskatchewan taxpayers shelled out millions of dollars under the Saskatchewan Stock Savings Plan, and I ask you, Madam Minister, to explain to us why this is a good deal for the people of Saskatchewan to have Saskoil expand in Alberta. Why should the average taxpayer feel that this arrangement was a good deal for him, and why should they feel that this kind of generous give-away is fair when it only pertains to a few people in Saskatchewan? Why is that a fair scheme?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Speaker, when the stock savings plan was put into place, it was put in for a specific reason, and that was to encourage investment that would in fact serve this province well. That's what happened with it. He wants to know why would they expand into Alberta. I would encourage Saskoil, if they should be inclined, to expand elsewhere also, because I believe it's going to serve this province well. I will remind you that their corporate head office is in Saskatchewan; they pay income tax here, and the majority of their production and their employees are here, and that is good for our province and our people.

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

**Mr. Rolfes:** — Madam Taxpayer . . . Madam Minister, I wish you would address the question that is asked. The question, Madam Minister, is this: would you tell the average taxpayer how much the Saskoil share offering costs them under the tax break known as the Saskatchewan Stock Savings Plan? The tax break, Madam Minister, if you don't know, results in a 30 per cent income credit to a maximum of \$3,000 per person. How many people in Saskatchewan took advantage of that tax break, and how much did that cost Saskatchewan taxpayers overall? Would you please answer those two questions for me.

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

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — His first addressing to me was correct, Madam taxpayer, with the recent notice I got from Revenue Canada, I'd like the member to know. In fact, it probably covers his salary, or close to it. I feel the sting like even the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg.

The member is looking for some answers that are not there, Mr. Speaker, because his assumptions are wrong. It is not a cost, it's a benefit. And I don't know how many times we would have to go through it before it would sink in, but that's what it is. It's a benefit to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan and to this province, and it will bode well, Mr. Speaker, for the industry within the province in the future.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Final supplementary. Order. Order. Order. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Rolfes:** — Madam Minister, I want to ask you another supplementary question. Since you were so obviously undervaluing the Saskoil shares, why didn't you at least give smaller investors in Saskatchewan first crack at this generous scheme. The investment dealers report that two-thirds of these new shares were sold to non-Saskatchewan residents, while a number of Saskatchewan residents were unable to get their orders filled. My question to you again is, once you had decided to sell these new shares so far below value, why did you at least not give Saskatchewan investors a chance to buy these shares? Why didn't you do that?

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

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Speaker, the government doesn't make those decisions. My opening statement to the member from Saskatoon South was, in fact, this company is run as a private company, and it's not run by the government. We on this side of the House do not believe that government has to operate everything day by day. In fact, this was an opportunity for individuals as a private company to be operating the company and run as they see fit, and that, in fact, is what has happened.

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the minister in charge of Saskoil, and I ask her this: is she aware that a major offering of Saskoil shares was made at the approximate price of \$7.60 a share? Is she aware that on the day the offering was made the market price of those shares was of the order of \$8.50? Does she believe, as she earlier said, that that would be a good buy at 7.60? And if all those are true, can she tell me why the people of

Saskatchewan should be offering a further bonus of \$2.25 a share for anyone from Saskatchewan who buys this share at 7.60 when it has a market value of over 8.50?

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

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am aware of everything that the Leader of the Opposition has laid out. I will say once again to the Assembly and to the Leader of the Opposition, the decisions are made by the company, and indirectly, I would suppose, through its shareholders, not the government. They made those decisions, and I believe that they are probably good decisions. We will for sure know in the immediate future, and the long term, the decisions that are made.

I would guess, when I look at what has happened to Saskoil on the stock market and the interest, that in fact most people do believe it is a good investment.

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Believing as the minister does that this was a good investment at 7.60 and a good investment at today's price of \$8.75, whatever it is, would she explain why the taxpayers should be giving a bonus to people who pursue this good investment? Would she explain why the government — not the company, but the government — made the decision to give the buyers of these shares a bonus of \$2.25 for each share they bought?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Speaker, I have already referred to the stock savings plan. Other provinces do it. I believe that it has served this province well with companies other than Saskoil. And Saskoil, obviously, has taken advantage of this one too. And the people, the people that have responded . . . You just heard your own member from Saskatoon South talking about people that couldn't get shares that wanted them. That's one of the reasons why. It's a good way for investment in Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Indeed I could expect that when you're offering shares worth \$8.50, which have a net cost of \$5.35, you're going to get a long line-up. There's no question that it's good for the people who are buying the shares.

My question to you is: would you explain how it is for the benefit of Saskatchewan taxpayers that you give a tax break, which means that people who buy these shares have to put up about \$5.35 net when they get a share which is worth over \$8.50 on the market the very day they buy it? Would you explain how that's a good deal for ordinary Saskatchewan taxpayers?

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

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Speaker, I believe that the more people that we get investing into enterprises that originate in this province, the better it is for the province. That's the bottom line.

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

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, Madam Minister, we can get everybody to invest if they're all going to get a major bonus from the

Saskatchewan treasury. What I am . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — And it's a lot cheaper than buying potash mines.

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — We will debate that at the proper time.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order, please. Order. Order. Order! Order. That also applies to the member from The Battlefords.

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted that the intervention of the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden . . . And I take it that means he will be prepared to answer questions about the potash corporation. But right now . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. The Leader of the Opposition is attempting to ask a supplementary but isn't getting much co-operation. Please allow him to ask the question.

Order, please. Order, please. I think that if both sides just calm down, then the Leader of the Opposition can ask his question.

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. My question . . . My supplementary to the minister is this: why do you feel that ordinary taxpayers should suffer major tax increases and major cuts in the services, and at the same time give a bonus to people who buy shares, a bonus of \$2.35 for people who buy shares for \$7.60 which have, as you freely admit, a market value of \$1 more the day they buy them? Under those circumstances, why do you feel the taxpayers should offer a bonus to the people who buy those shares?

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

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Speaker, once again, the stock savings plan was put into place to encourage people to invest in our home province, and that's Saskatchewan. I suppose we could stand here for a long time, and we could question whether government puts in money or private people put in money. I would suggest to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that it all comes out of the same pocket. The government, in fact, is the taxpayers' dollar. It doesn't grow on trees; it comes out of the working person on the street. I think we could agree on that point.

Mr. Speaker, the stock savings plan allows an incentive to invest in Saskatchewan. How is that good for the people of Saskatchewan? First of all, for those who choose, Mr. Speaker, to make an investment into Saskoil and in fact into Saskatchewan, it gives them an opportunity to make some decisions where they are going to put their money.

As it relates to the province, I see several factors where it in fact is good for the province. It gives a base of further cash flow to the company for expansion. We've seen some expansion. I've already stated their corporate head office is in this province, 95 per cent of the production is in this province, and the majority of their employees are in this province.

Jobs, the investment, and in turn, Mr. Speaker, the income and the income tax and the revenues, the spin-offs into the small-business community are all a part of the picture. And I don't know why that escapes the Leader of the Opposition. But it does not escape this side of the House.

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

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I regret that the minister is not directing her attention to the question I'm asking. Does she deny that the issue would have been sold out without the tax break? Does she deny that all the benefits that she speaks of would have been there without the tax break, and why did she feel it necessary to give a tax break of 5 to \$10 million to people to buy shares when they were perfectly willing to buy the shares without the tax break? Now why do you do that, Madam Minister? Why do you feel that these people are the neediest people in Saskatchewan, and not some of the other people whose services you are cutting?

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

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Whoops! Far from it. First of all the Leader of the Opposition's question is rather hypothetical. But let's try and deal . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, it is. It is. Think about it. Let's try and deal with it anyway.

Why the stock savings plan? It is precisely to encourage Saskatchewan people for the benefits and to invest in this province. It's that simple. If I could draw a picture for you, I would, but I'm a very poor artist. I hope that clarifies it for you.

#### Aid in Meeting Drug Needs

**Mr. Romanow:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. First of all, I wish to welcome him back to the legislature. And I say to the . . .

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — And, Mr. Speaker, judging by the warm applause he received from his back-benchers and the front-benchers, they want him and need him back, given the answers that they've been giving the last little while. So they welcome you back too, sir.

My question is this. We have just seen, in the questions and answers between the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister of Energy, the specific difference and the difficulties of your taxation give-away policies, coupled with the cut-backs of programs — 5 to \$10 million on the Saskoil share offering, while people on the drug plan, for example, in need, in some instances, are not able to look after their monthly drug bills.

My question to you, sir, is this: in the absence of the Minister of Health, who advised this House a few weeks ago — several weeks ago — that there would be a special catastrophic needs plan for those in dire straits, when in the world will you and your government get off your butts and start announcing that kind of special aid plan for those who need it in the light of the cut-back program?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to address the question put forward by the member from Riversdale. It took him a fair time to get to the point. I will say that with respect to investment, with respect to investment, it is important to have people, not only Saskatchewan people, but other Canadians investing in Saskatchewan to create the economic activity to have the tax base.

Now there is two ways that we can do that. We can take the government and we can buy potash mines or uranium mines or packing plants or various kinds of things or, Mr. Speaker . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order, please. Order, please. The Premier is attempting to answer the question — order, order — and isn't getting co-operation from two or three members. Please allow him to answer.

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, with respect to investment that the member from Riversdale brought up, it's important that we do have investment. I'm sure he wouldn't disagree with that. If we can have more investment come into Saskatchewan and more Saskatchewan people invest here, it creates more jobs and more revenue.

To give you an example, the Saskatchewan Power bond issue where the power company can go to the people of Saskatchewan and borrow 100 million or 200 million or 300 million — rather than New York — then the interest goes to Saskatchewan people; in turn they invest in Saskatchewan and we can have more economic activity, and as a result we have either the second or third lowest unemployment in Canada. Now that's important for our tax revenue base.

Secondly, with respect to expenditures on health care and social services. As you know, health care is up 60 some per cent since 1982, and we see the expenditures increasing at a very large rate. The only way that you can sustain that, and the hon. members knows that, is to have the increase in economic activity that would allow us to be able to afford a foundation, the economic tax base, to be able to do that.

Finally, with respect to the specific announcement on the comprehensive program for people who have long-run or chronic drug needs, that will be announced, I would expect, in the next two or three days, or surely within a week.

**Mr. Romanow:** — Supplementary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a supplementary question to the Premier.

It's all well and good to talk about investment and generation back of funds. But in times of economic restraint, Mr. Premier, where everybody is asked in Saskatchewan to tighten belts, I want you to explain to this House how that solves the problem of Mr. Ross Reaney in Saskatoon, who has \$600 a month of drug bills and cannot afford to pay them. How does your fine little speech help out Mr. Ross Reaney and the tens of others that we've brought to the attention of your government

and are now awaiting for several weeks, an answer? How does that help them out?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — I believe the hon. member . . . The hon. member is aware that there was a two-month lag time between the old program and the new program. So under that two-month program . . . the lag time, certainly people who had difficulties had the same opportunities to have them covered as before. And that's why we took that amount of time, to make sure that we could then kick in a program, after the two months, that would cover all those people that had a chronic problem, as they do in Manitoba.

So I would say to the hon. member that that two-month period of time, from the time we initiated the budget and watching it go through, has allowed people that.

Secondly, with respect to the specific concerns that he raises, and others, they have gone to the Minister of Health. We've examined them carefully, and in the next few days we'll be announcing the comprehensive program that will apply to everybody, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Romanow:** — Supplementary question to the Premier. With the greatest of respect to the Premier, he's far too glib with words in his answers; far too glib in this regard.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — And my question, supplementarily, is this, Mr. Premier . . . Mr. Speaker, through you, which I must just preface by bringing to the attention of the House this advertisement by your government on July 1, introducing the drug plan.

Why is it, in describing the elimination of the drug plan, why is it that you, sir, and your Minister of Health, did not take into account the kinds of emergency and catastrophic circumstances faced by Ross Reaney and by tens of other people? Why is it that you're making them suffer for up to two months, as Mr. Reaney and others are, while you're giving millions of dollars of tax breaks to people who don't need those tax breaks? How do you explain that?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from Riversdale is not being accurate with the information, and he should be called on it.

I said, when we announced the program, and let me repeat, that there's two months overlap between the old program and the new program. I've said that twice. I'll say it again: there's two months overlap to allow us to examine and to allow people to make the transition.

Now we're going through that process, Mr. Speaker, and we've had contact with people across Saskatchewan. They've written us, and the Minister of Health, and said, as we get to the end of that program, let's start the new one that is comprehensive. And that's precisely what we're

doing. So the hon. member knows that. We didn't just start it July 1 and end it July 1. There's a two-month overlap to allow those changes to take place.

**Mr. Romanow:** — A new question to the Premier. New question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. My question is a follow-up of the questions on the drug plan. My question pertains to Mr. Ross Reaney and the headline in the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* that says, "Ailing man runs out of prescription drugs," and I quote from the story as follows, sir:

Ron Waschuk, executive director of the plan, said recently (that) assistance for special cases are being worked out. Criteria were not complete or approved, he said on July 22, but they should be in place "very quickly."

Now Mr. Reaney says in this story that he has run out of drugs, two of which could be life-threatening to him. How in the world does that two-month overlap policy apply for Mr. Reaney and the tens of others that have been brought to your attention — even by your own back-benchers, the member from Esterhazy.

Here is a man who does not have the money to buy the drugs. He's on a life-threatening situation, and you're giving him gobbledegook that somehow he's going to get this help. How long does he have to wait? How long do we have to wait?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll say it another time to the member opposite so that he understands the . . . and he may not want too. But you have a two-month overlap period . . . It was July 1 that it was announced, and there's the overlaps, Mr. Speaker. I've mentioned it several times. And during that time we will make sure that we design a program that will allow people . . . that will allow people who have chronic health care problems and drug problems to have a comprehensive . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order! Order, please. Order, please. If the Premier has a few more words to say on the question he has the opportunity to do that now. I would like hon. members to give him that opportunity, if he so wishes.

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I will just say that people in this province had an opportunity to purchase two months worth of drugs as an overlap and, Mr. Speaker, we put that provision in on the advice of people, that we received from people across the various health care institutions, and looking at the Manitoba plan, and to give us the time to make sure that we have an appropriate package when we bring it in in the next few days.

So I think the hon. member understands that. If he wants to raise the issue over and over and over again, I mean, that's fair enough. But the program is there. They have had two months to be able to purchase the drugs and, Mr. Speaker, we'll be coming with the new program as quickly as possible.

## MOTIONS

## Leave of Absence — MLA for Cut Knife-Lloydminster

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move:

That a leave of absence be granted to the hon. member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster from Wednesday, August 26, to Tuesday, September 8, 1987, for his attendance on behalf of this Assembly to the 33rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

I so move, seconded by the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Motion agreed to.

## STATEMENT BY MR. SPEAKER

### Ruling on a Point of Order

**Mr. Speaker:** — I would like to make a statement on a point of order which was recently raised in this House.

Indeed, on July 30, the member for Saskatoon Riversdale raised a point of order concerning the right of Legislative Secretaries to ask questions during oral question period. This is a very important question as it deals both with the basic rights of members and with a sensitive and important part of the parliamentary day — the question period.

Oral questions are a relatively new element in the parliamentary process, particularly so in Saskatchewan, where we have had our current form of time limited question period only since 1975. It is not surprising, then, that this House has no specific rules or precedents to guide the Chair in this matter. With this in mind, I listened with interest to the comments made by various members on the point of order. I thank the hon. members for their contributions.

Before dealing with the specific issue respecting legislative secretaries, I want to clarify the broader issue respecting the rights of government private members in question period. In raising the point of order, the member for Saskatoon Riversdale indicated that question period was not the appropriate forum for "government members who have easy access to members of the cabinet, both in caucus meetings and other forums."

I want to make it very clear that government back-benchers have the same rights as back-benchers of other parties to ask questions. This is based on the fundamental right of every member to be heard, and is supported by precedents in this House. I refer hon. members to a ruling of the Chair dated December 9, 1975, which states that:

It is the right of any private member to ask oral questions. While in practice the number of questions is always firmly weighted to the opposition side of the House, it is important to remember that the rules of parliamentary

procedure do not require or assume that all members of one party speak with the same voice. Moreover, it is important to give private members the opportunity to raise in the House issues which concern their constituents.

Now I want to turn to the question of whether it is appropriate for legislative secretaries to ask questions in question period. In this Assembly since May of 1983, at least eight questions have been asked by legislative secretaries in question period. In all cases, except for the one last week, the questions were allowed, and no points of order were raised. None of them were put to the Legislative Secretary's own minister, except for the last one, asked on July 30, 1987 by the member for Kelvington-Wadena. And in this case, it should be noted that the member is the Legislative Secretary for the Premier as the President of the Executive Council, while another member is Legislative Secretary for the Premier as Minister of Agriculture.

The practice of the Canadian House of Commons was referred to in the point of order and in the ensuing discussion and, therefore, it may be useful to trace how the House of Commons' practice in this area has evolved.

Initially, parliamentary secretaries were allowed to ask questions as well as to answer them. As late as 1973, Speaker Lamoureux ruled that parliamentary secretaries had the same right as other members to ask questions, although he expressed some reservations about the propriety of this in certain situations. You will find this in debates of the House of Commons, March 6, 1973, pp. 1932-1933. Despite this ruling, it appears that it was not considered appropriate for a Parliamentary Secretary to ask a question of his own minister. You may find this in debates of the House of Commons, November 5, 1974, p. 1062.

On November 5, 1975, Speaker Jerome ruled that:

Those who are clothed with the responsibility of answering for the government ought not to use the time of the question period for the privilege of asking questions of the government.

This is in debates of the House of Commons, November 5, 1974, page 1060. Since that time it has become the accepted practice that parliamentary secretaries are not permitted to ask questions in question period.

In Saskatchewan the role of legislative secretaries, while still evolving, does not and has not, in practice, including the role of answering for or acting for the minister in the House in the minister's absence. Thus, the House of Commons situation, where parliamentary secretaries were able both to ask and to answer questions, does not arise here. A further distinction between legislative secretaries and ministers should also be made. A legislative secretary is responsible only to his or her minister for subjects within the minister's area of responsibility, unlike cabinet ministers who are collectively responsible for the operation and policies of the government as a whole.

In view of these differences and practices, I find it would

be inappropriate to apply the rule . . . to apply the current House of Commons practice rigidly in this Assembly. Based on our more restricted role for legislative secretaries, based on our past practice, and based on the realization that question period is more than just a forum for seeking information, it is my view that, on rare occasions, legislative secretaries could be recognized to ask questions in question period. However, such questions should only be directed at ministers other than the one for which the member serves as Legislative Secretary.

The duties of a Legislative Secretary, and the special relationship that exists between the Legislative Secretary and his or her minister and department, make it highly inappropriate for the time of question period to be used by a Legislative Secretary asking questions of his or her own minister.

While this ruling may be appropriate under current circumstances, this practice may need to be further restricted as the role of legislative secretaries evolves. In the meantime, I invite the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures to review this area with the view to giving advice and guidance to the Assembly on this matter.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

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

#### Item 1 (continued)

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I want to spend some time asking the minister some very specific questions about technical institute cuts. The first item I'd like to focus on is cuts that the minister has implemented at the Saskatchewan Technical Institute in Moose Jaw, specifically, cuts to the truck driver training and heavy equipment operator programs, both of which he has chosen to eliminate in that city.

And my first question is with respect to a contractual arrangement that existed between his government and the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board. The truck driver training and heavy equipment operator programs had a seven-year lease with the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board at a cost of \$121,000 a year. And with the elimination of those two programs, it's clear that those programs will no longer be using facilities that the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board was leasing to them, and facilities, I might add, Mr. Minister, that were especially designed for the use of those two programs.

And my question to the minister is this: in light of the fact that the lease agreement between your government and the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board does not expire until 1991, and in light of the fact that the value of that lease agreement is \$121,000 a year, can you tell members of this Assembly and the public what the status of that lease agreement is? Are you going to continue paying the

Moose Jaw Exhibition Board \$121,000 a year even though the programs that were using those facilities have been cancelled, or are you reneging on your contractual agreement to the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board? What's the current status of that lease agreement, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, thank you for your question. The truck driver training and the cuts you referred to there, I might tell the hon. member and the members of the legislature, for the last year in which we have statistics for truck driver training, 51 per cent were ending up with jobs after they had gone through the course. And for heavy equipment operators, the same number was 7 per cent.

I think this strikes at the heart of some of the debate we've had here in the past couple of weeks in so far as why changes have been made at technical institutes; why some courses have been down-sized and maybe even some eliminated; and why new courses have been put in place, because where the opportunities are decreasing in one area, there are opportunities increasing in the other area. I would want to put those on the record for you because I think it shows to you that there's been a rational and reasoned approach in so far as why changes have been made in specific course areas.

As it relates to the contract and the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board, it's something we're aware of, it's under examination and negotiation at this very time, I'm advised.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Mr. Minister, I'd like a more detailed response from you. Either the taxpayers of this province are going to be losers in this arrangement — because they're going to have to pay \$121,000 a year to the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board for facilities that are no longer going to be rented out to the truck driver training and heavy equipment operator training programs — or else the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board is going to be out \$121,000 a year as a result of the failure of your government to live up to the lease agreement.

(1445)

Now we on this side of the Assembly would like to know which one is it? Are you going to honour the lease agreement, or are you on the other hand going to end up in a situation where you renege on the lease agreement and cost the exhibition board a great deal of money? Will you tell members of this Assembly which it is? And will you also indicate, Mr. Minister, while you're answering that question, whether prior to cutting the training programs for heavy equipment operators and for truck driver training, whether prior to cutting those programs there was any consultation with the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board about the status of the lease agreement?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — To answer your second question first, the answer is no. And what you have painted, and I might add inaccurately or erroneously, or maybe you're leading some negotiations that I'm not aware of . . . Because what you have done here, after I just finished saying it's under examination and negotiation, what you painted, typically and, quite frankly, wrongly, is a complex issue and a serious issue, and you've somehow

said there's only two answers to this — we lose 121, or they lose 121.

And it is much more complex than that. I'm not wanting to duck your question except to say that it's not an either/or situation. And that's so wrong for us in this House as politicians, to constantly reduce every complex issue to a simply duality — either/or, right/wrong, them/us. You know, things are much more complex than that in society today. And that's a typical sort of reaction, too often, I would suggest.

And not wanting to duck the question, and not wanting to tip our hand in terms of negotiation, and thirdly, not being the lead agency in the negotiations, any further information would have to be forthcoming from the property management corporation who in fact looks after our physical plant.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Mr. Minister, I want to ask you another question with respect to the heavy equipment operator training program, specifically, and it relates to the fact that after you cancelled that program and laid off all the staff associated with that program, your department suddenly decided to reinstate the program again for a few months. As I understand it, the heavy equipment operator training program in Moose Jaw is going to be operating well into the fall; the instructors have been hired again; student enrolment has begun again; and it may well be extended into 1988.

Will the minister confirm that the only reason for that program being extended is not because of the training value of the program, which we on this side of the House think was a significant value to that program — contrary to the minister — but will he acknowledge that the only reason that program is being extended is because you had a contractual commitment between your government and the RM of Marquis, and that the reason that program is now being suddenly continued again is to fulfil that road building contract between your government and the Rural Municipality of Marquis. Will you acknowledge that?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Yes.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Well, Mr. Minister, you've simply demonstrated in that statement an example of the incompetence with which the cuts that you have implemented at STI have been made.

You didn't consult with the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board before you eliminated the training programs that the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board was leasing out space to. There was no consultation with the exhibition board. There was no consultation at all with the instructors in either the heavy equipment operator training program or the truck driver training program before you cancelled it. And because there was no consultation with those programs, your officials didn't even know about the contract that existed between those programs and the R.M. of Marquis, and now you've had to back up and

reinstitute the program in order to fulfil that contractual commitment.

And I say, Mr. Minister, we on this side of the House say that that's an example of the lack of consultation and the incompetence with which these cuts have been implemented.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. My question to the minister deals with similar topics, Mr. Chairman.

The minister appears not to be listening, Mr. Chairman. Is he planning to answer or respond to the last question, or is he intentionally not listening? He indicates, Mr. Chairman, that he intends to make a remark, and I'll provide him the courtesy of doing that.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Well the hon. member has tried to suggest, and inaccurately and erroneously, I might add, that we went into this process with our eyes shut and not having all of our facts in front of us — in fact, going so far as to say we didn't know that we had this contract obligation with this R.M. when in fact we knew all of that. And in the face of knowing all of that, we decided two things: (a) that the transfer of this program to NIT campus would still go ahead, because we thought there were more compelling reasons in a global sense to move it to NIT than just simply one contract and one location outside of Moose Jaw.

So we went into it not making the decision after the fact, but knowing up front that that was one of the complexities of making this change and transferring the program to NIT.

Certainly, I suppose we could have given notice to the R.M. We chose not to do that. We chose to fulfil our obligation there and take advantage of the training opportunity.

And I would point out to the hon. member, and to the public and to the members of the legislature, that in moving it to NIT somehow one ought not draw the conclusion that if you're in Gull Lake, Saskatchewan, that you can't access these training opportunities, because you can. And that's part and parcel of the concept of the single institute.

So to put it simply again, we knew before we made the change that there was this situation that required attention. It's not a matter of sort of stumbling along, making a change and then realizing, oh, oh, we've got this contract. Such was not the case. We knew that going into it.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Mr. Chairman, another question to the minister. It's difficult for members on this side of the House to understand how it is that you knew ahead of time about the contractual commitment between your government and the R.M. of Marquis, specifically between the heavy equipment operator training program at STI and the R.M. of Marquis, because you laid off all the instructors in the heavy equipment operator training program. You indicated to them that their jobs were done. You indicated to the students that the student positions

were no longer available.

And then suddenly you turn around a few months later, change your mind, reinstate the instructors, reinstate the student positions. And you simply — and you've already indicated to this Assembly that the reason you did that was to fulfil the contract between the training program and the R.M. of Marquis.

It seems obvious to members on this side of the Assembly that you hadn't given consideration to that contract when you cancelled the program. Will you acknowledge that?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I apologize for the delay, but the question that you raise is, as I mentioned earlier, relatively complex. And it's complex for this reason, that at the same time, as you will recall, with the restructuring of post-secondary education, the other initiative that was occurring, of course, was the 2,000-position, down-sizing exercise of the government as a whole. And as part of that initiative there was a day picked, if you like, to have all lay-offs occur.

And the reason that we didn't sort of sprinkle them out and have this rather anguishing process occur over a six-month period — two or three every day — was because we feel strongly about the welfare of our employees, and we wanted to provide them with every opportunity possible, and I'm speaking specifically of things like bumping opportunities and the right to job opportunities that might pop open in the system.

So much as you might want to connect what's happening with Marquis, and that contract — and who's training and who's not — the overriding process that was happening at the same time, if you like, was this lay-off process. And there was some bumping, and some of those individuals have bumped, and bumped into NIT, in the case of truck driver training. And I don't have a list of who went where, and who took what job and who came back on contract, etc., etc., etc., except to say to you that it's a tortuous process because bumping can involve — set up a domino effect where you can get a chain reaction of two or three or four.

But the bottom line on the whole process, we wanted to make sure that our employees who suffered lay-offs enjoyed the protection, and more than that, enjoyed the opportunities of (a) new job opportunities, or (b) bumping rights and privileges. And that was happening concurrently, if you like, and hence I caution the member from drawing conclusions about a particular management style, given the fact that those two events were going on somewhat concurrently.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Well now that the minister has raised the question of his employees bumping up to NIT, that raises another interesting question with respect to this cut, Mr. Chairman, and I want to ask the minister specifically if he can explain to this Assembly what sense it makes to undertake the following scenario that his government has chosen to undertake. We have a truck driver training program at STI in Moose Jaw. It was very well established and operated successfully for a long time. There was a satellite program, that was connected with the STI program, that operated in the North.



Your government set up the Northern Institute of Technology and decided to also offer truck driver training at NIT. Now what happened then is that you hired a number of new employees. You chose not to use the employees from the satellite program in your new NIT program. With one exception, you hired new staff at NIT, and now a year later what you have done, Mr. Minister, now within a very short period of time, Mr. Minister, what you have chosen to do is eliminate the long-established truck driver training program at STI in favour of the newly-established program at NIT, and generally speaking what has happened, with one exception, is that the people who were teaching in Moose Jaw in the STI truck driver training program are now all being forced to move up to Prince Albert, by way of bumping, to teach in the program at NIT.

(1500)

The minister nods his head. That's exactly what's happened. The people who were teaching at STI, for the most part, are now going to have to move up to Prince Albert to teach there, so you've dislocated those people. You've dropped the well-established program at STI in favour of the newly-established program in Prince Albert, and so I want to ask the minister what the logic of that is.

And in responding to that logic, perhaps he will explain to this Assembly why it is that the Trucking Association of this province, and the Safety Council of this province, have both indicated to your government that Moose Jaw is the appropriate location to train truck drivers; that Prince Albert is not the appropriate location because it doesn't have the kind of four-lane highway provisions that are required to do good training. It doesn't have the kind of high-density traffic that's required to do truck driver training.

The Moose Jaw location has those provisions. It's close to the city of Regina. Students in the truck driver training program and instructors can readily use the four-lane highway between Regina and Moose Jaw to do training. They can readily use the high-density traffic situations in Regina as part of their training. Prince Albert doesn't have those provisions.

We in this Assembly aren't suggesting, Mr. Minister, that you ought to have cancelled the program at NIT. What we're wondering about is what the logic was in light of what the Safety Council in this province has said, in light of what the truck driver's association in this province has said, why did you cancel the program at STI and force all the instructors, who were teaching in that program at STI to move up to Prince Albert? Why did you do that? What's the logic of that in light of what I've just said?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — The hon. member, Mr. Chairman, used the word "force." And that is patently wrong. Because what he is suggesting there that somehow what the union has negotiated in their contractual agreement is somehow inadequate, and somehow they are not representing their employees well.

How can the hon. member square that with an agreement that was duly ratified and a bumping process that was

bargained in good faith and willingly, and has been in place for some good, long time in this province. Somehow a bumping process that everyone agreed too is now no good. A bumping process that's a right and a privilege and a protection, that was there for these kinds of situations somehow he suggests it's not the right kind of process. And he's saying that I am forcing somebody, and that is patently wrong, Mr. Chairman — patently wrong.

Give me one example of an interface with this minister with one employee. Give me one example. Because you are patently wrong and inaccurate — patently. And you are absolutely wrong on that — absolutely. And your logic about the fact that there are no freeways around Prince Albert is sound. I acknowledge that. But the rationale for moving and having the centre of excellence, if you like, in Prince Albert is that if you look at the heavy equipment operators where we've had, according to our most recent surveys, a 7 per cent uptake in the graduates for jobs — 7 per cent, 7 per cent. That's the '85 numbers.

And why we move it to NIT is because that's where the jobs are in that area, is in the North. That's where they are.

So on the first count about forcing people to bump here or there or wherever, you're patently wrong. We do not force people. They have that right, they have that privilege, and the lawyer advises me that it's patently wrong. I think if one checks Webster, the "a" can be taken either way on that one. But I will stand corrected if the hon. member so chooses.

So you are quite wrong in your first assumption. And secondly, the logic as to why it's at NIT is that we've got a 7 per cent track record in Moose Jaw . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the hon. member says from his seat that that's not true. Then give me the numbers.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, would you not agree that the conditions necessary to provide quality truck driver training would include access to things such as four-lane divided highways in order to practise passing; expressways and clover-leaves to give that kind of experience to students; steep hills and winding roads in order to practise fast shifting under load and adjusting to lane position on curves; multi-lane streets with heavy traffic; narrow congested streets with traffic for turns and lane positions that you would find in old warehouse areas.

Would you not agree, Mr. Minister, that those are all prerequisites in deciding where you locate truck driver training in order to provide the necessary infrastructure, if you want to call it that, that prepares students to take on the rigs, to handle the rigs safely and competently once they graduate.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — My view would be that — and not being the professional here, obviously, but relying on the advice of professionals — I think Prince Albert and area has its share of steep hills, winding roads, etc., etc. to adequately train truck drivers, if you like.

And I would add, I mean if you're going to use your logic, one might say then, well how can you train somebody to

operate heavy equipment for uranium mines and gold mining exploration at Moose Jaw, because there are no gold mines or uranium mining sites outside of Moose Jaw. I mean, so your logic is quite frankly picayune, it doesn't make sense, and it breaks down if one tries to apply it generally.

What we're all interested in is making sure that these people have training opportunities, that we're training them for where the jobs are, and in this case our evidence suggests to us — and I'm prepared to debate the numbers or whatever. I mean I'm using the information I have, and we don't pick it out of the air. It suggests that if you look at the heavy equipment operators — and I don't think there's any surprise, given what's happening in the gold mining particularly, and those areas in the North where we've seen some extensive development. When it comes to things like heavy equipment operators, the opportunities are in the North, and what better place to put . . . and make that as the centre of excellence than Prince Albert, I would suggest.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Minister, I find a little unbelievable the logic of your argument at times. I don't know that in preparation for gold mining the training involves wandering around in a gold mine. But I do know this: in training to operate heavy rigs that move up and down the highways transporting goods across this province and across the country, it's necessary to do that in the cab of a vehicle under the conditions that the driver will be operating those rigs when he gets out on the road.

Now I ask you again, Mr. Minister, and I appreciated your comment before that you were not going to hedge on questions. And I would ask you to simply answer the questions that you're asked here. I understand that there are steep hills and winding roads in the P.A. area, but will you tell me, Mr. Minister, how the Prince Albert area, as compared to Moose Jaw and its access to Regina, how are the conditions in Prince Albert better, such that it provides the necessary four-lane divided highways in order to practise passing. You will appreciate, Mr. Minister, even though you've never operated one of those rigs, that that's not something that you practise in just a mile or two.

So will you describe how that is more available in the Prince Albert area — expressways and cloverleafs, multi-lane streets with heavy traffic, and narrow congested streets with traffic returns and lane positions that you find, typically, in old warehouse areas? Will you please describe for me, Mr. Minister, how those conditions are found at least equally in the P.A. area as they are operating out of Moose Jaw?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — With all due respect to the hon. member as I sat here and listened to his preamble, he made P.A. sound like it's some country hamlet with a population of 23 — no sidewalks, no paved highways, no bridges, no whatever. I mean the issue is this, is it not: can the training program be adequately delivered? Even the member from Prince Albert doesn't agree with his observations.

What the issue here is, can NIT put out and assure a quality program for heavy equipment operators,

whoever, at Prince Albert? I'm of the view they can. And one year from today, if we somehow have evidence to suggest they cannot, then I will be asking my employees to go with this new and separate and autonomous board of governors and raise that issue with them.

And as I have a fair amount of faith in them that they are no more interested in turning out people that are unqualified than you and I are — I mean, that's a given. We all want to have a good standard and a good quality. They don't want to come out with a piece of paper that would suggest they're not adequately trained. I have absolutely no doubt that they will be adequately trained. They've got a good reputation and it will be continued.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Minister, I wish you would listen carefully before making your superfluous remarks. I preceded my comments last time by pointing out the advantage of training out of Moose Jaw is the access to the training conditions that exist by operating with the city of Regina. It is not uncommon, I would point out, for truck drivers to operate their rigs in cities as they're transporting goods across this province and across the nation.

I think it's obvious, Mr. Minister, that your response certainly lacks sufficient specificity to be convincing.

But let me turn to another item, Mr. Minister, and come back to one that we talked about very briefly before, and that has to do with the contract that was held by the Government of Saskatchewan with the Moose Jaw Exhibition Company Ltd. for the lease of space at the seven-year lease for \$121,000 a year, Mr. Minister. And would you please describe for me your understanding of the conditions of that contract.

And this is a contract, I assume, with the same legal requirements as the contract with the R.M. of Marquis. There is a contract that exists. And will you please describe what the requirements of that contract are on the part of the Government of Saskatchewan, perhaps through the property management corporation now, and the Moose Jaw Exhibition Company Ltd. Would you please tell me what that contract requires?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — To repeat somewhat again, we acknowledge there's a seven-year contract, \$121,000 a year. As well, the property management corporation is essentially the lead agency here. It's not an either/or situation as I talked about earlier. There's negotiations going on.

And the reason I say it's not either/or, for all the reasons I gave previously, but as well, if you sort of look at the role of the property management corporation, it's a large perspective of what the government needs where. I mean, and I don't know whether they . . . although we may not need it for the use we have in the past, it may fit into some other overall scheme in so far as government space throughout the province and throughout government. I mean, I guess I would hate to see us make management decisions by putting buildings ahead of programming and people.

I mean, I think that would be a mistake for us, to sort of suggest that, well, because we've got a buggy whip

manufacturing assembly line, although we don't need buggy whip manufacturing any more, because we have the assembly line in the building, we somehow ought to continue to run it. I don't think that logic would serve the public well.

What I am saying is we ought not put the public interest, as it relates to training and training opportunities, secondary to filling up buildings. At the same time, we want to make sure that the public's buildings are used efficiently, and the public's contributions . . . or the taxpayers' obligations are discharged correctly in terms of our legal obligations.

It's in the hands of the property management corporation. It's not an either/or situation; it's under negotiation, under consideration. And I really don't have any more to add on it.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Minister, what year does that contract that currently exists expire?

(1515)

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — It's a seven-year contract, but we don't have with us what year it was initially signed. We're all aware it's seven years, but whether it has two or six or four years outstanding, we're not . . . I can undertake to get and provide you at some later time if you so wish.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Minister, if you'd provide that for me tomorrow, would that be possible?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I'll endeavour to do so.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And if I understand correctly what you have just told me about two minutes ago, then that it is your view that there is a contract in place right now between the property management corporation and the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board company, and it is your position, Mr. Minister, that the government is seriously considering not honouring that contract as it currently exists. I believe that that's what you told me. Would you like to respond to that? The minister doesn't . . . Do you want to respond to that?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Just to give you the best understanding that I have of this contract: likely when it was originally signed, because the property management corporation most likely did not exist then, it was probably signed between the Department of Advanced Ed and the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board.

Now, of course, the property management corporation is the agency responsible for administering that sort of thing. And to correct you, no, I did not say we wouldn't be honouring the contract. In fact, I just said that I'm very aware of the legal obligations that we have, whether it be with this property or others where we have contract arrangements. So I want to be clear on that. Once again, you're trying to distil this to an either/or issue, and I've already said it's complex.

And finally, I said . . . And you're saying either you honour the contract or you don't. Well there are . . . It seems to me if I was from the property management corporation, and I

don't mean to speak for them, but it seems to me the kinds of things that they are probably looking at is maybe buy-outs. Okay, that would be one possibility. And there's nothing dishonourable about that.

The second possibility is seems to me, as I said earlier, that they have the larger perspective on what kind of space various departments and Crowns need to conduct the public business across this province. And it may well be that there is some other use needed.

So why would you distort the issue, which I've already said is under negotiation, by trying to suggest that either you're going to honour it or you're not going to honour it, when I've patently said that is not the situation?

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Minister, while we're talking about distorting the issue, can we go back to your statistics that you used to describe the graduates of the truck driver training program? I believe that you said . . . and perhaps you'd like to correct this, because it is possible that you didn't say what you meant or what you intended to say; that's happened before. I believe you said that as for truck driver training students, who graduated in the year 1985, that 51 per cent got employment.

Would you not agree, Mr. Minister, that the figure 51 per cent represents those 1985 graduates who were employed in the truck driving field in January of 1986? Would you not agree, Mr. Minister, that as a matter of fact, 68 per cent of the graduates were employed full time as of January 1986? And my question to you, Mr. Minister, is: how many of those graduates are employed full time today?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I can't give you . . . I don't know how many are employed full time as of today and whether they're employed full time in the occupation for which they were trained or another occupation.

But if the hon. member is somehow trying to set the case that myself and my department and our government has erred in our analysis of the trend lines and the retrospective analysis of training-related employment in the truck driver training area, I will share with you and all members of this legislature the April 1986 Saskatchewan advanced education and manpower employment statistics report, because it's chilling.

The number I gave you at 51 per cent for 1985 paints a happy face on the situation. Here are the numbers. Training-related employment, 1981, truck driver training, STI, course length, six weeks. Okay? We're talking about the same thing. In 1982, training-related employment, 48 per cent; 1982 — get this number — 17 per cent; 1983, 18 per cent. And you can say, well what! Did they get a job anywhere? Well look at what that number is. In '83, 39 per cent, only, found work in any area after going for this course; '84, 17 per cent. And it bounced up in '85 to 51. I was painting a happy face.

Now as a responsible legislator, and as a responsible educator, and as a responsible custodian of the public purse, what would you do in the face of those numbers? Would you tell that person, and continue to tell them: you may have one chance in five, or one chance in two, or

one chance in three that you'll get a job in this area, but come on in. I mean that doesn't make sense. I mean that's the thrust of what we've been talking about in this House for the last couple of weeks.

We're not cutting back on programs just for the sake of cutting back, but who are you doing a favour with these kinds of numbers? And these aren't something that we pick out of the air, and they're not something that we put a political spin on for our own case — these are hard, cold, chilling statistics.

And yet the hon. member from Saskatoon University, not unlike yourself, has said we must cling to the past, don't make these changes, stick to the status quo.

I say, on the one hand, as painful as it may be, if there are programs that need to be down-sized, programs that need to be consolidated, we must do it. On the other hand, and more importantly, put the program and training place in place for those new prospects and those new opportunities. Don't you agree?

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Minister, my understand of the *Estimates* review is that it is the responsibility of the opposition to ask the questions. It's the responsibility of the government to provide the answers, and I wish he would do that.

It may make a difference, Mr. Minister, if those reports were done in some month other than January. It may also make a difference, Mr. Minister, if those reports were done sometime following the completion of the courses, by the graduates, that gave an accurate picture of the record of employment.

And I'll answer your question, Mr. Minister. I will answer your question by telling you this. I will first of all point out that 90 per cent of the graduates the truck driver training course got employment here in the province of Saskatchewan.

If I was wanting to forecast a need for training, I would go to the industry, and I would ask industry: how many truck drivers do you need in the province of Saskatchewan a year?

As a matter of fact, Mr. Minister, will you not agree that the industry in Saskatchewan today says that they can use 100 new truck drivers a year. And will you not agree as well, Mr. Minister, that the Moose Jaw Institute is turning out 60 truck drivers a year, and Prince Albert is turning out 45.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — As it relates to the information that one would use, we would try to use all sources including the . . . certainly the industry.

I mean, and you can pick your statistic from wherever you want, the reality and hard cold . . . and very hard and cold terms and unfortunate terms, as I reported to the House, but I would add this: that if there is this increased demand, or if there comes an increased demand, we will simply gear up the program.

And you're suggesting there is the demand. Well, I'm

telling you that I come from an area in this province that has a significant amount of oil patch activity. And if you think there's shortage of truck drivers in this province, then you come to Weyburn, Saskatchewan, and I'll have 20 guys for you tomorrow.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The industry has been promoting these courses for years, Mr. Chairman. And one of the reasons that they have been promoting them is a concern about safety in the industry. And the industry, as my colleague has indicated, is saying that they can use 100 new, trained truck drivers a year.

And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that what you've demonstrated here clearly this afternoon is that you simply didn't go to the people who ran the programs in truck driver training and in heavy equipment operation to ask them what was happening to their graduates, because they know what's happening to their graduates. And they know that their graduates have a far better record of employment than you claim in this House.

And I say to the minister this: what the minister has demonstrated this afternoon is that he hasn't accurately looked at the employment record of graduates from these programs. He didn't consult with the industry or the training council before he abolished the programs. He ignored the request from the industry and from the safety council to locate the programs in the south in an appropriate training area.

And moreover, he has ignored the contractual commitments that the two programs had before he cancelled them. It's obvious from his answers today that he didn't take into consideration either the contract that existed with the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board or the contract that existed with the R.M. of Marquis before he cancelled those programs.

And I ask him today simply in concluding this debate, will he now reinstate the truck driver training program and the heavy equipment operator training program at STI?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — To answer your last question first, the answer is no. But to give you and others some assurance that if a labour market demands more trained truck drivers, we will increase the training spaces. Or I would go this far to say that I'm sure those who are running the new institute will be cognizant and have access to the same kinds of numbers and data and trend lines as we do.

But you cannot — I don't know how you can — ignore the data that's before us. And you're right. There is more than one source, and predicting the future is always difficult at best. But how do you ignore numbers like less than one out of five in the last six years — there was three years where less than one out of five got training-related employment. Worse than that, in many of those years the . . . in terms of them getting a job in any area of employment was not great — 62, 68, 54 per cent, 48, 39 per cent.

So we can quibble about it. The important thing is — I

guess the question comes down to this. Will the province of Saskatchewan's post-secondary education system continue to train truck drivers? The answer is yes. Will they continue at the location Moose Jaw? The answer is no. It will be at NIT. And I have every reason to believe it'll be a very highly-qualified program.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, enough of that. We obviously disagree with the minister's decision.

I want to turn to another cut and very simply ask the minister to explain to this Assembly why he made a decision to cut the learning assistance centre at Kelsey Institute and lay off the instructor there, despite the fact that one out of four students at Kelsey obviously need the services of that centre in the sense that one out of four students who were attending Kelsey last year had a reading level below that of complete grade 10. Can he explain to this Assembly why he chose to eliminate that program?

(1530)

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I think you'll find there's a reasonable enough answer for your reasonable enough question as it relates to the question, being, will we be providing the learning assistance and guidance for the students. The background here is this. We had that function being undertaken by both the community college and the institute. With the amalgamation we found ourselves with this duplication. Now what will happen is that function will continue because we believe it's an important one, but it'll be delivered by the college component before the amalgamation. And I think the important thing is here that it continues, and I guess what I'm saying here today is that it will be continuing.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Mr. Minister, just very briefly on this, will you give this Assembly your assurance that the services to the students at Kelsey will be at least at the same level as they were last year? Will you provide that assurance, because I can't believe that this kind of a program couldn't have used more staff and more support, rather than less. And it's our view on this side of the House that that position ought to be reinstated.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — The assurance I can give you, as best as one can ever give it, is yes, and in fact perhaps even more than we've had in the past. I think that's what you're looking for, and I'm happy today to give you that commitment.

**Mr. Prebble:** — A question with respect to your decision to substantially cut back on the agricultural machinery technology program at Kelsey. You've said, sir, a number of times in this Assembly that you were only eliminating programs that were being duplicated. This was the only program of its kind in the province of Saskatchewan. Sixty-nine per cent of the graduates who completed that program had jobs, full-time employment, within six months of graduating. You, sir, decided to lay off 10 of the 12 permanent instructors in that program. Eight of them were rehired back in labour service positions, on a temporary basis.

This is an agricultural province. This was an agricultural program. Can you explain to the farmers of this province why you decided that this program ought to have been substantially down-sized? Surely farmers are going to need to continue repairing their equipment, and maybe you can explain to this House why you didn't see that program to be worthwhile?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — You asked me what I'm going to tell the farmers of Saskatchewan as relates to agricultural machinery technologists. As the farmer would know, and those who work in the equipment dealerships and in their shops around this province, I guess what I would — what I would tell them is a reflection of what they've been telling me.

Agriculture is in a downturn. The price of wheat just this past — just this week went down 20 per cent. We've had a couple of droughts. We've been hit with a bizarre situation internationally in so far as subsidies and trade distortions.

To put it simply, any farmer across this province would tell you that things are not good in farming and in the farm service sector. And one of those sectors in the farm service sector is machinery and machinery dealers and the shops and the service that they provide. And because of that downturn they are selling less machinery.

Farmers are generally tightening their belt and being very careful in terms of how they repair and what they repair and the expenditures they make. And hence equipment dealers have been faced, unfortunately, with some lay-offs of existing staffs. And that's why our government in the past put in place things like the 6 per cent production loan, and why our Premier lobbied — and lobbied successfully — for a billion dollar deficiency payment so that that money would find its way from the farmers' pockets into the farm service sector. And it's been very useful in its help and in fact net farm income this year will probably be in that billion dollar range.

So in so far as government can act as a shock absorber and a stabilizer, I think we've done as well as one can do. But the hard, cold facts still are that agriculture is in a serious downturn. Lay-offs were occurring in that area. Four out of 10 graduates, I think, were finding work in that area, something in that order.

Well the hon. member shakes his head. As I understand it, the employment rate for graduates in 1986 is 41 per cent. Now he can shake his head if he likes. I mean he can try and tell me, which he cannot succeed, that agriculture isn't in a downturn, but it is. And it's unfortunate. And it's hurting our province.

But we're not going to abandon because of perhaps a short-term cycle, we're not going to abandon turning out people who can repair and service farmers' machinery. That might be short-sighted. And in fact despite this downturn, the reality is that, is that there will be . . . rather than having 96 seats we'll have 88.

And I don't think that's a monumental cut-back. I think it's a prudent cut-back, and a prudent adjustment. So yes, there's a program. Does it have 96 seats as it did last year?

No, but it has 88. And is that unreasonable or unfair given the environment, if you like? I think not.

Now in so far as the business of those employees, instructors that were changed to a labour service contract, once again, if you have instruction time, work time of 175 days and less as opposed to the traditional kind of expectation of 200 days and more, it's not a wise use of the public purse to not make that kind of management decision. And so we have, because that may well mean that we have more money for programming. And that's the reason why that was done, because there were not 200 days required or there was not 200 days of instruction required here.

**Mr. Prebble:** — On that note the question I want to ask the minister is this: do you think it's fair to expect that good people who've been working in full-time employment in a program — and we'll use this as an example but you're government has chosen to do this in dozens of programs throughout the technical system — reduce instructor's time from 200 days to 160 days and remove their permanent position from the payroll and instead hire them on a labour service basis after they've given years of service to this province.

They were the lucky ones, I might add, because so many others were fired indiscreetly by your government. But what you're essentially saying is that you're asking these instructors to take a 20 per cent salary cut.

And my first question to the minister is: is it fair, Mr. Minister, to ask good people who give a long service in this province to take a 20 per cent salary cut?

And secondly, my question to the minister is this: how is to that you expect, in light of that, for these instructors to develop new courses, to keep up on the reading material in this program area, and generally to undertake all the responsibilities as instructors, over and above providing classroom instruction?

You know full well, sir, that these people are responsible for things like curriculum development, updating of courses, reviewing the current literature to ensure that their programs are up to date. That's what they spent that remaining 20 per cent time that you're now taking away from their positions on. And I ask do you, not just with respect to agricultural machinery technology, but right across the board, is it fair to expect that they can do the same job in 80 per cent of the time and at 80 per cent of the salary?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — The hon. member raises a question of fairness. And I'm very sensitive to the whole issue of fairness, and it's one that is really — I can honestly and sincerely say has been an issue that we've kept in front of us from day one, not only in terms of dealing with the post-secondary education issues but as well in the down-sizing exercise of government.

And no, who would want to ever take any cut in salary? Nobody does. The farmers don't want a 20 per cent cut in their initial grain prices. The farm machinery technologists, in some instances I'm led to believe, they wanted the job share, because in some instances, in fact,

they were prepared to take . . . work less hours and receive less money just to have a job. That's reflection of the times out there. But certainly nobody wants to take cuts.

And yes, we have tried to be as fair as possible in this because . . . The question I would put to you is: is it fair to that instructor who's working the 200 days, and who is keeping up on the literature and doing the curriculum writing and doing his research, etc., etc., is it fair to him that he does that for \$200 . . . for 200 days for his pay cheque? And somebody else might be instructing 150, 160 days, 165 days, and having just that much more time, I suppose — unfairly — than the other person.

So you know, I ask you, is that fair? I mean is it fair to the public? Is it fair to his other colleagues? How do we justify if somebody's 165 days, when traditionally 200 days is used as a bench-marks, as you well know?

I mean, is that fair? I can't see that it is. I mean, we're all interested in fairness, right from the farmer to the guy who works on his tractor, right to the guy who goes through college, right to the guy who instructs him. We're all interested in fairness.

And the reality of the issue, the overriding factor here . . . Did you mention 61 per cent employment-related jobs as the number here for the machinery technologists?

**An Hon. Member:** — I said 69 per cent for all employment.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Sixty-nine. That was right in '85, but I think the member . . . I mean, if you have any sense of what's been happening in agriculture in the last five years, these numbers clearly demonstrate it.

Let's look at the heady days of '81-82, when land prices were going up. Wheat was, what, 5 and \$6 a bushel. Quotas were . . . Grain was moving very well. And the discussion then was, will there be enough . . . where will we get the capital investment required to deal with the farming of the future? At that time 78 per cent were getting training-related employment and/or 78 per cent any employment. Okay?

In '82, the number dropped to 64; '83, 70; up and down. Now we're getting into the steeper declines — 60 per cent in '84; 54 per cent in '85; 41 per cent in '86 — I mean, clearly reflective of what's happening in rural Saskatchewan.

(1545)

And I can appreciate that there are not many in your caucus who have some . . . any significant representation from rural Saskatchewan. But I can assure you that this caucus here is very sensitive to the plight of the Saskatchewan farmer and to those who work in the service industry. That's why we've undertaken the initiatives that we have. We tried to cushion that as best we could, and with some degree of success, I might add.

And . . . I mean, I'm not happy if anybody has to take a cut

in salary. As I said, I'm not happy that uranium's gone down or potash has gone down or wheat's gone down or that oil's gone down. Or if you work in those areas, you may have to work for less or you may not even have a job. But I think your argument of fairness . . . I mean, you have to look at it in all its dimensions.

**Mr. Prebble:** — I want to ask the minister a question with respect to his decision to cut the office education programs at Kelsey and STI. You decided to cut the STI program in half; you decided to eliminate the office education program at Kelsey.

The Kelsey program, Mr. Minister, had the best employment record of all office education programs in the technical institute system. In the past five years, 71 per cent of graduates got training-related employment, 78 got some form of employment, 78 per cent got some form of employment, and 9 per cent were working part time. So in all, Mr. Minister, 87 per cent of the students who graduated from Kelsey in the office education program had jobs within six months of graduating.

Can you explain to this Assembly what your justification was for eliminating the program at Kelsey and cutting the program at STI in half?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — The hon. member is correct, for the most part, in what he provided this House with, but he conveniently ignored a couple of rather important facts.

Yes, compared to last year, STI, the number of seats went from 120 to 60; and yes, Kelsey, there was 48 and now there are none. But what he failed to point out to the members of this legislature, and I hope this is not something more than a case of selective amnesia, is that at Wascana there's an increase, 225 to 235; and at the Prince Albert campus there's an increase almost double, from 40 to 75.

When you add the two up, yes, we have decreased the number of seats by something less than 15 per cent, but there's still 370 training spaces because we recognize . . . It's not as though . . . I mean, these issues are not black and white. I mean, it's like the agriculture technologists. I mean, we didn't take 96 seats because farming is in a cyclical downturn, and wipe them out. That would be imprudent. There are 88 seats still there, and in office education where there were 400-plus, there are now 370.

So I think in interests of everyone, in terms of getting the correct story out, I won't overstate the case if you don't.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Mr. Minister, what you're . . . not only are you cutting spaces, but you're denying access to young people in Saskatchewan to those programs in the centre where you're eliminating them.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you another question, and this next set of questions pertains to your decision to cut a number of health-related training programs at the technical institutes in this province . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Yes, the minister says we touched on this yesterday, and it's true, we did. And I want to spend a few moments of the

Assembly's time on it this afternoon. And I want to come back first to the certified dental assistant program at Kelsey.

Mr. Minister, you've had representation from the advisory board to that dental assistant program, urging you to maintain the program. In other words, people in the field, people in the health professions, are urging you to maintain that program at Kelsey that you decided to eliminate.

That program had an 85 per cent record of success with respect to people who found work six months after graduating from that program. And my information, Mr. Minister, is that as a result of the cuts that you've decided to make to that program at Kelsey by eliminating it, the province now, as a result of the program at Wascana, will only be graduating 40 to 45 students a year.

The health professions are saying that 75 graduates are needed annually in this province. And one of the questions I have for you is: where will the other 35 graduates come from? And perhaps I can help the minister answer that question . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — He needs all the help he can get.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Yes, my colleague, the member for Regina Centre, says the minister needs all the help he can get, and I agree with my colleague.

But I suggest to the minister that the course we're taking, that the course we're taking in these cuts is very similar to the course that the minister is setting when he made a decision to cut truck driver training and to cut office education. You are clearly hoping to open up opportunities in the private sector, for the private sector to offer those same courses at tuition rates four to five times what students at the technical institutes will pay, and that is likely going to happen again with respect to dental assistants.

But my question to you, sir, is what is your justification for eliminating the certified dental assistant program at Kelsey when 85 per cent of the people who graduated from that program got employment six months after graduating?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Well we are not disagreed on the fact that employment prospects for dental assistants have been very good. Your numbers are inaccurate in that the decrease is not to 40, but rather to 50 seats. Why — and I want to make a point here — the hon. member continues to use the word "cut," and I don't mind, but he uses it sometimes, I believe, inaccurately. Because unless you use the word "cut," you imply that there is no program being delivered at all. And I know that the hon. member would not want to leave the erroneous impression, by design or by accident, right?

Because this is one of those examples, yes, the dental assistant program is being consolidated in one location. And it's being consolidated in one location for many good reasons, and I went through some of these yesterday. Yes, you can find reports — and I'm not familiar with them; I once was, and I could get them from

my office, I suspect — that would recommend, in fact, that they be consolidated in one location. I believe that we can find advisory reports that say that. You can probably find advisory reports that would say we should consolidate it all in Saskatoon.

And, in fact, I might even make the observation you get a different perspective on where you should consolidate, depending on whether you talk to dentists in Saskatoon or Regina or Meadow Lake or Weyburn or Swift Current or Nipawin. You know, I think there has been some traditional sort of territorial infighting almost — and not that that isn't healthy — when it comes to locating some of these programs.

But the reality is everybody who sort of examined the issue, including, I believe, if my memory serves me right, your own government in 1978. If I . . . I may stand to be corrected on that, but I believe in 1978 your own government, the NDP government of the day, examined the issue of consolidating the dental auxiliaries at one location. And I'm quite certain on that, although I may stand to be corrected.

So it's not as though somebody else didn't anticipate that a better service couldn't be provided, and better training by having it in one location, while the program is consolidated at Wascana, because Wascana trains both dental assistants and dental therapists, and hence will be our centre of excellence for the health and dental sciences training.

Secondly, as I mentioned yesterday, their curriculum has this flexibility to accommodate part-time enrolments who may desire to complete the training over a two-year period. That's particularly important that we look at the women who want to partake of the training opportunities here, especially if they have family. And we've been fairly conscious of that in a lot of these programming areas, whether it be night-time course programming and that sort of thing.

A third reason: Wascana's facilities and equipment, I'm advised, are considered the best in Canada. And that's a pretty compelling reason in itself. We have some cost savings because we eliminate the duplication. That frees up money to put into programming wherever.

But I also give you the commitment that if we needed to gear-up training spaces to a larger degree than are now available, despite all the dynamics that are taking place today, we will do so. I mean, I think that should always be our objective: to be sensitive to the ebb and the flow of society; of where the jobs and the opportunities area; and where the desire is. I mean you can't ignore the desires of the individual as well, who sometimes in the face of cold and chilling statistics still want to pursue certain professional areas. I think that should always be our responsibility, and as it always is.

But I think the rationale is sound for the consolidation. I don't think there is any arguing that particularly. I know, I suppose, if I was a dentist in Saskatoon, I might like it to stay all in Saskatoon, but when we weighed all the pros and all the cons, the pros outnumbered the finest facility for example, and we can expand our training there with

very little cost, I'm advised, if we do have to.

So for all those reasons we've consolidated it in one location. And I think it's important to talk about how a program has been transferred from one location to another, and we ought to be careful about the impression that we might leave. We talk about cuts or cut-backs generally in education. Because I know the hon. member would not want to leave the wrong impression with the people of Saskatchewan about what's really happening.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Well it's the minister who's leaving the wrong impression with the people of Saskatchewan about what's really happening. He says there are no cuts. The dental assistant program at Kelsey has been abolished. The program is now limited to Wascana where there's been, according to the minister, a tiny expansion in the number of seats. So the total number of seats has been very, very substantially reduced.

And I might point out to the minister that there were 237 people, almost all of whom were women, who were trying to get into that Kelsey program in Saskatoon to begin in the fall of 1987. The minister tries to claim that he's creating new opportunities for women. All you have to do is look at your cuts, sir, to see that what you are attempting to do is reduce training opportunities for women in this province.

Just look at your cuts in Saskatoon as an example. What did you eliminate? You eliminated 80 spaces in the diploma nursing program at Kelsey, all of which were spaces for women. You made a decision to eliminate the office education program at Kelsey, and everyone who was enrolled in that was female, I might point out to the minister. You eliminated the dental assistant program at Kelsey, and all the students in that were women. You eliminated almost — the minister nods his head — almost every student would be a women there. There may have been a couple of male students, but the large majority of people in that program would be women. You eliminated the certified nursing assistant program in Saskatoon. All the students in that were women.

You have consistently, Mr. Minister, launched an attack on programs in the technical institute system. Most of the student spaces that have been eliminated have been spaces for women. Do you deny that?

(1600)

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I would want to point out again, as I did yesterday, and I will read into the record again some of the considerations that we have given to women and their training needs, now and into the future, Mr. Chairman, whether it be making sure that we have identified those job opportunities that are there now and those that would be there in the future, and accommodating their kind of family commitment sometimes; whether it be to have flexible curriculum and flexible courses as we have in Wascana; or whether it be in the provision of night-time courses. And I'll let that record stand clear.

And the one thing that we must never, ever let the NDP or the public of this province forget, Mr. Chairman, is this



fact. Because this bears directly on the point of accessibility, whether it's Northerners, women, or people across this province generally.

Because I'll ask this legislature and the public of Saskatchewan again: when the NDP were in power, was there a formal program of extension of institute courses across this province? The answer is no. The answer is no, again for the third time, and the hon. member in his initial questioning raised the whole issue of accessibility. And when they were in government, despite all their talk and lip-service that they pay to some of the groups out there, that they so vehemently espouse to represent, Mr. Chairman, the reality is they did not lift a finger for them; they merely paid lip service.

And their idea of somehow being the sugar-daddy to women, somehow being the sugar-daddy to all the women in this province, Mr. Speaker, is their . . . Their idea of that is to have them engage in courses and training, have them spend a couple of years of their life, and maybe 10 or \$20,000, and then when they come out and look for those jobs, they aren't there.

Nursing. Talk about some of these health sciences. In some cases, 60 out of every 100 or 75 out of every 100 graduates were not getting full-time jobs in their specialties. But don't take my word for it. I'll read again, because you raised the issue specifically, of the nursing assistants. And I'll read again for you, because you're so condescending and so all-knowing. What did the Saskatchewan Nursing Assistants' Association report say on page 79?

The Saskatchewan Nursing Assistants' Association released a report on utilization of certified nursing assistants in Saskatchewan which advocated that overall institute admissions to the nursing assistant program be, and I quote now directly, "... sharply curtailed to bring supply back into reasonable balance with demand." Page 79.

Now the hon. member has suggested for the second day in a row, Mr. Chairman, that somehow I as minister or he somehow as opposition critic, knows more than the nursing assistants' association.

Just minutes ago, we had the hon. member from Moose Jaw North saying, don't you ever listen to the professionals? Don't you ever listen to the industry? Why didn't you listen to the truck drivers' association or the heavy duty equipment operators' association? Okay?

And now because we have listened to them and paid some heed to their report that says, you can continue to funnel in hundreds of young people but there are not jobs when they come out; you can continue to have young people spend 10 or \$20,000 of their money and two years of their time, but there's no jobs at the end of it; are we doing anybody a favour?

I mean, the essential issue comes down to this again, Mr. Chairman. The world is changing. The economy is changing.

**An Hon. Member:** — Let's not get into a long speech.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — And the hon. member across says, let's not get into a long speech. Well I'll tell you what. Until your party recognizes that the world economy is changing and we can no longer cling to the past with emotional rhetoric and blind ideology, you are going to be in opposition a long time, my friend. You're going to be there a long time.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Because the reality is, you do not have a blueprint. You have not researched this question. You have not consulted with the people. That is the reality.

In every instance that you have raised in this House today and before, there has been a logical, reasonable, fair-minded, and sensible rationale for any program changes that were made — whether they were cut-backs, whether there were transfers, whether there were consolidation, whether there was the elimination of duplication or out-of-date courses.

In every instance you have to admit, in every instance — whether it was machinery technologists, nursing assistants, heavy duty equipment operators — in every reason the logic was there, the rationale was there, the reasoning was there. And it was there in, too often, black and white, cold, chilling statistics. That is the facts.

As I said yesterday, the questions that you should be asking in this legislature are: Mr. Minister, what are you doing about making sure that we have the training places in place for the job opportunities of the future? And that is the essential question. That is the essential question. And by making these changes . . .

And I'll tell you what. As a politician, if I had never to make any changes or make waves, I'd love the job. But we're elected to do more than just be some kind of sit-on-our-butts politicians. If there are changes that have to be made because they are right, they're responsible; then we must do them. You don't make change just for change's sake.

In this case we're talking about doing some things differently because the world is different, and you can dismiss this and shrug it off as some kind of philosophical musing. But don't take my word for it. And I'm not going to take the time of the Assembly to read what the University of Saskatchewan had had to say about this, or what the Saskatchewan Community College Trustees Association has had to say about this. And I could go on and on.

You are the only ones who don't realize that the world is changing. The New Democratic youth recognized there had to be changes. The institutes' students recognized there had to be changes. The staff recognized. It is only you who do not recognize it. And I'll tell you what. I am quite prepared to go through this if you wish, course by course, number by number, because we have nothing to fear on this side of the House. We have nothing to fear and I'll go through this course by course at every campus and at every institute and the numbers and the

conclusions come up the same every time, every time.

What we are doing is positioning ourselves for these job opportunities of the future and we remain unresolved in our determination to do so.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Mr. Minister, we obviously hit a nerve. I note that you didn't attempt to answer my question with respect to cuts to programs for women. I note you managed to ignore that studiously.

But you raise some interesting points with respect to the position of the Saskatchewan association of nursing assistants and your cuts to the nursing assistant program, because I distinctly heard the Minister of Education trying to suggest to this Assembly that the Saskatchewan association of nursing assistants supports his cuts, and the minister knows that that's simply not true.

The Saskatchewan association of nursing assistants submitted a brief, many briefs to your government, asking your government to maintain accessibility to nursing assistants' programs in this province in both Saskatoon and Regina. And my question to the minister is: does he deny that the Saskatchewan association of nursing assistants asked him to maintain the course at Kelsey as well as the course at Wascana, and does he deny that the Saskatchewan association of nursing assistants pointed out to him that every province except Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland has at least two points of access for students studying to be nursing assistants? Does he deny that? Does he deny that the association asked him to keep the Kelsey program open?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — The hon. member perhaps wasn't listening when I talked about the fact that we've been very conscious of women and the training opportunities that should exist and can exist for them now and in the future.

And I'm going to go through these numbers again, because it doesn't matter which one he picks — diploma nursing, certified nursing assistants. And I'll put it to you. I know . . . I was at the graduation when the president of the nursing assistants' association made her remarks. So I will leave it to the public and to you to ask the question, how do you square those remarks there, perhaps in the emotion of the moment, with their very own report that said, enrolment must be "... sharply curtailed to bring supply back into reasonable balance with demand."

And what were they talking about? What kinds of . . . what was the facts they predicated that report observation on?

Well let's go through these. Because you're saying that I won't acknowledge what's happening in these related . . . these specialties where a goodly number of them are, in fact, women. Well let's look at certified nursing assistants. And I said in my remarks that in some instances as high as 60 per cent, or even worse, as high as 75 per cent were not getting training-related employment.

Well let's look at certified nursing assistants in detail, and I think from this we will conclude why the nursing assistants concluded what they did in their report on page 79. In 1983, 75 per cent of certified nursing assistants

were not finding employment in their training specialty. In '84 it was 69 per cent were not finding employment. In '85 it was 62 per cent. In '86 it was 63 per cent. Is it any wonder why you would find that statement in their report.

Now you tell me, hon. member, you tell me and the women of this province why you would like to continue to lead them down the garden path and say, come on in, pursue a career as a certified nursing assistant; oh, I'm sorry, three-quarters of you might not get a job or two-thirds of you might not get a job, but come on in, spend two years and maybe 20,000 bucks. How can you stand here and say somehow that you have professional women's best interests at heart when you do that?

Okay, diploma nursing. What's the score care there? In the last four years which we have numbers, '83 through '86, the number who were not . . . these aren't the ones who were finding work, the ones who were not finding work in their training-related occupations. In '83 it was 50 per cent; in '84 it went up to 53 per cent; in '85 it went up . . . or it stayed at 53 per cent; in '86 it went up to 58 per cent.

Now you can put your political spin in terms of your rhetoric on this; you can give us some rude rhetoric about how you know what's best for women, but I'd like to know how you square what your observations are with these statistics and these facts. And you explain to me, to the members of this legislature and to the public, why we should continue to have young women and, for that matter, those adult males — those young males as well, who in some instances pursue these careers, why they should continue to take up those opportunities, training opportunities, when the reality is, at the end of the day they may not get a job.

Now I acknowledge, and I acknowledge readily, as I did before, that there are some young adults, and I don't blame them, who will say despite those numbers, I have — want to pursue that profession. And they should be able to. And that's why we have the spaces that we still have. And there are a substantial number of them.

Because there are some who want to pursue careers with professions because it's something that they've always wanted to do. And they believe enough in themselves — and I'm happy to say that's really a Saskatchewan tradition — that despite sometimes bone-chilling statistics, that they know that if they take that course — they're the keen and the entrepreneur and the go-getter and the self-starter — that they'll end up with a job, they'll find a job. And that's why you would not want to shut off the opportunities, even in the face of those numbers.

But if you're going to argue that we ought not to adjust them, because of those kinds of data and the kinds of things that the nursing assistants said in the report — and I can't explain to you why they say one thing in the report and another publicly. I can't explain that to you.

(1615)

I can see the rationale for what they said in the report and I can, perhaps, appreciate the emotion of the moment. I mean, I will grant you that I suppose, you know, having

taken your training, and Kelsey, and now it will be consolidated in another centre, and there's that certain tradition and heritage, and I can appreciate that. We're not insensitive to that. But there are some other reasons that were even more compelling that changes had to be made. And so I say to you that's the hard, cold facts. Who would you be doing a favour if you led them down the garden path? Perhaps, you'd like to answer that question for us.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Well, Mr. Minister, that's a very — you gave us a very interesting speech. The first point I want to make in response to what you said is that you gave us an interesting, historical record during your time in government of how employment, full-time employment opportunities for people in the health professions have declined.

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

**Mr. Prebble:** — And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that that directly corresponds to your conscious decision — the conscious decision of your government to steadily erode medicare in this province.

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

**Mr. Prebble:** — If there aren't full-time jobs in hospitals for nurses — and I don't agree with all the statistics by the way that the minister gave — but if there aren't full-time employment opportunities for young people who've graduated at nurses in our hospitals, it's not because there isn't a need for those nurses, it's because your government has consciously cut positions for nurses at hospitals in Saskatoon and Regina.

Now, Mr. Minister, I want to go back — I want to go back to the remarks — I want to go back for a minute to the remarks that you made about your cuts to the certified nursing assistant program in this province because the Saskatchewan Association of Nursing Assistants say something very interesting in their brief that I note you didn't want to quote from, and that is that they quote a recent publication, *Job Futures — An Occupational Outlook for Saskatchewan* . . . to 1992. And they note in their brief that it says this with respect to employment prospects for nursing assistants . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Who's brief?

**Mr. Prebble:** — This is in the brief. The minister asks, whose brief? And I tell him again, it's the brief to you, sir, from the Saskatchewan Association of Nursing Assistants. And they say in their quote:

The occupation may be particularly sensitive to government expenditure policies.

Now I think that hits the nub right on the head. They note that there are many potential job opportunities in home care programs which you, sir, have cut back — in day care services, in convalescent homes, in chronic and rehabilitation centre — all of those areas have been starved for funds by your government, sir.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the Saskatchewan nursing assistants

association also says that they have urged you to set in place a certified nursing assistants training be the minimum requirement for the provision of nursing care in our province. And they've asked that the government facilitate nursing aides becoming nursing assistants.

If you simply had taken that measure, sir, there would have been full demand for the certified nursing assistants' programs at both Kelsey and Wascana. And my question to you is: will you not acknowledge that what you should be doing is expanding home care, expanding rehabilitation services, upgrading nursing aides by training them to be nursing assistants, and retaining the programs and access to nursing assistant programs at both Kelsey and Wascana? Will you not acknowledge that that is what you should be doing?

And finally, sir, will you acknowledge that your cuts to the dental therapy program at Wascana, your decision to eliminate that program is directly tied to your decision to eliminate the school-based dental . . . children's dental care program in this province? In other words, your training cuts in health care are directly related to your training cuts in medicare. Will you not acknowledge that, and will you therefore not reinstate the certified dental assistant program at Kelsey, reinstate the certified nursing assistant program at Kelsey, and reinstate the dental therapist program at Wascana?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — The hon. member from Saskatoon University drew a fairly long bow on his last remarks, Mr. Chairman. He somehow wants to have the women of this province ignore — and I can go over the numbers again when it comes to diploma nursing — he wants to have the women of Saskatchewan ignore, and those males who are interested in that career, that in '86, 58 per cent didn't get jobs; in '85, 53; in '84, 53; in '83, 50 per cent did not get jobs in those training-related specialties, Mr. Chairman.

He wants them to ignore that. He wants you and I to ignore that. And I don't think that's responsible, nor is it right. And then he tries to sort of make the connection somehow that when the NDP were in, all was well in the health care system, and that's why everybody was getting jobs despite the numbers to the contrary, Mr. Chairman.

Well I would ask you, and I would ask the members of this Assembly, and I would ask the public of Saskatchewan, who was in power . . . he talked about nursing homes . . . I ask you who was in power; who was government in this province; who was the premier when the NDP put in place a moratorium on nursing home construction? I'll bet you need a lot of nursing home attendants, Mr. Chairman, when you're not building any? And who was it? It was that NDP, Mr. Speaker, that was in government at that time. They were the ones that put a moratorium on nursing home construction.

And I challenge that member from Saskatoon University who, in his own city probably had more nursing home spaces constructed in the last five years — and I don't know for sure, but I'll go so far as to say — maybe more in

the last five than they had in the 15 years previous. Because I can go by my own experience in my constituency. For 11 years, Mr. Chairman, for 11 years the people in Fillmore and area had wanted a nursing home. They even had their money in the bank, Mr. Chairman. Did the NDP build them a nursing home? No; they got one of those famous letters, you know, about "there's a moratorium on. We're not building any more."

**An Hon. Member:** — That's absolutely ridiculous.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — That's what they . . . That is not. The hon. member from Moose Jaw North, and I'll tell you what. I'm going to get that letter, Mr. Chairman. And if I can't get it today, I'm going to get it tomorrow, and I'm going to file it for this House so the hon. member from Moose Jaw North will see the letter that his NDP colleague wrote saying: we're not building any more nursing homes.

And it's obvious, Mr. Chairman, that I've hit a nerve amongst the NDP, the saviours of medicare, they like to say. Well they are the ones that denied the people of Fillmore and area a nursing home for 11 long years, Mr. Chairman. That's their brand of medicare. That's what they did, and I'll tell the hon. member from North Battleford, because he's not going to tell me "or else" like he tells the chamber of commerce. There was more done for that North Battleford area when that find young fellow, Myles Morin, was their MLA than has ever been done by the MLA currently sitting there, I'll tell you that.

But the story doesn't stop there when it comes to health care and what's being done and what we need . . . the people we need in those places, Mr. Chairman. Because that was the member's question. In my own constituency gain, no wonder we didn't need . . . no wonder there were no jobs in Stoughton, Mr. Chairman, for the nursing home, because they waited and waited there for their nursing home to be completed, and added on, and go from 24 spaces to 36. That's the record of this government.

I would suggest to the hon. member, in rebut to his argument, that's absolutely wrong, that there have been more nursing homes built by this government than any other administration in history. And that's the facts, Mr. Chairman.

And he talked about day care centres, he talked about day care centres. Well what's the record on day care centres? Since this government came in, the Progressive Conservative government of our Premier, Grant Devine, what's the record on day care funding? Have we doubled it? No, we've tripled it, Mr. Chairman, that's what we've done. And I'll tell you, by tripling it I have no doubt that there are more young people required in that area, in terms of providing the adequate supervision in these day cares across this province. And, Mr. Chairman, that, too, is a fact when it comes to that whole area of social spending and health care spending.

And it's a fact, Mr. Chairman, that health care spending is over a billion dollars in this province, and we are going to continue to provide the . . . I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. I had a wrong number here, and I want to correct it.

When it comes to day care funding, we didn't do quite as well as I suggested, and I apologize to the House for that. In '81-82 the NDP spent less than \$7 million on it, and the last number for '87-88 is nearly \$13 million, Mr. Chairman.

Now how does the hon. member from Saskatoon University, in their usual pious and sanctimonious way, try to suggest that the reason that we don't have nurses getting employment or whatever, is that somehow it's because we are not funding medicare.

By every measure, Mr. Chairman, the expenditure is up. The number of nursing homes built is up. By every measure it's up, and I say to you, as the people of Saskatchewan saw in the last election, they don't buy their phoney-boloney logic; they don't buy their phoney-boloney numbers. And I'll tell you what: they stand four-square behind our Premier, because our Premier stands for the senior citizens and their heritage and the important qualities that they brought as pioneers to this province, and he's going to see that they're looked after, whether they're young, middle-aged, or old. And our party and our Premier stand by that, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm delighted to be able to enter this debate today. I thought we were doing education estimates, but after listening to the diatribe from the member from Weyburn, I find out . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Diatribe.

**Mr. Trew:** — Diatribe — mispronunciation. I stand corrected.

I find that suddenly we are into health estimates; we're into personalities of one of my colleagues; we're into day care. I'd like to respond to a few of the things that the member from Weyburn brought up.

First of all, in health care, the member just chooses to ignore that when the New Democrats were in power, it was . . . out government was implementing home care. It was listening to the very people of our province and the needs that they expressed, when people were saying to the government of the day, we want the opportunity to live in our own homes as long as we possibly can, and the government of the day was introducing home care and indeed expanding on it.

There's something I'd like to point out to the member from Weyburn. Rather than expanding upon it, you have simply increased the fees that are charged to people that are using that very good system.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Turning very briefly, Mr. Chairman, to day care. The member tells us and assures the House and the people of the province that this government is doing wonderful things in day care. I just wonder how he can square that with what's happening at the University of Regina where there is not one, but two day cares in

imminent danger of being shut down. Why? Because of the inaction of the member opposite, the Minister for Education. His inaction . . . I shouldn't say because of inaction, it's rather because of an action he took.

The action was that before the election they announced this wonderful . . . and it is a good students' union centre. The project was announced; the money was certainly there. There was nothing too good for our students before the election, but as soon as the election was over they pulled the funding for that. Both the day cares that are in danger of being closed, Mr. Chairman, happened to be going into what is not being used as a students' union centre.

So the reality simply flies in the face of what the minister has been trying to say. Indeed I challenge the minister to go onto the university campus in Regina, if he dares. I don't think he does.

Turing to education, Mr. Chairman, the Wascana Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences cuts have been done in the most illogical and even nonsensical manner. It seems logical for the criteria of courses to be provided or, indeed, courses to be cut to include a number of things.

(1630)

First, the availability of instructors. You obviously have to have some instructors around. Second, the availability of adequate learning facilities, which certainly WIAAS has. Third, the job employment probability of graduates. Fourth, the location of potential students. And fifth, the availability and location of other educational opportunities for people. In other words, what other learning centres are there around in the vicinity that can take up the slack if you're going to cut or eliminate a program.

I have before me, Mr. Chairman, a list of the programs that have been eliminated or cut, and the list shows the employment probability index, program by program. I'm sure the minister has this. I'm not so sure that he had this information when the decision was being made as to what programs were going to be cut because, as I mentioned, the cuts are totally illogical.

Can you tell us, Mr. Minister, why you reduced the capacity by eliminating and reducing programs in areas with better than average employment probability for graduates?

And I want to cite a few examples for the Minister so that he'll have something concrete to respond to, and I hope that you respond to this question much better than you responded to the previous question. It would be nice if we'd even stay loosely in Education for a change; it would be a refreshing change.

The examples that I want to cite, Mr. Minister, are the accountancy program that was eliminated at WIAAS. You choose not to say cut, so . . . and indeed, cut, elimination — it's all rhetoric. The other half of the story is the employment probability index for the accountancy program at WIAAS, Mr. Minister, was 1.54.

The administrative studies, which program was also eliminated from WIAAS, the employment probability — and this is counting both years of the program, Mr. Minister, and recognize that the first-year students are certainly not going to be seeking employment — but the employment probability was 0.61. The number I've given you is, of course, weighted in the wrong direction. The employment, actual employment, is much greater upon graduation and after graduation.

Office education, Mr. Minister, from Kelsey, the employment probability index is 1.35; dental assistant, again from Kelsey, 1.53; dental therapy from WIAAS, which is being subject to a phase-out, the employment probability was 1.17; agriculture parts marketing from Kelsey, the employment probability was 1.54; barbering, hairstyling from Kelsey, the employment probability, 1.35; the same program from NIT, the employment probability, 1.2; cosmetology from Kelsey, the employment probability, 1.22.

Of some of the courses that were not cut or reduced or eliminated, I'd like to just list a few of them. They include medical radiology technology from Kelsey, with an employment probability of 0.77 — less than half the employment probability of accountancy that you have eliminated from WIAAS; agriculture mechanics from WIAAS, an employment probability of 0.72; carpentry at NIT, an employment probability of 0.59; commercial cooking at STI, employment probability of 0.86; masonry construction, again at STI, an employment probability of 0.9; radio, TV, and computer electronics at NIT — grand employment opportunities — a probability index of 0.45. And the list goes on.

It just simply doesn't make sense, Mr. Minister, to cut back programs with relatively high employment prospects. And indeed, if programs are going to be cut, the very least that you should do is cut programs that happen to be in areas where the employment probability of graduates is low.

What rationale, Mr. Minister, did you use in deciding which programs would be cut? Obviously the employment of graduates did not figure in this decision. So my question is: what did you use in the decision-making process when you were making these employment cuts?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm almost getting to the point where I'm starting to object to the impression that hon. members are leaving — the erroneous impression that they're leaving — when they very, very loosely use the word "cuts" and "eliminate."

I don't know, Mr. Chairman, whether the hon. members are trying to leave the impression when they talk about programs being eliminated, whether they're trying to leave the impression that programs are being eliminated, as opposed to programs that are being transferred to another location — whether they're doing that out of ignorance or out of design, Mr. Chairman. But it's becoming a bit disturbing because the public are not well served by that kind of inaccuracy.

In virtually every instance that the hon. member raised, if not all, and I didn't catch them all — but in virtually every instance he raised where he talked about the program being eliminated or the program being cut, he is absolutely wrong, and I take objection to it.

If he wants to more correctly address this debate and be serious about it, I'm prepared to be serious. He's not right when he talks about programs being cut. He's right maybe, if he talks about a program that was running at NIT and is now in Moose Jaw, or one that was in Saskatoon and is now in Regina, or vice versa. But to leave the misleading impression, Mr. Chairman, that somehow these programs are wiped out and do not exist is absolutely wrong. And the public of this province are not well served; in fact, the students of this province are not well served, and I'll tell you why.

That's absolutely nothing other than absolute fear mongering. And he's playing on the fears and the emotions of our young people. He's taking advantage of them. And I'll tell you, Mr. Chairman, I object to that. I think that's shallow, shallow, shallow. And I'll put the record as straight as I can, Mr. Chairman. Barbering — and I don't know whether he mentioned that one — but barbering is one that has been completely eliminated. And he went through a litany of statistics . . . okay, went through some of the very same areas.

I mean, I heard machinery technologist, agriculture machinery technologist, dental assistants, all of those, where we went through it and we talked about why we made the decisions we did based on the information we had. And we've also talked about if the situation changes, as best as anyone can determine, we will increase or decrease or modify or change or add. Now what can be more reasonable than that for the people of this province?

Now they want to cling to the past, that's fine. If they want to try and leave the wrong impression with the people of this province, that too I suppose is their right. But quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, I object to that tactic because it's not fair to the young people of this province. It's not fair. And I'm happy, as I told the hon. member from Saskatoon University, to go through these program by program if he so wishes. Because we didn't somehow sit in some office, my office as the hon. member might like to suggest, and sort of decide, well, let's get nursing assistants.

I mean, what nonsense. But what do you do when you're faced as a responsible legislator, which I presume the hon. member is, when three out of four are getting no jobs after a couple years of training? What do you do? What do you do, Mr. Chairman?

The hon. member from Regina Rosemont, if he's got something to say, get up and say it. You're chirping away. As the hon. member somehow suggests that we should ignore the fact in some instances that six out of ten, or three out of four weren't getting jobs . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

And now the member from North Battleford doesn't want to hear this. He would rather somehow send people through the system with no job prospects at the end of the day.

We can continue to go through these step by step, course by course if you wish, but the reality is, the numbers are not much different in terms of the changes we made.

And it's important to point out that this is not a knee-jerk reaction. With the exception of barbering, okay, with the exception of barbering, virtually every other program, although the location may be changed, or if it was offered in four places at night, now be in two, in some instances seats might be reduced.

But more importantly, and an area that this debate has never centred on, Mr. Chairman, is they've never once asked me, although I have willingly volunteered to the legislature, the number of new training spaces and the number of new program areas that we've put in place, whether it be at the Moose Jaw campus or the Saskatoon campus or the Regina campus or the Prince Albert campus.

They conveniently overlook that. And I believe they overlook it, Mr. Chairman, because they're trying to paint a distorted picture of what's really happening in post-secondary education. And I don't think anybody's well served by that.

And I'll submit to line-by-line questioning as long as they so desire, but I'd rather deal with some facts and get the political rhetoric out of the way, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Trew:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I have before me a copy of a *Leader-Post* article that says, "Hepworth gives students more rhetoric." And it doesn't seem to matter if you're in the House or out there, all you're capable of doing is providing more and more of the same old rhetoric.

You talk about taking exception, Mr. Minister, to us using the term "cut." Well I don't know what in the world would be more direct and more germane in the whole entire English language . . . I understand the language; I just don't speak it very well. I don't understand what would be more clear than to say that the accountancy program has been cut from WIAAS when what you have said to those students is that you can't take it in Regina any more; we simply do not offer it here at all. In other words, it's been cut from here.

And then you're saying, but it's offered at another location where it has been offered previously. That location happens to be STI.

But, Mr. Minister, the administration and accounting students from Wascana Institute were told when you made your announcement of the program cuts, which was very late in itself . . . but then you had the audacity to tell them, well apply at STI. The problem, Mr. Minister, as I'm sure you are aware, or at least I hope you're aware of some things that are going on in your department, the training places were full because of the lateness of your announcement of that program elimination from Wascana Institute.

And in addition to the lateness of your announcement of the cuts, Mr. Minister, the cuts — and I use that word

deliberately . . . In addition to the lateness of the cuts there are other programs, or pardon me, other problems for students, such as the difficulty in finding suitable accommodations in Moose Jaw, difficulty in arranging for transportation, baby-sitting, family arrangements, and that sort of thing.

Mr. Minister, do students have to now resort to travelling out of province to obtain the training because the places are all full in STI in those programs? I want to know on what basis you're trying to justify the elimination of the administration and the accounting programs from Wascana Institute, and you have not even undertaken to answer that question. You give us some rhetoric about being willing to tackle programs, program by program, and here I have offered you on two occasions to debate the issue of the administrative studies and the accounting programs being cut from Wascana Institute, and yet you duck and weave and dodge and just generally evade the question.

(1645)

You asked for some solutions, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, you accused me of always being negative, of never having a solution for you. I have some solutions that I'd like you to pay some attention to because they're common sense solutions that . . . of course that would escape you, but you might be able to find one out of three of these solutions — one out of these three you might just agree.

Why don't you, Mr. Minister, allow the first year students . . . I think I've got your attention. Mr. Minister, why don't you allow a first-year phase out to accommodate existing students, or better yet, reverse your cut-back decisions? Reverse the program cut-backs and allow a management team of staff, students, to develop a plan that can most effectively rationalize the new super-institute that you've created.

The third option, Mr. Minister, is for you — and this is one that you may choose — is to continue on your present course, and in doing so, the problem is that you're going to cause unnecessary pain for students and staff of the technical institutes.

I just want to conclude my questioning, Mr. Minister, by saying that you spoke of a reality and of changing job opportunities in the future. Mr. Minister, the federal government, which also happens to be a Conservative government, has projected that by 1991 our present training capacity will not even meet one-half of the estimated employment needs in accountancy and office studies.

Therefore, my question is: why are you cutting that training at Wascana Institute in administrative studies and accounting? Why cut it when by 1991 you will be training fewer than one-half of the required graduates, and in the meantime creating such an undue hardship? Why in the world are you going to go ahead with such a ridiculous cut?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I'll get right to the issues the hon. member raises. Accounting, specifically — the hon.

member has talked about cuts. The facts there are: there are 42 additional seats in Moose Jaw. Each and every one of those who were displaced, given that they passed their courses if you like, will be given an opportunity at the new centre of excellence in Moose Jaw. I think that's very fair and very reasonable.

Now the hon. member suggests further that there's a hardship with having to move and to transfer, and I agree with him. And I agree with him. And I saw nothing in what he raised of a solution to that. And when their party was in government, Mr. Chairman, the reality is they never tried to address that question. Because the additional point on accounting seats and training spaces and student opportunities that he should know is this — and I want this clearly in the record, Mr. Chairman, because there's been a lot of erroneous reporting on that very issue of the whole question of accounting and accounting spaces. There are 42 extra in Moose Jaw to account for each and every one that was taking at the course at the alternate location, so everyone is going to have the opportunity if they pass their course.

But more than that, Mr. Chairman, but more than that, in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, because we now have, as well, 2,600 student opportunities through out extension program that was non-existent in the NDP days — 2,600 opportunities through the extension program. So what that means, Mr. Chairman, for example, if there are 10 people in Meadow Lake, or whatever the appropriate number might be, who want to take that course, they can have it delivered in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, or Weyburn, or Swift Current, or Nipawin.

**An Hon. Member:** — But nothing in Regina.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — And the hon. member, from his seat, says nothing in Regina. Well I'll tell you, Mr. Chairman, the city of Regina will be well served in the future, as in the past, when it comes to education opportunities. But more than that, through extension, through distance education, through this new institute structure, accessibility will be made, will be increased on a province-wide basis. And that's something that we should be proud of, Mr. Chairman.

Not only when it comes to that specific one he raised, accounting, are there 42 additional seats in Moose Jaw, and contrast that with his statements of cuts and eliminations. You know, and I won't get into that any further, Mr. Chairman, because that is exactly what's happening. Not only do we have the extra seats, but we have the extension program for delivery across this province. And I'm proud of that.

And it's not something that's been well recorded, Mr. Chairman. And I thank the member opposite for the opportunity to raise this, and I look forward to the questioning from the hon. member from Regina Lakeview.

**Ms. Simard:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question to the minister is: what is the government's position with respect to asbestos in schools, and I'm wondering if the minister could tell us what rules and regulations exist with respect to asbestos in schools, whether or not there is any

program for funding to schools that have asbestos in schools for the removal of it?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I'm advised that in the past, sometime, where there may have been a problem identified with what they call friable asbestos, and where school boards raised this with that, and on the basis of inspections by the Department of Labour, any problems that existed were attended to and cleared up. And there was assistance through the provincial government in so far as capital funding to right the situation.

I'm, as well, advised that the policy hasn't changed, and that if there are instances that would be brought to our attention, we would involve those officials from the appropriate departments as expeditiously as possible, and as I understand, as has happened in the past, to make sure that the problem was cleaned up and righted as soon as identified.

**Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the minister is aware that Pius X School in Regina Lakeview has asbestos in the ceiling, so I've been advised. I also understand the Department of Education has been contacted about the problem, and I'm wondering what has been done or what will be done by the Department of Education with respect to that problem?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — The officials that I have with me are not aware of any specific notification. However, we can undertake to consult with others who may have been more directly involved with this case and report back to you if you so wish. Or, in fact, we will . . . not if you so wish, we will do that for you.

**Ms. Simard:** — Could you get back to me this evening or tomorrow? This evening? Okay, because I'd be very interested in knowing exactly what the situation is, Mr. Chairman. I've heard a number of complaints from parents who are very concerned, and I want to be able to assure them that everything is being done to clean up the problem.

The other thing that I wanted to convey to the minister is the fact that I have heard from a number of parents in Regina Lakeview how deeply concerned they are about the teacher/student ratios in the schools; that the high teacher/student ratio, they feel, means that their child will not get the first-class education that they want for their children and that this province requires to meet the 21st century standards. So I want to convey that concern, a concern that has been addressed to me on a number of occasions by parents.

I also want to advise the minister, Mr. Chairman, that there are some teachers who have talked to me about the burning-out factor and the fact that they feel burnt out; that because of high teacher/student ratios, they are having an extreme difficulty in providing the quality of education that they would want to provide to their students. So I make those statements simply to convey the concerns of constituents of Regina Lakeview to the minister.

One other thing that I wish to raise with the minister is the fact that I spoke to a university student today who may be

looking for full-time employment, but is also considering the possibility of going back to university on a full-time basis. This student, Mr. Chairman, has a chronic medical condition and cannot afford the \$140 up-front costs for drugs, and if this student has to pay the \$140 up-front costs for drugs, will not be able to attend university on a full-time basis.

Now it's not at the stage where we would address the Minister of Health or the Minister of Education personally about this because the individual has not made up his mind whether he is going to take a full-time job or go to university. But I wanted to raise this problem so that the government will think about it and consider what they are going to be doing about those sorts of situations because, as was indicated earlier in the House today, they are looking at things that they will do to help unique situations.

Well I consider this as something that may not occur often, but it occurs, and I consider that very unfair. I think that's very unfair to an individual if they cannot go to university because they can't afford the up-front cost of drugs.

And I'd like to know from the minister today what the Department of Education could do for a student, along those lines, so that when I'm talking to that individual I can convey the information, and whether he would be receptive if I asked this student to approach him about some special assistance.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Just quickly in response to, and I appreciate your sensitizing me to a potential issue there with that student. And as I think we heard the Premier say earlier today in this legislature that the Minister of Health will be addressing that whole question of those with special or unique circumstances when it comes to their drugs and the health care plan of this province, and so I'll leave it in the Minister of Health's hands. But I . . . as you wished, you know, consider me sensitized to the question.

As he relates to another and a rather serious issue and one that we spend some time thinking and talking about, the whole question of the challenges and the burn-out. I think, as it is sometimes referred to that our teachers and the pressure that they're increasingly under, and the whole question of teacher/student ratios. If one was to look at the hard cold data and the statistics on this, one could say that Saskatchewan, in terms of its pupil/teacher ratios, has a very good ratio relatively speaking across Canada. And even over the last three years in this province we've seen the pupil/teacher ratio go from something like 17.1 down to 17 to . . . as of September '86 down to 16.4, if you use the totals, down to even 16.1 to 1. And so one I suppose could, you know, take some comfort in that.

But the reality is the teachers out there on the front lines, if you like, or at least what I'm hearing from them — and maybe the issue isn't so much the pupil/teacher ratios, it's the reality of the school today. The teacher is faced increasingly with demands to keep up with curriculum changes. What I hear teachers telling me that every week their stack of mail with new inserts for curriculum guides,



etc., etc., is never ending, and the pressure to keep up with that, the expectations of society.

The examples I've always used, and the ones that I see teachers nodding their heads on is, you know, 20, 25 years ago accidents on the highways were a problem, so give it to the education system. So we had driver training. And then it's, you know, AIDS and it's drugs and alcohol abuse, and we always have this expectation of the teachers and the educational system, and we pile it on them, and they've done a good job there.

But it adds to the challenges and the pressures of that teacher on the front line. And we have some concern in that area, very much, in so far as the challenges facing them. And the young people today, maybe not many of them, that are fighting themselves, the issues of peer pressure, and chemical and substance abuse, and what effect that has in the classroom in terms of unruly behaviour.

And all of those things . . . even perhaps more than that hard number that the system has traditionally used to evaluate the teacher's burden, the pupil/teacher ratio. I don't know as it acknowledges some of these things like changing curriculums, and the changing nature of the student, and the changing nature of society, and its expectations of the education system. So there's these . . . Although you can measure things tangibly, and we look very good on paper — and I suppose I could say, I'm even proud of it — I'm not so sure we measure these intangible things that, perhaps, in a larger way contribute to the issue that you raise relative to burn-out, more so than pupil/teacher ratios.

But further than that, if there's a specific school in Regina, or something that has a particularly bad pupil/teacher ratio, I'd be . . . You could maybe, you know, send that across to me. I'd be happy to look into it for you. But generally, the numbers are quite good. That doesn't address, as I said, those intangibles that I talked about earlier.

And I will undertake to get the information relative to asbestos in Pius X. If we can get it for tonight, we will; if not, at our earliest possible opportunity we will.

**Mr. Chairman:** — Order. Being past 5 o'clock the committee is recessed until 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.