

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Education

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 5

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Chairman, before we adjourned at 5, I was relaying the message from the opposition and from the people of Saskatchewan about the choices that the government had made with respect to the Education budget and, indeed, to the budget on the whole. And the message was, Mr. Chairman, that the people of Saskatchewan felt that the government was betraying their youth by de-emphasizing the budget items related to education. Education was being cut. And I was asking the questions why.

I was asking why, for example, the government chose to go that way. And the answer seemed to be that because of the first choice that they had made — the government had decided to go on a spending spree last year — they had another choice to make this year. They had to change their direction. They could change their direction either by collecting taxes from places they had been collected in the past or by down-sizing some of the budget items.

Let me detail where the money could have come from, Mr. Chairman. From oil revenue the government could have received an extra \$1.5 billion. From the PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company) sale, the government could have received 148 million. Savings from not going ahead with patronage appointments could have come up with another 20 million — 1.7 billion in total when you total that, Mr. Chairman. That would have been half the deficit.

And I mention that again. I mention that, Mr. Chairman, because it clearly was a choice. Clearly, it was a choice that the government had, but under your leadership you chose to do the opposite, and you chose to underfund education.

What are the effects that we are feeling of the cut-backs to the funding? What are the effects of the 1 per cent cut-backs in the EDF (educational development fund) . . . the EDF cut-backs? They will result in two things, and to be brief I will just put them down into two points, Mr. Chairman. They will result in a higher pupil/teacher ratio which will lower the quality of education. They will result in that or they will result in higher local taxation. And we know that property taxes are already at a maximum toleration level.

What will the university class cuts or limits and the technical school class cuts result in? They will result in fewer opportunities for adults, for young adults, to get post-secondary training in education. What will the community college cuts result in? They will result in no personal development classes taken by many adults in rural and in urban Saskatchewan.

These cuts will have a long effect on our own youth. Why? Because the leadership of this government made the wrong choice. Instead of choosing to manage the economy so that it can be used to pay for education, our children's education, we find that the money has been used to feed big oil, to feed big Weyerhaeuser, to feed bit Shand in the Estevan riding of the Premier, also providing rich desserts for the like of Peter Pocklington, George Hill, Tim Embury, Paul Schoenhals, Sid Dutchak, to name a few.

Your government, your government called on Coopers & Lybrand for advice on how to get your finances in order, and these estimates show that you chose to accept the advice. If you want to continue to feed your same friends, you will have to reduce the amount needed for Health, Social Services, and you'll have to reduce the amount for Education. That's the course that you chose. Some choice. A poor choice and I say the wrong choice.

Your leadership — and you were among them, Mr. Minister, and the Premier is among them — you were saying that you had to make a tough choice and you decided to reduce a deficit by cutting programs and increasing taxes to the people of Saskatchewan.

We have shown in these estimates that there was another choice. The people of Saskatchewan know you had another choice. You chose to make cuts in Education and Health and Social Services; you chose to target the youth of Saskatchewan to bear the burden of this government's mismanagement, when you could have chosen to go the steady course where Saskatchewan resources were used to pay for our programs. And it's because of your choice that Saskatchewan people feel betrayed. They loathe your mismanagement. They feel powerless because you have not responded to their protests. They are left worried about the effects of the cuts. They are left wringing their hands because of your mismanagement priorities — and many of them feel like wringing your necks.

When we listen to the Minister of Education throughout the estimates, he drove the road to distraction, using phrases like: — we must position ourselves for the 21st century; we must look to the future. He even raised repeatedly a motion that was put forward by the New Democratic youth. When we objected to the radical surgery he was performing, he accused the members on this side of living in the past. And he said that the New Democratic youths were at variance with the members on this side. He said that we wanted local autonomous governance for technical institutes, and the New Democratic youth wanted one set of governance for the institutes, and that we were out of date.

But what is the resolution that he talked about? The resolution reads like this. It says, and I quote:

That we endorse and actively support the reorganization of technical institutes under an independent board similar in structure to the university board of governors.

Clearly, amalgamation was not mentioned. Clearly, our universities have two independent boards of governors.

Clearly.

And then he says we were out of date. And do you know when that resolution was passed, Mr. Chairman? Do you know when that resolution was passed? It was passed in 1976.

So what did we get? What are we getting from the minister? We are getting camouflage and distraction from the cuts . . . to distract from the cuts. We are getting rhetoric and we are getting beautiful glossy pamphlets.

Now I tell the minister that until he changes and his government changes their relationship with those who are sucking money from the province that should be put into the educational fund, until that changes, then the work that's done in here will end up to be nothing but bunk — unless he changes. And that would be too bad. And that would be too bad, because as you read these documents . . . There is a lot of good stuff in there. There is a lot that's debatable. But there is some good material, as there was in the *Directions*. This document is threatened.

I guess an analogy, Mr. Chairman, an analogy would be that the crowing of a rooster does not put eggs in the frying pan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — You put out attractive booklets, well-written booklets, and then you pronounce rhetorical statements about amalgamation, about positioning for the 21st century, about how awesome the year 2000 will be. And I tell you, that will not result . . . These statements will not result in improved education unless the resources are put there to implement it. And these estimates clearly show, Mr. Minister, that the resources are being sucked into the black hole of the deficit, resulting from the mismanagement of your government.

We are faced not only with mismanagement; we are faced with deception. Let's take a look at what we found out about the teachers' pension fund. That pension fund has a \$1 billion unfunded liability. There was an agreement between the teachers and the government of the time, that the fund be . . . that that particular pension be funded and become funded, and since 1980 there were attempts, consistent attempts, to keep it . . . to fund it fully. And according to section 14 of The Teachers' Superannuation Act, all contributions on behalf of teachers and by teachers, and the interest, together with the interest thereon, was by law to be deposited annually into this fund.

I am advised that for the years 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, and 1984 this was done. Then suddenly, under this government, in 1985 and 1986 things changed — then things changed. Thirty million dollars was siphoned off in 1985, and this last year 40 million. Your government siphoned \$70 million. The rationale was what? The rationale was because you needed the money and because the treasury was broke. Well that part was true — true if not an understatement.

Well, Mr. Minister, if your government was straight and it had gone to the teachers and had bargained or perhaps

signed a contract, maybe the teachers would have agreed. Maybe they would have agreed to loan the money or to shift it. But what did your government do? It left the impression that the 7 per cent of interest from that fund, to be contributed back into the pension fund, was the only legal obligation — that you only had to contribute 7 per cent of the investment income from the teachers' fund back into the teachers' fund.

I asked for an authority or a statute or an agreement, and first I was given a reference to section 55 of The Teachers' Superannuation Act. And when you look at that, it deals solely with the refund of contributions and the rate of the teacher that gets a refund. A teacher who ceases teaching gets a refund; it says nothing on that in there about how that fund should be built up.

So when that was pointed out, then we were told, well it's by mutual agreement between the teacher body and the Government of Saskatchewan. And what was the authority? I believe that what I was handed was a collective agreement from past, and in it, once again, it referred to the 7 per cent but only as to how much a teacher who ceases teaching should get from his pension fund, or her pension fund.

So what has happened is the teachers have been fooled for two years. Now I don't like being misled by a government, and I know teachers don't like being misled by a government, particularly if it means \$70 million of their pension fund. It's bad enough you mismanage the economy; it's bad enough you should underfund Education; but it's terrible that you should need \$70 million from the teachers' pension fund to help run the government — and worse yet, to create a deception that you have a mutual agreement. To do so in the absence of an agreement is just an outright outrage.

The estimates reveal, Mr. Chairman, a betrayal, underfunding, deception, and mismanagement by your government. You have been entrusted, Mr. Minister, you have been entrusted with the education of our children. I don't believe that you or your colleagues understand the gravity of the feelings of the people of Saskatchewan who have children and relatives in our schools. I don't believe that you really feel or believe how they want leadership, and the lack of leadership that they see in this government and in this department. I don't believe that you even begin to understand that they feel that you have . . . how strongly they feel that you have abandoned, abandoned the steady course set by the previous governments and ministers.

(1915)

Mr. Minister, we have lost confidence in your leadership. And accordingly, Mr. Chairman, I move, seconded by the member from Saskatoon University:

That the amount for item 1 be reduced by an amount equal to the salary of the Minister of Education.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Mr.

Chairman, I want to make some brief comments on what these estimates have demonstrated in terms of educational policy by this government.

First, Mr. Chairman, they've demonstrated how accessibility to post-secondary education in this province is now being denied to hundreds of young Saskatchewan people as a result of this budget. Eleven hundred student spaces eliminated at our technical institutes. . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Chairman, on a point of order.

Mr. Chairman: — The member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I believe there is a motion on the floor and the hon. member should be speaking to the motion. He is not.

Mr. Chairman: — I find that the member's point of order is well taken. I would ask the member from Saskatoon University to keep his remarks to the motion before the committee.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Chairman, the motion is that the minister's salary . . . The motion is that the estimates under . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Chairman, if you could . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order. Order. It's very difficult to hear with the chattering that's going on in the back benches.

Mr. Prebble: — My remarks are in order because I'm speaking to the . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Are you challenging the ruling of the Chair?

Mr. Prebble: — No, I'm not.

Mr. Chairman: — Order. I would ask the member to keep his comments on the motion before the committee and the motion reads:

That the amount for item no. 1 be reduced by amount equal to the salary of the Minister of Education.

I would ask the member to keep his remarks pertaining to the motion.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Chairman, the intent of this motion is to demonstrate to the legislature that we on this side of the House have lost confidence in the Minister of Education.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — And my remarks, my remarks this evening are to that point, Mr. Chairman. And as I was about to say, the first reason why we have lost confidence in this minister is because this government and this minister have demonstrated that they are not prepared any longer to assure accessibility to post-secondary education in this province. They have cut 1,100 spaces at Saskatchewan's technical institutes.

We have enrolment quotas, Mr. Chairman, for the first time in the history of the University of Saskatchewan, denying access to at least 500 qualified students. We have denial to accessibility for post-secondary education as a result of this government's decision to increase tuition fees at technical institutes by 15 per cent, and in many courses even higher than that.

We have a record, Mr. Chairman, over the last five years in which tuition rates at our universities have risen 43 per cent — double the rate of inflation — denying access to the universities of this province to many young Saskatchewan people.

We have, Mr. Chairman, in this budget, as a result of the incompetence of this minister, we have a situation, in which, because of the underfunding of programs at our technical institutes and our universities, we see severe cuts in programs, particularly in programs that were primarily enrolled by female students.

This budget, Mr. Chairman, attacks women. In the case of the university, forcing the closure of the home economics department at the University of Saskatchewan. In the case of the technical institutes, forcing the closure of programs like office education, dental assistants, cosmetology, certified nursing assistants, and a host of other programs primarily held by women.

This budget, Mr. Chairman, brought forward today by this Minister of Education, which we've been debating over the past two weeks, has brought forward the most savage cuts to the student bursary program that we've ever seen in the history of the province of Saskatchewan, moving it, Mr. Chairman, to a situation where, for the first time since the bursary program was brought down, students are going to have to borrow almost \$6,000 before they become eligible for any bursary assistance from this government, Mr. Chairman.

These estimates that have been brought before us in the last two weeks also result in a very substantial cut in apprenticeship training spaces. The minister acknowledged in these estimates yesterday that the number of students enrolled in apprenticeship training had dropped dramatically from over 5,000, five years ago, to only just over 3,000 today.

And, Mr. Chairman, essentially what we have seen in these estimates is an attempt by this government to restrict accessibility and to force students in this province, at great expense to themselves, to relocate from one centre and another to either continue taking a course that they were taking before at another institute, but that is now being cut by this government, or in many cases, if they were enrolling in a course for the first time that was originally available in Saskatoon — shall we say office education or dental assistant technology — now being forced to move to Regina or Moose Jaw to take that same course.

Mr. Chairman, therefore it's this government's decision to deny accessibility to post-secondary education to hundreds of Saskatchewan young people. That is the first reason why members on this side of the House have lost

confidence in the Minister of Education.

Mr. Chairman, there's a second reason why we've lost confidence in the Minister of Education, and that is that this budget has also unfairly treated faculty and staff at Saskatchewan's universities, community colleges, and technical institutes in this province.

Virtually no consultation with the staff and faculty effected before cuts were made by this government. Lay-offs, Mr. Chairman, that in many cases cannot be justified at all given the record of employment for graduates in the programs that were cut. Decisions by this government to lay off people with many years of service to this province in a random manner demonstrating that this government did not appreciate their service, and firings and bumpings, Mr. Chairman, that have destroyed the morale of those still left working in our technical institutes and our community college system in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Now, Mr. Chairman, where did the minister get his advice from? It's obvious that he got it from one of two sources. Either he got it from the Coopers & Lybrand studies that were being done by this government . . .

An Hon. Member: — Or the Fraser Institute.

Mr. Prebble: — And the minister says, or the Fraser Institute. That's right. You had two sources, Mr. Minister, of advice that I suggest you primarily have drawn.

First of all, Mr. Minister, the reports that were done by Coopers & Lybrand, which you've yet to table in this Assembly but which you acknowledge were done for the kindergarten to grade 12 system and for the advanced education system, and I suggest to you, sir, that when you table those reports, those reports will focus primarily on where the government could save money and not on where the government could improve its quality of education in this province.

And, Mr. Chairman, I suggest to you that the second source that this government and this minister drew on for his advice was from the advice of people like Michael Walker and others who work at the Fraser Institute. Mr. Walker has acknowledged that he has come to this province to give advice to this government on many occasions in the last months. And I suggest to you that one of the areas in which he was giving advice was how to follow the example of British Columbia in cutting educational services to the people of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Chairman, there's a third reason why we have lost confidence in this minister and therefore are calling for the removal of his salary from these estimates, and that is: — that the result of his cuts and his denial of accessibility has been a very significant decline in the quality of education and particularly the quality of post-secondary education that's offered in this province.

Mr. Chairman, the firings, the early retirements, the bumpings at Saskatchewan's technical institutes — the

net result of those, Mr. Chairman is going to be a marked decline in the quality of education that's available in Saskatchewan's technical institutes when students return to them next month. You can't . . .

An Hon. Member: — Rubbish.

Mr. Prebble: — One of the members opposite says rubbish. And I say to him that as a result of bumpings and firings, you can't eliminate four or five of the people who working in a program out of the six or seven that were there originally and hope to have the same quality of education when students return in the fall. And that's been the case again and again at places like Kelsey Institute and STI (Saskatchewan Technical Institute).

Now, Mr. Chairman, we on this side of the House say that the two-year freeze that this Minister of Education is imposing on university funding means no additional faculty . . .

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I believe that the ministers' salaries are under Executive Council estimates and not under Education estimates, and I wonder if the hon. member's motion is in order.

Mr. Chairman: — Order. The member's point of order is not well taken because the motion reads, an amount equal to the minister's salary, and it isn't specifically the minister's salary.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The opposition is in fact a motion to reduce the expenditures on education by an amount equal to the minister's salary, with the minister's salary being paid out of another vote, Executive Council. In effect the member's motion is to effect reduce the expenditures on education. Is that correct?

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order. The minister's salary is in item number 43 and the debate continues.

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I was saying before I was interrupted by the member for Qu'Appelle, the two-year budget freeze that these estimates and that this minister has imposed on the university of this province, means no additional hiring of faculty. In fact it means cuts to faculty positions at the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina. It means a continuation and a worsening of overcrowded class-rooms at our universities. It means a further deterioration of library services on our university campus.

And, Mr. Chairman, perhaps most serious of all, the minister's push to privatize education, to encourage education for profit in this province, with students graduating and getting diplomas that have no national recognition in the long term, may prove to be the most serious blow of all to educational quality in Saskatchewan. We reject, sir, your attempt to privatize adult education in the people of Saskatchewan, and we will reverse that attempt when we are next elected to government.

Mr. Chairman, we reject this budget and support this motion because this minister is jeopardizing the quality of education in Saskatchewan. We reject these estimates

because these estimates break the government's commitment to make education one of its top priorities. And we reject these estimates because they fail to prepare us for the year 2000.

In the year 2000, Mr. Minister, we will need fully trained health care professionals in our dental programs, in our hospitals, in our rehabilitation services. And your cuts to health care training in this province assure us that we will be short of nursing spaces, and short of rehabilitation care workers, and short of home care workers in the year 2000 unless your policies are reversed.

(1930)

You say, Mr. Chairman, this minister has claimed that he wants to build a future for high tech, for science and technology in this province, and we say to him that he cannot do that if he erodes university funding in this province. The universities are the base for a future high-tech economy in Saskatchewan, and he is undermining that economy by underfunding the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina.

Mr. Chairman, the minister has claimed throughout these estimates that his government is working towards planning for the year 2000, and we on this side of the House say that one of the very reasons why we reject his estimates is because they do not lead us towards the year 2000; they lead us back towards the 1930's when we had the last Progressive Conservative government in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to reiterate and put the motion in the context of the educational estimates. We have heard now over the last six weeks that the NDP say they want more money spent on education, and yet tonight they bring a motion to this Assembly to reduce the moneys being spent on education by, I believe, some \$60,000. And that is specifically what that motion does.

Now I don't know whether that puts the lie to all the arguments having been made over the last several months, or, Mr. Speaker, is the true story of what the NDP really want coming forward tonight when their educational critic comes before this Assembly and says to this government, cut more money from education. And I find that a shocking statement, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it was strange . . . Now maybe it's the absence of the opposition leader that's caused the several mix-ups and lack of understanding and poor question period performance, which leads to this motion tonight. But I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that I'm going to urge members opposite to reconsider what that motion means and to begin to look when you stand up in this House and ask that the Education budget be cut another 60 some thousand dollars, because that's precisely what you've done tonight. And I find that appalling, Mr. Chairman.

I'm going to urge all members, including some who didn't

get carried away with the foolishness and the procedural stupidity of the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, to urge that this motion be defeated and that that 60 some thousand dollars be restored to the educational budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Chairman, I can't let the kind of deception, which the Minister of Finance is trying to practise before this House in this debate, pass without some kind of response.

Once again we have seen the Minister of Finance, a member of Executive Council and the cabinet, deliberately trying to deceive people, to mix facts with fiction — the same kind of fiction that he used in drawing up his budget these last several years.

The Minister of Finance knows very well that the motion to reduce the Minister of Education's salary to \$1 is a sign . . . Pardon me, to reduce the minister's salary is a sign . . .

An Hon. Member: — To zero.

Mr. Lyons: — To zero, is a sign of non-confidence in the government and non-confidence in the activities of the minister. To suggest that this opposition, which day after day has stood here and have demanded more money, demanded more money for Education, to say that we're trying to say the opposite is nothing but plain deception, and the Minister of Finance, who is well known in this province for practising that type of deception, should be ashamed.

I'm going to support the amendment, I can tell you that.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not going to make any suggestions here or any assumptions or ask anyone to decide what people are thinking, but we should really consider the reality of this motion, and how clearly it was laid out by the Minister of Finance that his motion to reduce the salary does not reduce the salary of the minister, because it cannot be done by this motion. And therefore, there's no alternative to defeat this motion because if we pass it, the Education budget is going to be reduced by whatever the salary of the minister is. And I encourage the members opposite to reconsider the reduction of the Education budget. And I know that our colleague and the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg understands this and will vote with the government on this matter because he does not wish to reduce the Education budget. And I'm certain that there will be some sanity at least among the people of the right and the people of the near right in the Liberal Party.

(1942)

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 10

Prebble	Shillington
Tchorzewski	Rolfes
Kowalsky	Atkinson
Lyons	Calvert

Simard

Smart

Nays — 26

Duncan

McLeod

Andrew

Berntson

Lane

Smith

Swan

Muirhead

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order, order. I would ask the member from Regina Lakeview to be quiet while the vote is being taken. Order. Vote continue.

Schmidt

Hodgins

Gerich

Hepworth

Klein

Meiklejohn

Martin

Toth

Sauder

McLaren

Hopfner

Petersen

Martens

Gleim

Neudorf

Kopelchuk

Saxinger

Britton

Mr. Goodale: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have a number of questions that I would like to address to the minister this evening and I understand that his officials are making their way back into the Chamber for advice to him.

While they're doing that, I would like to begin by making the point to the minister that I have followed the questions and answers in these estimates rather carefully and it seems to me that the minister has on a number of occasions . . . The minister has tried to make the point on a number of occasions that at least some members in the opposition are somehow frozen in the past and afraid of change. I want to assure him that I'm not one of those that fears change. I am anxious to pursue reform in anticipation of the future. And my only caveat attached to that, Mr. Minister, is that I would want to be sure that whatever changes are undertaken are thoughtful and timely and prudent, and not done in some kind of a deficit-driven panic, but in a thoughtful and well thought out way.

(1945)

And I am concerned, Mr. Minister, when I hear the outcry of distress that I have heard on a number of occasions in the last six months from teachers and from students and from parents and from school boards and from post-secondary education students and from professors and post-secondary education administrators and others.

The minister indicates that he has, in the process of undertaking the changes that he has made, consulted broadly with almost everyone in Saskatchewan. But I must say, Mr. Minister, that there are a large number of people in the province who are still in a state of considerable apprehension about what has happened, and what continues to happen, and the uncertainty into which the changes seem to be directing education in this province. And I think it is important in this legislature for

us to explore those issues. And I have a long list that I would like to raise with you and receive your reassurance about. I'll try to restrict myself this evening to just three or four of the more important.

First of all, in respect of the changes that you have made in the community college system in Saskatchewan, one of the changes in the regions and in the structures which you have undertaken directly affects my constituency of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg and that general district surrounding Assiniboia and many towns in south-central and south-western Saskatchewan.

I gather from looking at the new map that we are not longer connected to the Coteau Range structure as it used to exist out of Moose Jaw, but are shifted into a much larger region generally known as the south-east region for community college purposes. And in order to answer a number of questions which my constituents have raised, I would ask you this evening, Mr. Minister, to clarify if you can the status of the Assiniboia district in relation to the community college structure.

On behalf of my constituents, I would want to know where they stand and what will be available to them in future, compared to what existed in the past. And perhaps you could begin, Mr. Minister, by indicating specifically where that Assiniboia district now fits geographically in the structure, and will there in future be an ongoing community college office located in Assiniboia or in the Assiniboia district.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I thank the independent member for his questions.

A couple of points I would make, first relative to your opening statement about consultation. I wouldn't want to leave the impression, as I haven't attempted to do here in these many days of the estimates, that the consultative process is somehow one that you turn on and turn off, and you do it for three months and then stop somehow. That process will continue on for some good long time.

As relates specifically to the K to 12 side, and the teachers and school boards, and all who might have been interested in the establishment of *Directions*, there were several thousands of people that provided feedback including, I think, 6,000-odd teachers — written feedback on that consultative process. When the hon. member from Swift Current was the minister, I think there was something like 800 public meetings held, although my memory may serve to be corrected on that. So there was an extensive consultative process leading up to the publication of *Directions*, which will serve as the blueprint for the future.

Similarly in the post-secondary education, certainly with 20 meetings you're not going to touch, you know, 500,000 people, nor was that the intention. Nor was it the intention that it should stop there. I've engaged in discussion with the universities' boards of governors, the students, the student associations, so I will be engaging in further discussions as we go forward with that blueprint that I tabled in this House, and develop and frame the distance education initiatives and the literacy initiatives. And that will be ongoing over the next weeks and months

and over the next year or two, I'm sure.

As it relates specifically to the area in your constituency and the community college that was part of Coteau Range, for the most part nothing changes until the legislation in this House passes, because that will officially mandate the changes, if you like. The indication has been given, of course, based on the wishes and the desires of the people that wrote me, and there were a number . . . From a geographic standpoint, that part that was in Coteau Range will now be going to Weyburn in the south-east, and that was as they wished it. And I think there was some discussion between that and Swift Current, but I . . . My sense was, based on the correspondence I had, that this was their wish.

Assiniboia, the office will continue in so far as changes and what's available and courses, etc., etc. The only thing that will change there is as what will change across the province, and that is what's commonly known as the hobby courses will no longer be delivered by the regional college. We would expect that local interest groups may well deliver them if there's sufficient interest in any given community.

And I don't know whether you have the most recent boundary map that lays out the regional college districts. And the final one — at least I'm advised it's our most final — but I'll have a copy sent over to you to make sure that you see how it's laid out and have that understanding.

Mr. Goodale: — I thank the minister for that. Do I take it, Mr. Minister, from what you've said, that essentially in Assiniboia the office will remain where it is, doing essentially the same function? Can you indicate as yet what, if any, staffing changes will be occurring in that office. And can you give me some idea what process you are going through within the department in developing the curriculum to be offered through this office or through you and your officials engaged in to develop the new curriculum that you have spoken about in general terms in the House, but haven't yet provided us too much detail about?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — A couple of points here for the hon. member. First, as a point of clarification, just so you understand, these employees aren't employees of the Department of Education, and have never been. It's not unlike a school board relationship, that kind of thing. So in terms of what ultimately will be the staff and/or their job descriptions specifically in Assiniboia, I can't speak at this point in time for the regional board. They are also involved in this transition period which really doesn't become . . . They can't work in a solid sort of fashion, in terms of making some decisions, until the legislation passes. Which takes me back to my first comment about how Coteau Range . . . At this point in time we'll probably still fund it because that's, in a technical sense, how that has to work until the legislation is passed.

I guess what I'm trying to show you is that we have some complications here while the legislation . . . until the legislation is passes. It's not going to handcuff us in terms of delivering programs, or in terms of having an Assiniboia office staffed. The pay cheque may come from

one place for a while until we get things sorted out, that kind of thing.

The point I want to leave with you though on this, is that . . . And if I'm sounding vague on who and what, and what they'll be specifically doing in the Assiniboia office, I can't because that will be a decision of the regional board. But I can say that our expectation and our view probably would be that it wouldn't be staffed a terrible amount different than what we might expect across the rest of the province, in terms of . . . for a community that size.

Your other question is relative to curriculum. I'm not sure I totally understand it because they're not into curriculum development particularly, so I'm not really clear as to what you were getting at there. The local contact committees will still do their job in so far as if there is some view that a institute course or adult basic education or university extension course, there's substantial interest — the process that's always been in place, there'll virtually be no difference there. The difference, of course, is that we're going to be very much more proactive in delivering — and I hesitate to use the word because it sounds a bit eight-cylinderish — but we're going to be more proactive in delivering what one might call more sophisticated program which what is the people want: — more institute programming, more university classes. We're going to be more proactive on that and as part of that the regional colleges will be very hooked into our distance education initiatives — you know, the use of the new technology to deliver more and more programming to more and more areas in rural Saskatchewan.

So I don't know whether that answers your question relative to curriculum or what courses or whatever, but it gives you some sense of what I see happening there. We see this as a very positive step for communities such as Assiniboia and area. I think it's also fair to say that the south-east regional college which they have chosen to become a part of has been a very proactive and very . . . a very busy and aggressive community college and the board is currently under the chairmanship of Mary Halbert, who's a person who very much has her heart in adult education and doing a good job. And I think you'll be well served.

(2000)

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Minister, I think it's that hiatus period that I am concerned about. We seem to be in a never, never land here in the midst of this process of change. And what a number of people in my constituency are asking me is, what will effectively be available to them in the fall when they may be interested in pursuing some of the services and some of the programs through their local community college. They are pretty familiar with both the type of service that has been offered and the procedure by which they access that service over the course of the last number of years. But there has been a tremendous amount of change in the last few months. The process of change continues. As you say, things can't really begin to settle down into some new pattern until the legislation is adopted or amended or whatever, and while everything is up in the air people are asking a lot of questions in terms of specifically this fall and how they

will have access to the types of programs and courses they want.

And you may well not be in a position to answer their questions tonight but I wonder if you could indicate, Mr. Minister, specifically how people with questions about community college services in the Assiniboia district, how they can find answers to their questions in due course. Is there going to be, for example, a catalogue published that will indicate to them what the changes are, what new courses they may have access to, what they previously have had access to that no longer going to be available? It seems to be a rather confusing situation at the moment and I think people are anxious to know exactly what's available to them, and how they properly go about taking advantage of it.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I know, as the hon. member knows, as I suspect he's had some letters and calls too, that . . . I mean, initially the calls were of the nature of, what area are we going to be in and that kind of thing. And as the processes unfolded, all these things have been addressed.

I mean, I suppose when it came to things like the boundary, we could have sat in our little offices and said, well here is a nice boundary. But the view was that we ought to get some sense of what the people wanted. And that took a month or six weeks or maybe even more. And I think because of that, we've made the right . . . We're on the right line, if you like.

But I know during that process, of course, until it's drawn and they know for sure where they belong, there's some uncertainty. And then there's the additional situation of the clumsiness at this very point in time of dealing with two offices in some sense.

But I can assure you and assure the people there that if they have some inquiries and want some further understanding of what might be available, to contact their local contact person if they know them, or the Assiniboia office. If it isn't staffed, it will be shortly, with a secretary or a receptionist — that kind of thing at a minimum, I'm sure. The Coteau Range office in Moose Jaw, since they are still sort of technically the office until the legislation passes, I'm sure would be another contact point.

And finally to address your very question — and a sensible one, I might add — about, is there some kind of catalogue published or whatever. And there will be a calendar coming out shortly. And I think what you'll find in that calendar will verify what I said earlier, that we're not talking about less courses; we're going to be talking about more offerings. And the less, if there is any less, will be because some hobby courses . . . The hobby courses will have been dropped. So as much as there's certainly a transition period here, I don't see it holding us up or causing any great problems.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Chairman, I thank the minister for that information. I want to move on to another area. It has been discussed earlier in the estimates in some general way.

And it has to do with the new formulas adopted by the

Department of Education in relation to capital funding for school projects. And, Mr. Minister, I have received a number of inquiries about this. Perhaps the most telling one was a letter that I received some time ago, a copy of a letter that I received some time ago from the Unity Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 88.

There are portions of this letter that I would like to read into the record, Minister, in order to solicit your reactions to them. Maybe I could send you a copy of the letter over so you might be able to follow the point that I'm anxious to make. The letter, Mr. Minister, is dated June 19. It's addressed to the Premier and I understand that a copy was also forwarded to you for your information. I won't read the whole letter but I do want to read a couple of paragraphs that I think explain the predicament that this school division is in. And again for the record, the letter comes from the Unity Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 88, and it reads in part as follows:

To better explain the situation, let us compare the requirements of the old method to the implications of this new formula.

And again references are made to the capital funding formula for school projects.

From what information we have, under the old formula, the amount paid on an average capital project by a larger school division, when the 2.5 mill cap did not come into play, was 13 (per cent) to 17 per cent. If this larger school division were now required to pay the average 20 per cent of a capital project, the greatest effect this requirement would have on it would be to double its cost. However, it paints an entirely different picture for a small school division. As an example, let us use a school division with a \$5,000,000.00 assessment being granted approval of a \$5,000,000.00 capital project. Under the old formula the cost to the division would have been \$12,500.00 or 2.5 mills. Using the new funding method, and applying the average requirement of 20 per cent of the project, the cost to the same division is a \$100,000.00. This amounts to 20 mills for this school division, and is an 800 per cent increase over what was required in the past. An increase of such magnitude would be devastating to any school division, large or small.

Mr. Minister, the letter goes on to discuss certain issues related to the ability to pay, and then concludes with this paragraph:

Fearing for our very existence we, of course, feel very strongly about this issue and hope that our information can help you to realize the unfairness of the situation. Perhaps, due to the many other duties of government, you were not fully aware of the implications of this new method of financing school projects. Now in your awareness, it is our hopes that steps can be taken to correct the unjustness of it.

And the letter is signed by Mrs. Wildeman, the secretary-treasurer of the Unity Roman Catholic Separate

School Division No. 88.

Mr. Minister, I believe this particular school division has raised a very valid point in terms of the escalation in the demands being made by the department on local school divisions in terms of the local share that they will have to pick up in new capital projects. In the one example this school division uses, it amounts to potentially an 800 per cent increase.

As the letter points out, for larger school division, that's a substantial problem. For smaller school divisions and separate school division, it can be almost a catastrophic problem and I would ask you, Mr. Minister, if you could, to turn your attention specifically to this case referred to by the school at Unity, and if you will also in your answer, more generally to the principles upon which you and the department based your decision to increase your demands upon local school divisions in terms of the capital projects that they wish to undertake. What it might result in, Mr. Minister, is a state of affairs where those projects simply don't get done because local school divisions can't afford them any more. I'm sure you would agree with me that that would be a rather tragic state of affairs, especially for these smaller school divisions across rural Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, there's no question that there's been some changes in our approach on capital construction funding, and I outlined the reasons for these earlier in these estimates. And to some degree — maybe even to a large degree — I think we could say that there is a larger question of fairness that enters into the decision to change the formula, and I'll not get into the details of that argument again.

But it seems to me . . . I guess the question that I would raise here in answer to your question is, what this board was faced with on a . . . I understand the project was something in the neighbourhood of 635,000. Under the previous formula they would have had to cover the down payment, albeit a smaller number, in one year.

That does cause a big strain on smaller school divisions. There's no question about that. It causes a strain on lots of school divisions, and on larger school divisions even when they have to do capital projects, and that's why they are always well thought out and planned and not taken into consideration lightly, albeit smaller school boards probably don't do them as soon.

It was because of the fact that they had to come up with their down payment all in one year, that was part and parcel why we changed the formula, the process, so that instead of coming up with it all in one year they now come up with it over a period of 10 years. They can amortize it over 10 years.

Now the third point that's valid here, as it relates to a small school board, is the provisions in our formulas in education that have always made adjustments and have compensated for smaller school divisions and rural school boards are in the capital formula as well. So you get that same kind of compensating adjustment, which once again becomes . . . It satisfies the argument of fairness to those who are smaller and have less resources.

And the fourth thing that you should know here — and I'm not trying to suggest that this project will somehow be really easy for the local taxpayers, but of course given that this isn't really a cost, it's an investment in education and their children's future, I don't know as they look at it as burdensome ever — is that that school board has a \$120,000 surplus which is about equal to what they will have to come up with for the down payment.

(2015)

So as much as I am sensitive to the change in formula, I also believe that the change in process, in some ways, won't cause the strain on a yearly basis because it will be spread over 10 years. So what I'm saying is: — yes, there's changes. Are they going to create insurmountable hardships? I don't think so.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Minister, I don't know if this particular letter that I've sent across to you, dated June 19, from the Unity Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 88 to the Premier, has been referred to you for reply, although it does indicate that you received a copy of it for information.

Could you tell me if a formal detailed reply to that particular inquiry has been prepared and returned to Mrs. Wildeman, the secretary-treasurer?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'll have to take notice and check. I can follow up on that for you. We have a lot of material with us here but obviously we don't have access to all of our correspondence over the last few months. I'll look into it for you, and provide as you've requested.

Mr. Goodale: — I thank the minister for that. I know the school division, the last time I spoke with them, a matter of some two or three weeks ago, my information then was to the best of their knowledge a reply had not yet come. I wonder if the minister could attend to that.

And could he also indicate, either tonight or in the near future, how many capital projects across Saskatchewan were caught in mid-stream by the policy change? It would appear that this is one.

And I wonder if you have any information tonight, or if you could provide it shortly, as to which projects, how many of them in total, what type of projects, and for how much money, were caught in this problem of a policy change, beginning their planning on one grant formula basis and finding out that, before they were finished their plans, the formula had changed and they were suddenly going to have to contribute much more locally than they had anticipated when they originally envisaged the project.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — In a very technical sense, I don't know if there's any projects that were caught in mid-stream. The projects that were approved last year, and there's a number of steps in project approval, and the ones that were at the . . . had the right stamp of approval as opposed to a look and concept, etc., etc., etc., were done under that. And I suspect, you know, if I look at the history of this thing, as I understand it, there's some school

divisions that put their projects forth 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 years sometimes before they're high on the priority list and go forward. So I don't know in the technical sense if there's any caught in mid-stream.

When they were planning last year to build a new project, albeit for 2 or 3 or 4 years down the road, they might have been working on one set of assumptions, but as you know, things do change from year to year, and this is one of the things that has now changed.

I don't know as they're caught totally off guard, because how we got to where we got to on this new formula was as a result of some consultations that were held about nine or 10 months ago with a number of . . . with virtually I think, all of the board chairmen and directors across Saskatchewan. And there was a number of issues raised that I talked about earlier in the House; you know, roof repair formulas, and all those kinds of things. They themselves raised points. I suspect that what we're seeing here is some ideas that came forward from a number of meetings.

Mr. Goodale: — Minister, I thank you for that answer, although I think you've at least implied in your answer that you acknowledge that there is some disruption and some difficulty for some school divisions as a result of the change, and only time will tell whether it's for the better or the worse. But there are certainly some school divisions that are presently very apprehensive about the proposed change.

I want to move on to one other subject, Mr. Minister. I have three other areas in total I would like to raise with you this evening, and I'll try to do that as briefly as I can.

One has to do with what has happened in the last six months to the education development fund. And I have before me a list of concerns expressed on behalf of the Regina public school teachers' association in May of this year. They make the point that, as recently as January of 1987, the Department of Education was emphasizing the importance of long-range planning. School boards and teachers were being encouraged to plan and implement innovative programs through the EDF (educational development fund) system in a long-range, well-planned, thought out in advance way. The Regina public school teachers' association indicated in their presentation to me that in their school division they had committed to 11 ongoing projects before the EDF was changed. As a result of the EDF changes, the watering down of that fund from a five-year period to a 10-year period, they saw six of those ongoing projects cut immediately, and of the five remaining projects, they wonder if few of, or any of them, will continue into the future, and they note that no new projects have been invited for this year.

Mr. Minister, they made the point that they were encouraged to start their planning with respect to the EDF, in an innovative, long-range approach, and they find that a year or so into that process, the rules of the game once again change and they're dealing with a much weaker program than they had originally anticipated.

And I can tell you, Mr. Minister, that I hear that complaint

coming from more than just Regina. I recall a conversation I had with a number of educators in the Humboldt district who made a number of the same points and indicated that they were in a rather awkward predicament, having budget originally for both the new programs they wished to undertake and the new staff that they wished to engage, all flowing from the EDF process, but once EDF was watered down, they had money left either to pay for the program or to hire the staff but not to do both. And obviously the one is useless without the other.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, what firm, confident assurances you can give to these professional educators who see what was originally a very good idea that a lot of people in Saskatchewan applauded, see that idea being watered down to the point where in many respects for at least some school divisions, it's almost rendered as being useless to them.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well relative to the education development fund . . . And I'm not so sure . . . Before you were a member of this House, were you the one that said it would never be put into place in the first place? well the reality was, it was put in place, and it's still in place. The \$150 million fund is still intact. It started out as a five-year fund, yes. It soon became a six-year fund. And this year it's now become a fund that's going to be stretched out over 10 years. I acknowledge all that; we've been into that debate several times in this House.

The important point is the money is still there. If I back up and explain to the hon. member as to why we stretched it over 10 months, in my discussions leading up to this budget and particularly after the Hon. Minister of Finance tabled his economic statement, I recall meeting with the president of Saskatchewan School Trustees Association and some other representatives there, specifically discussing, given what our expectations can be that education for the most part will be shielded from the budget exercise. And I think if you look at the blue book, all things considered, most people say that given the times, we've done not bad there. And I think you would acknowledge that the number this year is somewhat slightly larger than last year, and school operating grants are 99 per cent level they were last year. So all things considered, I think most trustees acknowledge that it's been a reasonable budget for them.

What they indicated to me in this strategy was this, and this is why we have what we have. As I said, given what the economic statement says, above all, preserve the base operating grant. And that's what we did at 99 per cent level of last year.

They said, if you have to use something as a shock absorber, so to speak, use the EDF because many school districts and boards didn't spend up all their allocation that they were allocated. And rightly so, because the idea was, don't rush into this money and spend it just because it's going to be there and it might not be there next year. And that's why we've made certain that we've kept it in place for 10 years, so that you could plan and do it as needed and as made sense, and in well thought out projects, etc., etc.

So I think the important thing to note here, in terms of the commitment that you asked for, is the \$100 million fund intact? The answer is yes. Will projects get done that they wanted to get done? And I think again the answer is yes. Maybe some not as quickly as before, and let's not forget why the fund was put in place. It was to enhance the change and the K to 12 process as it relates to the Directions and curriculum change and all those kinds of things. And I've said in this House before that our commitment there is still very much on the front burner and, if anything, we want to speed it up.

So as much as one can find examples of uncertainty, once again, more than the real examples of what's happened as a result of it, I think at the end of the day, you'll see that the process has not been an unreasonable one and not going to cause any jeopardy in terms of the quality of education, particularly.

In fact, we ought to be very happy that the minister and our Premier had the foresight before I came into this portfolio to establish it. Because the one thing I've sensed and learned since I got into this portfolio as I've met with other ministers across Canada and indeed, across Europe, I would suggest to hon. member that once again Saskatchewan could hold its head high. And the fact that we've got into the directions process and established this excellence fund that puts us ahead of others right across Canada and, indeed, right across the world. And I guess that's where we've always been in Saskatchewan education, is ahead of the pack. I think this will keep us there.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Chairman, I wonder, in light of that answer, if the minister can give us two assurances. First of all, that there will not be any further extension of the time frame for EDF; that it won't go from five years to six years to 10 years; and some point in the future, even beyond that, that there's no risk of any further watering down. And will he also give us the assurance that there is some prospect that the government may, in fact, reverse that trend and decide to tighten it up once again and counteract the watering down, perhaps as early as next year's budget.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — If you would give me the assurance that our government will be re-elected, I think I can say that the fund won't be tampered with while we're here. And if you give me that assurance, I'll give you the equal assurance on this side.

I mean, I think I've said in this House before, and I say again, that the fund is intact, albeit it stretched over 10 years. If you're asking me if I can predict anything in the next four years that would . . . or five years that would alter that course, I can't say that I . . . There would have to be a pretty catastrophic event.

(2030)

At the same time, I can't give it to you in blood, if you like, but our commitment and our view and our planning, if you like, is all based on the fact that, yes, the \$150 intact is going to be over 10 years, and that's the way we're going to proceed.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Chairman, I'll move on to one other item. It has to do with university financing in the province of Saskatchewan. And I'm interested, Mr. Minister, in the state of affairs that might exist today between you and the University of Regina.

I recall this spring's convocation at the University of Regina where the president of the university delivered a very strong address which dealt at some considerable length with the issue of accountability . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the president of the university was very vigorous that morning in dealing with the issue of accountability as he saw it. And I just quote one line to refresh the minister's memory from the speech of Dr. Barber. He said on that occasion:

Universities have served society well and will continue to do so, but not if they are forced into a bureaucratic strait-jacket in the name of accountability.

I wonder, just briefly, if the minister can give us a report on that state of affairs in relation to the relationship between his department and the University of Regina, and whether the series of concerns that have been expressed earlier in the spring have since been resolved.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, and hon. member, I like to think that the relationship between myself and the university president, the University of Regina, and the board of governors, for that matter, is a constructive one. Certainly we've had many opportunities at dialogue. That doesn't mean to say that the president doesn't express his views when he wishes, as should be the case.

I think we've heard further . . . previous discussion in this House in estimates about . . . albeit that we presented a brief to both boards of governors, that their autonomy is very much intact. It has not been trampled on or anything like that.

The board of governors continues to operate the college there, albeit that they have had to make some tough decisions in their budgeting process. Any decision, I suppose, to alter programming will always hurt somebody, but I think their priorities have been very much in the right place — maintain that essential core, that critical core, which is what we transmitted to them as being our view of the approach that they should take. It was up to them as to identify that core; this they have done. They have, I think, a game plan in hand to deal with their deficit.

I've been very happy with the feedback and the dialogue I've had with the university, both the president and the board of governors, and that doesn't mean to say at times that the discussion hasn't been very frank because it has been.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Minister, would you not agree, as a result of what transpired in the spring in relation to the universities, the restrictions with respect to expenditures at one university, enrolment limitations applied, in other places tuition increases going up, a memo from you to the universities offering them certain, one might say, advice

... I think you would have to concede it was expressed in somewhat stronger terms than just advice. Would you not agree, Mr. Minister, as a consequence of all of that, that we do have a state of affairs in Saskatchewan at the present time where the accessibility to our universities is less than it used to be, and the academic freedom available to our universities is, in fact, less than it used to be?

I know those are two things that are rather intangible and hard to measure, but in terms of education in Saskatchewan, they are critically important. And there are many people in this province, both inside and outside the university community, who believe that those institutions are now less accessible and, in fact, there have been some constraints imposed upon legitimate academic freedom.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I think the hon. member, when he addresses the question of accessibility — as other members in this House have — I think one has to be very careful on this one to not take a simplistic analysis on it. And I don't mean to be criticizing; I'm just saying that you have only engaged in simplistic analysis.

But I think too often, at first blush on looking at that question, you come to the conclusions that you have. And I guess I can say to you quite frankly that having examined the issue in something more than just that first blush, that quite frankly what you say, the opposite is true.

And how would I support my argument that accessibility to our education system — our post-secondary educational institutes — has increased? Well you only have to look at the Issues and Options paper that the University of Saskatchewan put out. And a very good paper, I might add. I think president Kristjanson and his whole team there that have been spearheading that process have done just a fantastic job. And as I said in this House before, they've been prepared to lay out where we're at and where we ought to go and in that process there are certainly some challenges and some tough questions that face us. But they're haven't put their heads in the sand on this; they're looking at the questions.

But to address specifically the question of accessibility and the comments that they made in there about how accessibility to our institutions has in fact increased, I would remind the hon. member ... Perhaps he wasn't in the House in estimates in days past, when I talked about how if one was to back up 50 years and look at the per cent of the adult population that could in fact enjoy a university education, the number was something in the order of 3 per cent.

And we got into the '50s and the '60s and the numbers rose, albeit slowly, to now where we're at a point where it's 15 per cent plus. And in the city of Saskatoon they surveyed a school board there — high school students — 35 per cent, I think, is the number I read into the record here a couple of nights ago. We can check it if you like.

Thirty-five per cent. Thirty-five per cent — more than one in three — from that Saskatoon school board that they surveyed went on to university. Now I say, what a tremendous mark of accomplishment in this province,

where we've gone from 3 per cent to a school board in Saskatoon — albeit that not all may be like that — where one out of three went on to university.

I'm sure maybe even more would have, but there were obviously some who didn't choose that. They went into institutes and technical courses and other post-second institutions. If you talk about accessibility, is that not something we should be proud of — that the numbers have gone up even in the last six, seven years? I think the enrolments have increased 35 per cent.

And some people see those, I think, as you do sometimes, on looking at it at first blush, that that's a problem, that we should be somehow unhappy that enrolments went up 35 per cent because our classrooms are very busy and there's scheduling problems sometimes because of those. But the fact of the matter is, as enrolments went up 35 per cent, funding went up 60 per cent and inflation was 35 per cent at the same time. So we've kept pace with enrolments in terms of funding and it's a mark of accomplishment that we have the enrolments that we do have.

But more than that, you may have heard me talk in earlier days in this House about what we want to do in terms of making accessibility even, or making courses, university programming, available to all Saskatchewan. We've talked about the distance education and the regional colleges, and their explicit mandate to deliver technical and institute and university programming across this province. And we saw a story in the Leader-Post where the University of Saskatchewan can deliver English and history, I think it is, to 14 communities.

So not only are we making the institutions more accessible, but we're not going to provide more programming into the Swift Currents and the Meadow Lakes and the Assiniboias and the Weyburns and the Estevans and the Nipawins of this province. I think we have made great strides forward and we'll continue to make great strides forward.

Mr. Goodale: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think on that last point, we could have an interminable debate, and I won't wade into it at the present time.

I have one other technical area I wish to raise with the minister. In terms of the blue book, Minister, for the estimates of your department, could you give me the total figure when all of your funding for post-secondary education costs, operating grants, and otherwise, is added together — the total figure for that category for this year?

When I add up the numbers I come up with a figure something in the order of 205 or \$206 million, and I wonder if that's approximately in the right ball park.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The best number I can give the hon. member, because it's ... It's not broke down that way, because we've got the amalgamation, we've got some efficiencies there. And so it's hard to know whether we should assign 42 per cent of one number to K to 12; and 63 per cent of another number. I'll give you a best guess, and it's \$270 million.

Mr. Goodale: — Would the minister . . . Was that number 270, 270 million?

Will the minister just briefly indicate what categories of things go into that calculation. And perhaps if it's not possible to do that tonight, he might provide that to me in writing at a later stage, but at his earliest convenience, just so that I can have for reference the total number committed by the Government of Saskatchewan in the 1987-88 fiscal year for post-secondary education in total, and what categories go into making up that total.

And, Mr. Chairman, presuming the minister will provide that in writing at a later stage, I would like to ask the minister one final question in relation to the contribution to post-secondary education coming from the province of Saskatchewan as compared to the amount that comes from the Government of Canada and the amount that is contributed by students in the form of tuition fees. There has been, in my judgement, a worrisome trend in the last number of years which has seen the federal share steadily increasing, the share contributed by students steadily increasing, and the share actually contributed out of the resources of the province of Saskatchewan going down.

(2045)

It's one thing for the minister to refer to global increases in revenue in a budget for education, but it takes on a much different light when one considers the source of at least part of that provincial money is not the resources of the province of Saskatchewan, but in fact transfer payments from the Government of Canada. And I'm concerned to know, out of the total for post-secondary education, how much of that is Saskatchewan originated, how much of that originates in Ottawa, and how much is left over for students to pay themselves in the form of tuition.

We have seen suggestions, Mr. Minister, that in the coming year, we could have the rather peculiar state of affairs where tuition fees would in fact amount to a larger contribution to the costs of post-secondary education than the amount being put in by the Government of Saskatchewan. And that, I think, is important to get straight in terms of the relative shares. How much originates in Ottawa, how much originates with the Government of Saskatchewan, and how much originates with students themselves? As I say, if you're not in a position to provide that detailed breakdown tonight, I'd be happy to receive it in writing at your earliest convenience.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — We'll get that to you as soon as we can, maybe even yet tonight.

Your second point relative to the money that comes from the federal government, and is the government passing it on or is it somehow being stuck in the Consolidated Fund and not being passed on — we went through those arguments here in this House in estimates in the last couple of days, but I'm happy to go through them again. And in fact the students at the universities have raised the same question for me.

And here are the facts. Saskatchewan's expenditures on

post-secondary education increased by 17.1 per cent from '83-84 to '85-86, the highest rate of increase among the provinces. That was what that report said. And just to dispel any view that somehow we're not passing the money along, I'll give you another fact. Saskatchewan's expenditures on post-secondary education have risen by 50 per cent over the last five years, while total EPF (established program of financing) entitlements rose by only 35 per cent during that period. So no matter which way you come at it, no matter which way you look down the tube, our funding of post-secondary education, I mean, is virtually second to none. And I know there is a report that questions, you know, who's spending what on what. I think virtually every province is of the view, and rightly so, that there is some understating going on there by the feds, and in our case, I think I read into the record \$35 million the other evening when we were discussing this same point. So I will assure you, as I assured the other members of the NDP opposition, that we're passing along what we get and then some, in spades. And I absolutely and sincerely and categorically stand by that statement.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Minister, is it correct to say that in fiscal 1987-88 the total of tax transfers and such transfers to the province of Saskatchewan from the Government of Canada for EPF will be in the order of \$200 million?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'll have to refer you to the Minister of Finance in his estimates because that's where that transaction falls under.

Mr. Goodale: — I will pursue that, Mr. Minister, with the Minister of Finance, but it would seem to me that if your total commitment to post-secondary education is in the order of 270 million, as you've suggested in an earlier answer, and if roughly 200 million of that comes from the Government of Canada, then two-thirds, more than two-thirds, of what's being expended by the province of Saskatchewan in post-secondary education is actually originating with Ottawa. And that seems to get quite away from the principle of equal sharing federally and provincially in relation to post-secondary education. And I think it does indicate that there has been, in the last decade or so, not entirely under your government — certainly under the previous administration — an erosion of the provincial side of the bargain.

Mr. Minister, there are a number of other questions that I would like to have the opportunity to pursue with you, some of which I may raise when we get to the detailed clause by clause items. But I would just like to leave you with one final message as I conclude my questioning. And that is, when no one in Saskatchewan wants to remain stuck in the past and allow the future to pass us by, I think it would do the government well to be cognizant of the worries — and I don't think it's too strong a word to use: — the distress — which a good many of the changes which you have proposed have created in the minds of many Saskatchewan people. And the people of Saskatchewan will be watching closely and critically to determine for themselves whether or not the rosy picture, which you have done your best to convey in relation to education, in fact comes to pass, or whether the changes that have been instituted in the last six months will lead to a situation where education in this province declines rather than moves forward. I think you are dealing with a

cautious and a sceptical public that has been rather shell-shocked by the conduct of the government in a number of respects over the last six months. And there's a lot of goodwill, on the part of this government, that needs to be earned back because in the process of what's happened in the last six months a lot of goodwill has been squandered.

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2 agreed to.

Item 3

Mr. Kowalsky: — With respect to item 3 in the budget item, the first budget item, the staff component in person-years has gone down from 62.2 to 61.1, yet the amount expended has gone up from 2.319 million to 2.407 million. Could you explain what has happened there, and how come we've got an increase in budgeted amounts in view of salaries being frozen other places.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The training division that you're inquiring about a half a person reduction — I don't really think that's a big issue, and the reality is, the money has gone up.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I would ask for a repetition. I wasn't able to hear that last portion of the statement. In this . . . I think you said the money went down, but I'm not certain. The money did quite clearly go up.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I'm advised that, albeit we're dealing with a small . . . I guess your question is: — if we've got half a person less, the money went up a little bit . . . I think the difference is merely because the mix of salaries has changed during the course of the year. We maybe have some more people there now who are at a slightly higher salary level. There's no particular reason other than that kind of thing — the mix that existed at any one point in time in that division.

Mr. Kowalsky: — It has nothing to do with increments?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — No, it does not.

Item 3 agreed to.

Item 4

Mr. Kowalsky: — In item 4, the staff component went from 9.9 to 7.9, down two. The average staff . . . The average cost in '86-87 was 32,800. By my figures the average cost in '87-88 is 38,000, which is quite a hike. Could you explain the reason there?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm advised that the . . . What you see before you, the basis for it is that there were some staff that were transferred to the institute and for the most part clerical, whose salaries were lower, which left those that were left with a relatively speaking higher salary, and hence that's why you get that particular mix.

Item 4 agreed to.

Item 5

Mr. Kowalsky: — Once again with respect to the staffing under item 5, does the same answer apply as to item 4, or is there possibly some severance pay that's being paid here?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, there's some severance involved in this one, I'm advised.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Could I be advised as to the amount of severance if you have it here today. If you don't have it here today, would you give it to me soon.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'll have to forward you that information and there may be some . . . We have to have some legal advice on what we can forward relative to severance settlements. And what I can give, I will give you, but we don't have it here tonight.

Item 5 agreed to.

Item 6 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

Item 9

Mr. Kowalsky: — I ask you a question, Mr. Minister, with respect to day care facilities that were built at the Northern Institute of Technology. My understanding is there were approximately \$40,000 spent to develop the facility, and my understanding is, to this date the licence has not been granted. The place is not licensed to operate as a day-care centre. Is it your intention not to ever license this, or what has happened there? Why is the facility lying without a licence so that the staff and the students can have the facility open the way it should be as a practical situation?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, it has to be licensed. It's licensed by social services, and we're of the view that it will be licensed this year and operational.

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, earlier in these estimates the minister promised us that he would give us information on a contractual arrangement that existed between his government and his department and the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board — \$121,000-a-year contract.

(2100)

The Moose Jaw Exhibition Board was renting out facilities to the truck driver training and heavy equipment operator training programs which his department has chosen to cancel. I wonder if he can now indicate to this Assembly whether he is going to be paying out that contract to 1991 with the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board, or whether he is going to be buying the Moose Jaw Exhibition Board out for a lesser price, or whether he is cancelling the contract completely.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I don't know as I can give you a much different answer than I gave you the other day — that the property management corporation is handling it, and we don't view this as an either/or situation. There's negotiations that are ongoing, and I don't know what more I can tell you, quite frankly.

It's in the hand of the officials of the property management corporation. We're aware of it, and we don't know whether yet there might be some space that we might need to use it, or whether we buy it out. But I mean, we're aware of our legal obligations.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Chairman, another question. Just briefly, clarification with respect to tuition fee increases.

Mr. Minister, you originally said that tuition fee increases at the technical institutes would be limited to a 15 per cent increase. Would you acknowledge now that this is in fact not the case — that if courses run longer than average, in fact, tuition can be far higher than a 15 per cent increase? It can be up as much as 25 per cent. Would you acknowledge that and explain to this House why that's the case?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The tuition fee increase, to be very specific about the numbers, is it's a 14.2 per cent increase based on a 38-week course length. Now in the past it didn't matter whether the course was 38 weeks or 40 weeks, or 42 weeks, it was the same tuition fee. Okay? There was no discrimination, or to put it another way . . .

An. Hon. Member: — It wasn't weighted.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — It wasn't weighted, would be another way of putting it.

Now there is no cap, so if you're a 40- or 42-week course, it's been adjusted to reflect that, and then I suppose that'd be a one-time event. So if there is some increases that are larger than 14.2 per cent it would be because those courses are probably 40 or 42 weeks in length. Do you understand what I'm saying?

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, in effect is that somebody who is taking a 42-week course and is going into their second year, could find that they've got a tuition increase as much as 22 per cent. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm advised that there might be some instances where it could be that high.

Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Minister, I think you should have been clearer with students about that before you implemented that. Because, in fact, in many cases your tuition rate increase is much higher than you earlier indicated.

I want to just ask two other brief questions. One is with respect to the Regina Plains Community College. Can you advise me how many staff positions have been eliminated there? And can you explain to this Assembly why you chose to cut back on instructors in areas such as life skills training and native life skills, when your government is supposed to be emphasizing a new initiative in the area of literacy, and encouraging people who have been out of the educational system for some time to get back into it? Don't your cuts to native life skills, and life skills and career planning instructors fly in the face of that initiative, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm advised as it relates to Regina

Plains, there were two in scope and two out of scope at the administrative level where the positions were abolished. Due to program adjustments, there may be, as well, some instructors' positions abolished in the programming. In both instances all efforts are being made to accommodate the individuals.

But once again this initiative relates somewhat to the whole process of amalgamation and how that all tucks together. But I can give you every assurance that we're trying to . . . as we've done at the institute level, and very successfully, at accommodating those who face lay-offs.

The other point I want to make is the hon. member made just a quick shot about student tuition fees. A quick comment about how we arrived at the number this year — 15 per cent or 14.2 per cent. I guess I would just read into the record a letter I received June 16, 1987 from SECTIS, the Student Executive Council of Technical Institutes in Saskatchewan, which is the umbrella student organization. And I want to commend them for their intelligence and their constructiveness with which they approach this, and the responsibility and the very responsible nature in which these students approached this business of setting a tuition fee in conjunction and consultation with myself. And the letter goes:

Dear Mr. Hepworth: — In regard to our meeting of May 25, 1987, the stance SECTIC (which is a student organization) put forward is as follows:

- (1) 15 per cent increase this year in tuition;
- (2) putting a package together for September 1, 1987 that will address tuition for the next five to 12 years.

So the number that we arrived at, Mr. Chairman, was based on in consultation with the students who, I might say, I congratulate them for taking a very responsible attitude here. They too have a vested interest in excellence and recognize that some changes have to be made.

And I wanted to let the hon. member know that this wasn't a fee increase that I dreamed up in isolation. It was done in consultation and in fact on their recommendation.

Item 9 agreed to.

Item 10 agreed to.

Item 11

Mr. Kowalsky: — With respect to item 11, curriculum development, I see that you've down-sized your staff from 25.8 to 21.8. This is the department which would be responsible for implementing the core curriculum, I would expect, Mr. Minister. How do you expect to do this with four fewer staff members, particularly new staff members in there when you let a lot of people go? And I also noticed, Mr. Minister, the average salary has gone up to 38,000 to 46 or closer to 47,000. How much of that is due to severance pay? The end result that I see here, Mr. Minister, is that you've got fewer staff but it's actually

costing you close to \$30,000 more to operate that particular . . . the personnel services under that particular item, curriculum development.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — We're down four positions. Two were position abolishments, two were early retirements, although I'm advised that because of the early retirements it may well be that over the long haul there will be some replacement there. And yes, the number which is an increase reflects as well some settlements, and I'll give you the same undertaking on that as I did for the earlier question tonight.

Item 11 agreed to.

Item 12 agreed to.

Item 13

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, the other day I had an opportunity to raise some questions regarding special education services during these estimates. And one of the themes that you've been trying to develop from to make your case in this estimate is the whole theme of consultation. When I was raising the question of special education, and shortly thereafter I had a chance to talk with the chairperson of the public school board here in Regina. And that chairperson informs me that the changes in the special education funding which your department will administer, was not done in consultation, to his knowledge, with the school board, and that he was not aware of the changes from a per pupil basis to a block funding proposal.

My question to you, Mr. Minister, is: — if this is the sign of consultation that you so proudly talk about, are the rest of the school boards in the province going to find out about changes to their funding through whatever, whether it's special education or any other program deliveries, are they going to find out after de facto manner — after you've made the decision, and after the fact? Or will you, in fact, before you make changes to the block funding program for special education and implement those changes, will you consult with school boards throughout the province before you make those block funding changes?

That question applies to number 14. It's my mistake. I thought we were on number 14; we're on number 13. The same question will apply when we reach number 14.

Item 13 agreed to.

Item 14

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm advised that there's been extensive consultation relative to this issue. In fact, I'm advised that the director of special education took an entire year, set it aside to produce a report that was in consultation with virtually everybody, and the final point I would make is the changes are not yet made, as I think I mentioned in the very first time we addressed this issue.

(2115)

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, just a very brief question. Was

the person in charge of special education for the Regina Public School Board, were they involved in the decision-making or consultation process?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, I don't know whom the director talked to specifically, but I can tell you, emphatically tell you, that there was extensive consultation, and I don't mean that in some moot way.

Mr. Lyons: — One question on this issue, Mr. Minister. Will you undertake then, prior to any changes that you implement in terms of funding for special education in the province, will you meet with those people from the school boards affected in the province to discuss it before you in fact implement those changes?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I would suggest that that's already been done.

Item 14 agreed to.

Item 15 agreed to.

Item 16

Mr. Prebble: — Just one question. There's been six positions cut here. Can the minister indicate what is being cut at the school for the deaf?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — For school of deaf, five early retirements and one vacancy that was eliminated. And these are a reflection of the demographics that I addressed earlier that the rubella outbreak which produced a number of that disability, passed through the system, if you like.

Item 16 agreed.

Item 17

Mr. Kowalsky: — Item 17, education media services, has been cut by eight staff. The average salary has gone from 22,000 to 31,000. Is that once again largely due to severance, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, there was some . . . or will be some settlements there.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Then would you give me the same undertaking for this item?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes.

Item 17 agreed to.

Items 18 and 19 agreed to.

Item 20

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Minister, the other day in the questioning on the estimates, you were going to give me the number of staff that had been in the library system from 1982 through to 1987. Do you have that number?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Can we carry on and I'll get it to

you as soon as I can. I think we have . . . the sheet was here and I think I had it and I've misplaced it. But I'll give it to you as quickly . . . I'm sure we have another copy; I'll get it to you as soon as we can.

Ms. Smart: — Well I will be pleased to receive the figures that you would give to me. But when I was looking back in the estimates, I discovered that the number of professional and technical staff that have been cut from the Saskatchewan Library from 1982 until now has been 20 staff — 20 staff cut; and four staff cut just in the last year. The budget has gone down, the library has been subsumed into the Department of Education because it's here as a special vote here instead of being as a separate, autonomous, independent public institution. And for me it's just another example of how your promotion of the information age in the knowledge-based industry is just a lot of hot air hype.

Item 20 agreed to.

Item 21 agreed to.

Item 22

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Minister, this item 22 is a new item to the Education budget, total expenditure of \$23,850,000. We have no information whatsoever as to just what the purpose of this expenditure is, and I would like to have some detailed answers as to how you are spending money under this item. What are you getting for this money, and what are we getting for this money, Mr. Minister? We want to know what spaces you are leasing, by location and by square footage.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Departments now are charged for accommodation space they occupy and for mail they send and have delivered to them, and the moneys are allocated in each departmental budget, which were previously budgeted in the Department of Supply and Services. So that's the difference.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Are any of the spaces that are . . . Is all the expenditure due to spaces . . . to the rental of spaces, Mr. Minister? And are any of these spaces vacant?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — As I've mentioned, there is space facilities. The other thing is the mail. Is there vacant space? Yes. I mean, I think your colleague raised the question of the Moose Jaw space. With the amalgamation, administratively, we've been able to free up a whole floor, and I suspect there's maybe some other instances.

Some of it may be in a fluid state yet, relative to the revamping of the new institute and the amalgamation of the urban colleges and institutes. So it will be in hand in property management, and the bottom line on this is: — this is an example of more efficient government. And albeit that we've got some freed up space here in the transition period, but at the end of the day the taxpayers of this province will be well served by this initiative.

Mr. Kowalsky: — What I wanted to know then, Mr. Minister, is: — I'd like to have a paper with some detail on it as to exactly what the location of the spaces are and

where they're being leased. Will you give a commitment to make that available to members on this side?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I've got some stuff here on some briefing notes, and I'll undertake to meet your request. Perhaps I can get that done for you tomorrow.

Item 22 agreed to.

Items 23 to 27 inclusive agreed to.

Item 28

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all just a question of clarification to the minister. Can he indicate with respect to university capital projects whether that falls under item 30 or whether I should be addressing it now? I assume it's item 30, but I want to be sure.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Under item 30, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

My second question is with respect to the decision that the University of Regina has made to phase out the School of Human Justice in this province, and to phase out the community education centre in Saskatoon. I think my colleague will be addressing the phase-out in Prince Albert.

But I want to say that you, Mr. Minister, have talked a good deal in this House about how you want to take initiatives in distance education, and yet I see the social work extension program as being a model in this province for distance education. And I'm wondering how you see the severe cuts to extension offerings that the School of Social Work is now being forced to make as squaring with your commitment to expanding distance education in this province.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — As it relates to the universities and the boards of governors, whether it be at the University of Saskatchewan or the University of Regina, and their decisions in so far as what programs they will offer and what they will not offer, clearly that falls within the realm of their autonomy, and I don't think the hon. member would want me to interfere with that autonomy.

As it relates to the specific programs we've talked about, my understanding is that as they wind down or down-size them, or whatever, that they are going to undertake to make sure that people in the middle of that programming will have an opportunity to finish, and I think that sounds very, very reasonable.

Now if the hon. member is saying to me that as I went across Saskatchewan — Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, rural and urban Saskatchewan — did I hear people pounding on my door saying, you know, we want human justice, we want human justice courses; I didn't hear that. What I heard them saying is, we want access to first and second year Arts and Science, we want access to more institute programming; that's what I heard them saying.

And so, first of all, I'm not about to second-guess the universities' decision because, secondly, I think it's not inconsistent with what I heard across Saskatchewan. And, as I said, I'm not about to interfere with their autonomy.

Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I would say to the minister that there are a number of ways of eroding the autonomy of the universities in this province, and one of them, Mr. Minister, is consistent underfunding so that the universities are forced to make cuts that under ordinary circumstances they would never choose to make. And I would suggest to you, sir, that this is one of those cuts.

Now, Mr. Minister, I want to ask you another question with respect to the funding of the universities, and that is that I simply want to plead with you again: — will you lift your two-year budget freeze on the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan and fund them at at least their real cost increases that they face in the coming two fiscal years — in other words, their rate of inflation? Will you not, please, one final time, reconsider your decision to freeze their budgets and provide them with the funding they so desperately need to offset the crisis in post-secondary education that we face on these two campuses.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Our game plan, as we can best determine it and the best direction that we can give universities and their boards of governors, was laid out in the briefs to them. And to this very day, we stand by that. The funding has been far ahead of enrolment increases; it's been far ahead of inflation. We have an admirable track record, as high as you'll find anywhere in Canada.

(2130)

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Minister, you mentioned that where you went, that you didn't hear anybody saying, we want human justice and we want social work. And I assure you very sincerely that I can take you, and within 15 minutes of hitting the city of Prince Albert, I can take you to a place where people will be telling you that right sincerely and desperately.

We've got a pipeline there of people in the School of Human Justice and the School of Social Work that will take up to seven or eight more years to finish their courses, because these are people who are working on the job and taking two or three courses per year and finding that that's a very efficient way for them to do it.

I want to emphasize, Madam Chairman, just how unique the School of Human Justice and the School of Social Work in the community education centres were and are regarded by the people that work there and the people that have gone through the courses. And when I asked them about it, they told me that the biggest advantage was that the courses were being taught in their natural communities, as opposed to their artificial communities. And they told me that field learning occurs in all of the classes.

As a result of them having taken classes there, they say that, not only does it give them the qualifications, but it leads to other concrete developments right in the community. They're able to provide services to drug

abusers, to handicapped children, to schools, and to the elderly.

It actually . . . The phase-out . . . The freeze of money to the universities which resulted in this phase-out actually contradicts the objectives of your department as stated in this book, *Preparing for the Year 2000*, where it talks about providing greater access to adult education and training in more organized manner for people living outside major urban centres.

I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, whether you're considering, in view of the universities having their funding cut and having to cut this facility to the city of Prince Albert, will you consider setting up some alternate type of funding for it and do something to ensure that this valuable service to the community is not lost?

Mr. Chairman, I didn't get an answer to my question. The question was: — will you undertake to provide some alternate type of funding other than . . . seeing as how the funding will no longer come through the universities because of the cuts to the university and they refuse to fund it. Are you prepared to look at a concept of a university centre or something like that in Prince Albert so that this valuable service is not lost?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — No, I'm not going to get into duplicating the role of the university and operating it out of the Department of Education. But I would say that, as we pass the legislation for the new institute and it's up and running, they will have the mandate explicitly to deliver as programming that the communities wish, and I'll leave it at that.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Chairman, just one more point for clarification. Mr. Minister, I assume with respect to the funding, the funding cuts to the feed testing lab at the University of Saskatchewan and to the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan, that neither of those directly relate to your department. Is that true, that they come out of Agriculture and Health? I just want to be sure about that.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — My understanding is those are not out of this budget, our of Education estimates.

Item 28 agreed to.

Item 29 agreed to.

Item 30

Mr. Prebble: — Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask the minister a question about the College Avenue campus in Regina. When can we expect, Mr. Minister, that you will put in place funding for either a new fine arts building for the University of Regina, or major renovations to the College Avenue campus for the University of Regina? That's been at the top of their capital construction planning list for some time. When can they expect a funding commitment from your government for that kind of a project?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I can't . . . As I know as the hon. member would expect, I can't give you any

commitment on that project. I'm advised that there's been some pretty active negotiations and some discussions around it. It's not as though there's nothing being done, but I can't lock myself into anything. In fact, I'm advised that there's a number of alternatives that may be there, may present themselves, and so I'll just leave it at that.

Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Minister, you know this project has been waiting for a long time for some response from your government, and I would urge you to give it a higher priority in future budgets. I think it's unfortunate that it's not in this one.

I want to ask you two other questions about capital funding. One is with respect to the College of Agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan. What moneys are designated for College of Agriculture construction in this budget? It's a specific figure. And over what time-frame do you see constructing that project?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — In this year's budget for that particular project there's \$2 million. And just to address your initial point about who waits for what projects: — the project you raised earlier, the fine arts, waited a long time when your government was in power. And I'll tell you what, every farmer and every university researcher and faculty member in agriculture knows that the agriculture university building waited a long, long time and never did come to pass under your government — 25 years, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Prebble: — Well the minister didn't answer my question, which was: — over how many years do you anticipate that building being constructed?

I want to ask you one other question, too, which I'll do at the same time for . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . A five-year commitment? Okay.

My other question to you is: — when can we expect funds from your government for a new drama facility at the University of Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . When can we expect a funding commitment from your government on a new drama facility at the University of Saskatchewan — a facility that's desperately needed, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well relative to what's planned for the URDF (university renewal and development fund) and university capital projects — I read this into the record before — administration buildings, heating plant, computer system, animal resource centre, the ag college, waste management facility, pharmacy addition, library acquisitions — several projects that individually should not total 100,000 but several of them, so that's a substantial sum there as well — equipment for high technology initiatives, utility tunnels, library upgrading, and other numerous projects. So although you can identify pet projects and important projects, all of which are important to various sectors, the reality is the track record is an impressive one as far as what's been undertaken in capital projects at the universities.

Item 30 agreed to.

Items 31 to 35 inclusive agreed to.

Item 36

Mr. Kowalsky: — With respect to item 36, operating grants to schools, Mr. Minister, could you give us a report on the progress of teacher negotiations in view of the fact that a contract has not been settled to date?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The negotiations are ongoing. I think there's been something in the order of 11 or 12 meetings over the last six months.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Minister, your statements earlier and prior to the House sitting, and also statements of the Minister of Finance, referred to there being no money in the operating grants given to school boards for increases in teachers' salaries. I have had several people — teachers — who are quite concerned about that statement saying that that is interference in the collective bargaining process. Are you planning to get more involved in this collective bargaining process by directing it, or are you going to take that statement back? What is going to happen so that these negotiations can proceed?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — No, I have not and will not interfere in the collective bargaining process. And the economic statement that was tabled, and any mention that it made of salaries for governments and crown corporations, was clearly a case that was setting forth the framework, if you like, for the government's position. It was our view that schools and other third party groups would accept the spirit of that broad statement, albeit that we recognize that we do not have direct hands-on in some of the negotiations, and I could give examples, like universities, etc., etc.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I wasn't going to ask you about the pension, but I know that you're interested in that, seeing that the next election may be much closer than you anticipate, and you'll be looking for some revenue for keeping yourself in . . .

(2145)

Madam Minister, I was going to say, but we haven't started with our estimates yet.

Mr. Minister, would you mind telling me, since you have interfered with the fundamental negotiations by simply declaring that there will be no financial remuneration for the teachers, are you prepared, and is your team prepared, at this particular time to at least consider some of the other items that the teacher bargaining team has put on the table. It's my understanding that even though that they have met 11 or 12 times . . . Mr. Chairman, I would appreciate very much if you ask some of the ministers over on the other side there to tone her down a bit so I can be heard. Okay?

Mr. Minister, Mr. Minister . . . There goes the Minister of Finance again.

Mr. Chairman: — Order, please. I would ask members from both sides to come to order.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, all I can hear is noise from

the other side. I didn't hear any on this side. I simply ask you to ask those people on the other side to let me speak. I think it's totally unfair for saying quiet on both sides when the noise only comes from one side. I would ask the minister again.

Mr. Chairman: — I would remind the member that I will be the judge of that as chairman here. Would you ask the question, please.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, I can only observe . . . I can only speak on what I observe, and I want to ask the minister again: — since you fundamentally interfered with the negotiations that took place by indicating that there will be no financial remunerations considered for the teachers, will you tell us today what your team has considered in the bargaining sessions that have gone on, and has any progress been made on any items. Would you please inform us.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, I don't accept what the hon. member says about fundamental interference in the collective bargaining process, etc., etc. What I will tell him is that the two parties have agreed not to release information on progress since they believe an agreement can be achieved.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, are you telling me that you've had no progress report from the members of the government side as to what has been discussed and what progress has been made?

Would you mind telling us, have you had any discussions at all with the members? Have they reported to you, and what progress have they made in negotiations? Or has no progress been made at all?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — As I said earlier, there's been a total of 13 meetings held between the bargaining committees. The last meeting took place on June 16 with negotiations scheduled to resume August 27, and in the interest of maintaining the spirit of the bargaining that's gone on for years and years and years, the two parties have again agreed not to release information on progress if they believe an agreement can be achieved.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, I've just one further statement to make. I don't see how the minister can say he's not going to interfere when he . . . I can't recall in the history of this province when the minister or a government has said, before negotiations take place, that there will be no negotiations for financial increases, and then comes to this House and says, I will not interfere with negotiations. If you're going to say that there will be no financial increases, Mr. Minister, how can you say that you haven't interfered already with the fundamental process?

All I'm asking you is: — what progress has been made? Because when the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) reports back to the teachers, they indicate to us very clearly that the members on your side, the members on your team, simply cannot give any answers because they have no authority to do any negotiations. How can you say that you're not interfering when you don't allow your members on your team to negotiate?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, Mr. Chairman, hon. member, I don't know what more I can say other than the meetings are ongoing, negotiations are ongoing. I think both parties are in those negotiations believing very much . . . despite what you say, despite your perceptions and misinterpretations, they are very much into those negotiations with the view that agreement can be achieved. And I applaud them for that kind of spirit.

Item 36 agreed to.

Item 37

Mr. Prebble: — One question to the minister. Excuse me. In the last election the minister promised in his own constituency that a new elementary school would be built. There has been no announcement to date. Are you planning to keep that election promise to your own constituents?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, I'm hopeful that I can keep that election promise to my constituency. I also very much respect the responsibilities that go with the office of the Minister of Education in that I'm responsible for the entire province. I'm also very respectful of the prioritization and evaluation process, that the Department of Education has had in place for years and years and years, that determines which project should go ahead first, and that's based on a set of credentials and indices that have served this department well for some several years.

And if you're asking me if I'm going to use political jiggery-pokery to put my project ahead of some others, the answer is no. If you're asking me if I want to see that project, or the whatever the right project is to service the Weyburn area, it will get the same consideration that all other projects get, and I don't think members of this legislature would want it any other way.

And I think it's a credit to that system that we've seen in this House in estimates review that projects in opposition constituencies, if you like, go ahead. Because so often governments are criticized for somehow, you know, building in certain ridings. And I think what you see in the project array speaks well for the process, and it's one that I have some fair amount of faith in.

And I have no doubt that if I can't announce a project in the next month, I'm going to take some heat locally. But I have faith that that project, or whatever the right project is for there, will happen if it's of a high enough priority when the time is right.

Item 37 agreed to.

Item 38

Ms. Smart: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, when we talked about libraries the other day, it became obvious to me that you weren't clear and didn't understand the granting formula for the regional libraries.

This item 38 is the grants to the regional libraries, and I asked you several times about the base formula for the grant, and you didn't seem to know what I was talking

about. This grant is based on three items. It's based on the population and the population density of each one of the regional libraries; it's based on the service points that those libraries have; and it's based on the levies to the municipalities.

That formula is quite complex and it's used to create a base grant for each one of those regional libraries in the province. You have cut that grant by 10 per cent. And that means next year, as I read this and as you've said in the House, that that becomes the base for any increases that might come in the years ahead.

So by taking \$7,000 out of that money and putting it into a separate book budget, you have decreased the amount of money for the regional libraries. You have decreased the base formula. It's very clear here. And there's no money for the regional centres such as Weyburn, Swift Current, Moose Jaw, Yorkton, Prince Albert, and North Battleford.

This is another example of the destruction of the public library system in Saskatchewan, the fact that it's no longer under the Saskatchewan Library. And I want you to tell me please: — do you think this sum of money includes any money for library construction, for public library construction in the province?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm going to really quickly go through what the process was on the libraries. The regional library budget had a reduction of 10 per cent, the cities have 30, and then there was the establishment, based on need, of the special book fund, Mr. Chairman, of a half a million dollars. It's been greeted with much ado, and I'm very proud of it.

And I think the hon. member herself must have to question her own rhetoric when she uses terms like destruction, when it comes to the library system, given the numerous initiatives that our government has undertaken, whether it's at universities, schools, or regional libraries, when it comes to libraries in this province, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Smart: — I'm not surprised that the minister didn't answer my question because he had his head back and wasn't paying attention or listening. My question was: — does this money include any public library construction in the regional library systems?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — My understanding is that the library hasn't been into funding capital projects for some several years. But they are eligible, under ... I think it's under Parks and Recreation, the capital facilities construction grant program of 20 or \$25 per capita, that program. And I suspect there may well have been some libraries build there, but you may want to address that question when those estimates are up.

Ms. Smart: — I will be addressing that question. I want to point out how much you've cut the regional libraries in their operating grants, and the facilities program budget has been cut from 6 million to 2 million. So there's no money in either budget for any library construction, for any public library development, maintenance and development of library buildings.

Item 38 agreed to.

Items 39 to 42 inclusive agreed to.

Item 43

Mr. Prebble: — Yes, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the minister could provide ... could commit himself to providing us with a list of all his trips that he's made in the last fiscal year, and all trips made by staff accompanying him? In other words, I want an indication of your own trips, Mr. Minister, and an indication of which staff members accompanied you on those trips. I would like also to have a list of all trips that your Legislative Secretary has made in the last fiscal year, and I would appreciate getting the costs associated with those sets of trips, please. Could you give us a commitment that you'll provide that?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, yes.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Chairman, just one other question to the minister. I'd be much more satisfied with the idea, sir, of voting in favour of your salary if you would agree to reinstate the salaries of the 142 technical institute instructors that you fired.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — And I ask you for one final time: — will you restore some confidence in your position, and your justification for receiving a salary as a cabinet minister, by reinstating the fired instructors at Saskatchewan's technical institutes?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, and then conducting any adjustments that need to be made in the programs at those institutes, in consultation with the technical institutes and the instructors affected.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, I want to address this question of firings, and that's an improper term, because there were no firings and that says something about what their records might show. There were lay-offs.

But I want the hon. member to give me the commitment, when he's asked about the fate of those instructors, that he looks those people in the eye and says what he heard from this seat, from the minister when he was asked, not once, not twice, but three times, that very question. And every time I said this, and I say it again, and I ask that you would relay this, as a honourable gentleman that I know you are, that every one of those instructors who wished employment were offered employment, except in once instance. And that is the track record, and I stand by it. And I want you to stand by it, because that is the truth, and it is the facts.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, this is a matter of confidence and a matter of justification for your salary. My question to you, sir, is: — will you not acknowledge that while a large number of the instructors that you fired — or in your terms, laid off — bumped into other positions? As a result of that bumping, other technical institute instructors were, in effect, laid off, and that therefore there

has been a large number of firings and unjustified lay-offs in the technical institute system. And I ask you, sir, again, will you reinstate the salaries and positions of those instructors who have been unjustifiably laid off, and only then do you deserve your salary as a cabinet minister, sir.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, once again the hon. member should hear this answer. Even those that were bumped in this whole domino effect, the treatment there and our track record there is no different than it was on the instructor's side.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Chairman, the item 43 — payment to the members of the Executive Council is a new item in the '87-88 budget. Previous to this it was put in under the vote under the Executive Council. This really is not a new item in terms of additional funding to the Department of Education; it's simply a shift of funding, a camouflage, taking money from Executive Council and putting it into Education budget, making the Education budget look a trifle bigger — 35,000 in this case — but making the Executive Council budget look like it has been decreased by approximately \$700,000. Will you deny that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, what my understanding is, is that item 43 is the allowance for myself and the Legislative Secretary to myself. I think for \$35,200 they're getting a pretty good buy, personally.

Item 43 agreed to.

Items 44 to 46 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 5 agreed to.

**Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Education
Education Development Fund — Vote 64**

Items 1 and 2 agreed to.

Vote 64 agreed to.

**Consolidated Fund Loans, Advances and Investments
Education
Vote 141**

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 141 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1988
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Education
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 5**

Mr. Chairman: — Items 1 to 36. Are there any questions?

**Supplementary Estimates 1988
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Education
Education Development Fund — Vote 64**

Mr. Chairman: — Any questions?

**Supplementary Estimates 1988
Consolidated Fund Loans, Advances and Investments
Education
Vote 141**

Mr. Chairman: — Carried.

**Supplementary Estimates 1987
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Education
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 8**

Vote 8 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1987
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Advanced Education and Manpower
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 5**

Vote 5 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1987
Consolidated Fund Loans, Advances and Investments
Advanced Education and Manpower
Vote 141**

Vote 141 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1987
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Saskatchewan Library
Vote 29**

Vote 29 agreed to.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you. I want just a half a minute to thank the minister and especially to thank all of his officials for coming here and sitting through what was rather a long series of estimates, but I certainly do appreciate their presence. I know that some of them have work piling up on their desks which they are very eager to get to, and now they'll be able to do so, and I look forward to working with them in the future.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, I, too, would like to thank my officials who have been with us here in the House for two or three weeks — not only for their help through these estimates, but for their fine work throughout the entire year. I, too, would like to include in that group my Legislative Secretary, the member for Regina Wascana, who provides me with extra eyes and ears and legs throughout the year and has been most helpful, particularly in areas like the Northern Lights and addressing the whole of the Scharf report. So, I want to acknowledge their fine work.

Both these documents have been tabled in this legislature, Mr. Chairman: — the *Directions* document, setting out the future agenda for the K to 12 school system, the *Preparing for the Year 2000*, laying out the blueprint on adult education. And I think these documents will go down in history as setting our educational process in

Saskatchewan on an exciting future agenda.

And I, too, want to thank the NDP for their questioning. There were, in the four or five hundred pages of *Hansard*, I think there were at least two or three sentences of constructive proposals that you put forward, and I think you for them.

If I was to register . . . As I take my place, Mr. Chairman, if I was to register one note of disappointment, extreme disappointment in the assessments process, that is if you go through the probably several hundred pages of *Hansard* that recorded this estimates debate, the disappointment that I would express — and I express this sincerely — is that the numbers of times that the NDP opposition mentioned the words students, children, parents, teachers, excellence or opportunity, we can probably count on one hand. And that's unfortunate. And that's sad, Mr. Chairman. And it's equally unfortunate that the numbers of times that Weyerhaeuser and oil companies were mentioned were way, way, way too numerous, Mr. Chairman.

The issue here is a question of addressing change that these two blueprints outline. It's an exciting agenda. I ask them to join with us. We have excellent officials serving us in this province, not only the ones in this Assembly tonight in these officials, but across the entire province. And I will look forward to this very exciting agenda. I look forward to being here next year to go through it again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:15 p.m.