

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, a couple of visitors who are spending a month in Saskatchewan. They're from Scotland. They're seated in your gallery in the front row, sir.

One is Tom Harvey, my father-in-law, and the other is Bud Maxwell, my father. I'd ask all members to welcome them to the Assembly. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Protection Offered by Drug Plan

Ms. Atkinson: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. My question's to the Premier, and it deals with the announcement last Friday by the Minister of Health. His so-called special plan to deal with catastrophic drug bills for Saskatchewan people turns out to be a plan with no rules or guide-lines, which even the minister admits will help a few dozen people.

In other words, 99.9 per cent of Saskatchewan people have been left out in the cold by this change, and will continue to pay 100 per cent of their prescription drug costs up front.

Mr. Premier, can you tell thousands of Saskatchewan people, struggling to make ends meet, why you don't feel they should get any help with their huge drug bills? When you could afford \$21 million for Peter Pocklington, why can't you afford to reintroduce the old drug plan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I think indeed it's unfortunate that the opposition would want to frighten people, particularly senior citizens, about their drug costs when they know very well that they're extremely well covered in the best drug care program they'll find any place in Canada.

And the opposition members will stand in their place and say that 99 per cent of the people will not have any assistance at all, and that's just not true, and she knows that. It's not the facts. The facts are that senior citizens are well covered. Those on low income, Mr. Speaker, are extremely well covered, better than anybody anywhere in the country.

And we're looking at a safety net for individuals that might be caught in unique circumstances, Mr. Speaker. And she knows that, and that's the case. So it's a little bit unfair. And then, as the former minister of Health says, she get into other personalities, which means she's grandstanding. She doesn't care at all. She just wants to

play politics.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, another question to the Premier of our province. Can the Premier explain or table today written guide-lines for this new program? Can you tell the people where they can get application forms for your new program, and how are people to know whether or not they qualify, when you can't even give us basic information?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, clearly the opposition wants rigidity in the program so that they can say that there's a line — there's a line between this and a line between that. And no matter where you put a particular line, they'd say, well the line was too low, or the line was too high. And they'd just want to play with it.

They did the same thing when we had, for example, Mr. Speaker, a drought line in Agriculture. And they'd say, well the line was in the wrong municipality on the wrong road. Well they're doing the very same thing now. They really don't care, Mr. Speaker. They just want to cause a little bit of confusion for people who, in many cases, might be concerned.

And we have laid out, it covers every single solitary person. And the Minister of Health stood in his place on Friday and said, professional people, those from the medical profession, and from the pharmaceutical profession, and other people will be able to deal with unique cases. And as the Leader of the Opposition has admitted, unique is unique. Unique is exactly that.

And when we have a situation, whether you have a peculiar drug or a high cost drug or something else . . . And obviously you're not in a low-income category because it's \$50 deductible — 25 year. Or obviously it isn't somebody's in an institution; it's covered. So it is unique, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why we've provided this professional group to make sure that we can handle all circumstances, and not put people into pigeon-holes as the opposition would like us to do.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, supplementary. I want to bring the Premier back to reality, the reality of what thousand of families in this province are facing. And I want to ask the Premier about the impact of this new plan, even on the very few you've decided will qualify.

I remind you of the family from Esterhazy who have a young asthmatic son. His medications will cost the family more than \$6,000 each year. Now you've informed that they will have to pay 20 per cent of that up front. That means that this family still pays \$1,200 each year to buy medication for their asthmatic son. Can you tell this family why they should feel thankful to be paying that kind of bill for life-saving medications?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the circumstances . . . though I don't know, you know, the exact circumstance of this particular family because I'm not sure of which one that she's talking about. There were two in the community of Esterhazy, as I recall from the top of my head now.

I believe at least one of these has been contacted, because they did fall into the circumstances that I laid out here last Friday, the kind of circumstances where it would be seen by the people in the drug plan and in the review panel that that circumstance could be looked at it in a different way than some other might be. So as I stand here now, I'm not sure if they've been contacted, but I believe they have, and I believe they will have been told that they would pay 20 per cent up front but not have the problem of having to pay the other 80 per cent and waiting for the rebate.

So each circumstance, as I said on Friday and as the Premier has reiterated here today, is looked at in a separate way. And that's what the people of Saskatchewan do expect, and that is the way in which this government has responded, Mr. Premier.

Ms. Atkinson: — Supplementary. Is it fair and is it reasonable that a family should now have to pay \$1,200 per year to pay for prescription drugs for their son? I ask the minister a very simple question: is that a fair and reasonable payment for medications for their asthmatic son? Is that fair and reasonable?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I don't have before me, nor do I believe that the member opposite has the absolute circumstance of this family before them. What I will say, that each of them have been looked at and all of the various things which must come into play here. And when it was looked at, as I understand it, when the case — if it's the same case that I believe that the member's talking about — when it's looked at, if they pay their 20 per cent up front, we believe that that's a fair and reasonable solution to that circumstance that was laid out by that family. And I believe the people of Esterhazy would believe that as well.

Waiting Lists in Saskatoon Hospitals

Mr. Mitchell: — I have a question for the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday my colleague from Saskatoon South raised with you a case of a Saskatoon man who was having to wait a period of six weeks for urgent surgery for cancer to his jaw. And at the time, sir, you didn't appear to be familiar with the case. And I want to ask you now whether you're familiar with it, and how do you explain and justify the fact that people in the position of this man, in urgent, life-threatening situations, are having to wait as long as six weeks for their surgery to take place?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I said to the hon. member last week that the medical professions is treating cancer as a priority, and we are encouraging them to do that, to make sure that they treat these patients with the utmost care and as quickly as possible. And the hon. member can get that kind of information from the medical profession, and they are responding as quickly as they can.

Mr. Mitchell: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, with respect, that is simply not an adequate response. What we have here are urgent, life-threatening situations. The doctors can give it all the priority they like, but with a waiting list of 10 or 11,000 people they simply can't do better than six weeks. And it's up to you, sir, your government, to do something about it.

Now may I ask you whether you can't rearrange your priorities, when you're spending lots of money on lots of things, can't you rearrange your priorities in such a way that urgent, life-threatening surgery can take place within a reasonable time?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I want to make something very, very clear to the House and to the hon. member who raised the question, and to the member who was here last week raising the same question. As the Premier has said, and as is the fact, cancer surgery, surgical procedures related to cancer are given priority.

The member uses the kind of terminology that's been used by the Health critic and a couple others in the past, and they say life-threatening and so on. Life-threatening surgery, Mr. Speaker, that are life-threatening are given priority to the point that they're in within hours, not six weeks. That's not the circumstance as the member has raised it by using terms like life-threatening.

That's not to say that people don't have waiting time. I agree that people do have waiting time for some circumstances, but when the member uses terms like life-threatening, because those are not the terms that are used by the physicians in these cases. Because if the physician uses the term it's life-threatening, the person is in the hospital within hours, not six weeks, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. In this Saskatoon case we've got a case of a man with cancer of the jaw judged by the doctor to be urgent. The cancer is growing. The man and his family are sitting there waiting for a hospital date to come up. Now Minister, I ask you again: in these situations, can't the government's priorities be reordered so these urgent and, in many cases, life-threatening surgeries take place within a reasonable time?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, that's true. Now this question is more along the line of reasonable. That member now has changed his terminology from life-threatening to urgent — life-threatening to urgent — and if it's true, they have urgent surgery. And they come on to very different sort of levels, and they're dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, the case that the member raised, the member raised with the Premier last week, and that I will look into very carefully as of this day — but I'm glad that it's noted here, Mr. Speaker, and it must be, because it's important that when we speak of something in this

House, on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, regardless of what political party we're from, or whatever, when we speak of those kinds of things here, Mr. Speaker, any of us, when we speak of it here, we must know what we're talking about when we use terms like life-threatening, and terms like urgent, and terms like emergency, and whatever. Those are the terms that the medical profession must deal with as they slot the people into the scheduling for surgery, whether it be in Saskatoon, or in Regina, or any other location in this province.

Dental Records of Children's Dental Plan

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Premier. Mr. Premier, we used to have the best children's dental plan in North America until it was crippled beyond recognition by changes in policy of your government in June. The records of the children's dental plan have now been removed from all of the schools in Saskatchewan, or are about to be removed from all of the schools in Saskatchewan.

Can you explain, sir, why, rather than being sent to parents, those records are being stored by the government? And why haven't those records been made available to parents so that they can pass the information on to the private dentists which they are going to have to use as of September 1?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I believe the records will certainly be made available to parents. It's a reasonable suggestion and question. There's no question that the records of individual children will be made available to parents.

I guess the question though, Mr. Speaker, if you take that question to its logical solution, under the plan which was brought into force by the folks opposite when they were in government, why didn't the parents have the plans in the first place? Why didn't they have — not the plans, but the records of their own children in the first place? That's something that, you know, and now that he raises the question, it raises that in my own mind as well. There's no question in my mind — and I'll say so here on behalf of this government — parents should have, and will have, the records of their own children.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — In a supplementary, Mr. Speaker, I remind the minister that because the dental plan was operated through the schools, the parents did have access to those files at any time that they wished. They don't have access to them now because you have not made clear to them or to the dental profession how they will be able to get access to them. Will you explain to them, Mr. Minister, and to this House, how the parents will be able to get access to their files when they need them.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — All parents in this province will have access to the records of their own children. There's no question about that. They'll have access to those records, and I won't say within one-half an hour from now or whatever, but I'll tell the member opposite because it's a reasonable question which he raised. And

all parents in the province will have access to the records as they relate to their own children.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, coverage for young children under this reduced plan begins at September 1. It ended in June. Throughout this summer, parents who had children who needed immediate care have taken their children to dentists and have had to pay for that care. I ask you, Mr. Minister: why have you not made provision to cover those children during these summer months while you are waiting to implement your new, reduced plan in September?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that it was a very limited circumstance where the children under the former dental plan had the coverage from the dental therapist during the summer months — under very limited circumstances under the former plan, Mr. Speaker.

So what I'll say to the member is that in this transitional period you must pick a date. The date we picked was the date going into a new school year; September 1 is a reasonable time. That's the transitional period you must pick a date. The date we picked was the date going into a new school year; September 1 is a reasonable time. That's the transitional period that was chosen. That's the date that we go with. And I guess the question then in return is: what happened in the summer months of 1985 and of 1984 and of 1977, for that matter, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, and I ask this because it's really up to the minister to tell the public and the parents what is happening.

Mr. Minister, my question to you is: will you assure the parents of Saskatchewan who have had to get care for their children from a dentist during the summer months that they will be covered at least to the same extent that they were before you crippled this program and basically destroyed it from what it used to be?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, as of September 1 of 1987, children will be covered by visits to the private dentists' offices of Saskatchewan, and they'll be covered on a 12-month basis beginning on September 1, year around . . . on a year-round basis as they have not been, frankly, under the former plan. They were not covered during the summer months. They were not covered under the same circumstances in July and August under the former plan as they were before.

Mr. Speaker, as I've said, September 1 became the initiation point for this plan. There was a necessity to set a date of a new plan. The date was set for September 1. It was the reasonable date to set and we . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. I ask the members to please allow the ministers and those individuals asking the question to do their part.

Effects of Down-sizing Chartered Banks in Saskatchewan

Mr. Goodale: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. The Premier must view with some considerable alarm the news disclosed on Friday that three of the five chartered banks in Saskatchewan are in the process of down-sizing their Saskatchewan operations, removing certain key personnel from this province, and withdrawing a critical element of local decision making from the Saskatchewan economy.

And I wonder if the Premier would indicate what specific steps he would be taking to reverse those bank actions so Saskatchewan will not be subjected to absentee decision making by some banks at a time when local sensitivity is critically important, especially in such areas as agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the hon. member has put his finger on it. Because of the downturn in agriculture, and the province of Saskatchewan having something like 43 or 44 per cent of the farm land, and certainly the largest province with respect to wheat production and the difficulties there, the financial pressures in the community and the financial pressures on the institutions and, I believe, if I can quote from the Leader-Post, it's because of the economy and particularly in rural Saskatchewan that the banks are trimming some of their staff because of the general costs and the fact that they face a great deal of difficulty, along with the farmers.

So it's generally as a result of the economy. And as you know, this last couple of three months we've been able to put something like \$675 million into the Saskatchewan economy, and we are lobbying for more and obviously lobbying internationally to get the price of wheat up and the subsidies back. I mean, it's nothing that I suppose \$2 a bushel extra on the price of wheat wouldn't correct.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, the very problem that the Premier has described is exactly a very good reason for trying to reverse what the banks are in the process of doing. When the economy of Saskatchewan is under considerable duress, we need local decision making and not decisions made in Calgary or Toronto or somewhere a long way away from Saskatchewan.

And I wonder if the Premier would give us his undertaking that he is in fact going to pursue the banking community to ensure that they reverse this decision and don't subject Saskatchewan in future to absentee decisions made a long way away from here, when what we need is local sensitivity with the banking community and financial institutions that have some Saskatchewan roots and connections.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I think the hon. member knows that the financial institutions will still have their offices here. There will be vice-presidents from each of the corporations, as I understand it, will stay in the province of Saskatchewan. They will have certainly the staff here that is familiar with Saskatchewan. If they have less staff here, that's a corporate decision, and if they are consolidating their staff in the prairie region, and particularly because of the expense associated with having a large number of rural branches spread across the province, then that's their corporate decision.

If there was much more money in the rural economy, I'm sure that you would find an expansion in machinery dealers and an expansion in financial institutions and dealers and an expansion in financial institutions and other things. But the fact is, at \$2-and-something a bushel for wheat, there isn't a great deal of income, and the financial institutions, as well as anybody else, is quite familiar with that.

Shand, Rafferty and Alameda Projects

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Premier and it has to do with the Shand, Rafferty and Alameda projects. Mr. Speaker, we've been advised that this Shand, Rafferty project was the most expensive option for the expansion of Saskatchewan's power generation system, and I'm wondering if the Premier can confirm that this is the most expensive option. I'm wondering in the Premier can confirm that this is the most expensive option. I'm wondering also if he can confirm what we have been hearing, and we're not sure it's correct but I'd like to hear it from the Premier, whether this will mean an extra 15 per cent increase in our power bills over the next few years just to help build this political project in the Premier's riding and the Deputy Premier's riding. And if the Premier cannot confirm that, Mr. Speaker, then will he table all the internal studies that show the financial data with respect to the Rafferty, Shand and Alameda projects?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member obviously leaves me a lot of room with respect to answering a question because when she starts it saying that this is a political project, I could respond for some time.

Let me just say a couple of things briefly and to be very clear. If you're going to have a project anywhere on the Souris River, it runs through Tory ridings. I mean, anything to do with the Souris River is in one of our ridings, and the hon. member should know that, and we can't change that ... (inaudible interjection) ... I suppose we could move the river, Mr. Speaker.

When we look at a water project associated with a power project, we can say that on the Souris River it's going to be in a Conservative riding and we're going to have to deal with that. And she can say that it's because it's in a Tory riding, it's political. But the river happens to be there, and for years and years, Mr. Speaker, people from all political parties have been looking at the development of that project.

Secondly, let me point out to the hon. member, when you look at the fact that if you put together a power project, we can build a power project at Coronach and there will be additional power projects there. We're building a power project in the Estevan area. And, Mr. Speaker, when you have a project like that, you have to cool the power project. And you can do it through air, or you can do it underground aquifer, or you can dam water and do it on the surface. We're finding that about \$20 million will get the job done and Sask Power would have to do it one way or the other.

Secondly, on this project, Mr. Speaker, the United States

of America is going to spend about \$50 million of their money. That means the total project, Mr. Speaker, is about \$45 million, which is a very, very good project for the province of Saskatchewan and it involves agriculture, tourism, economic development, and a wide range of recreational facilities.

Mr. Speaker: — Order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier, and it deals with his government's priorities and its list of priorities. We've seen today, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier can't provide adequate care when it comes to drugs, the cost of prescription drugs; he can't find adequate care when it comes to dealing with cancer patients, but he has found \$136 million for Alameda and Rafferty in his own constituency and the constituency of the Deputy Premier.

Even his environmental impact statement, which he put forward last week, which was written to try to save his political project, even his environmental impact statements say that the cost outweigh the benefits. My question is this, Mr. Speaker: how can the Premier justify a \$136 million political boondoggle in his own constituency when every report, every independent report which was ever done on that project says that the costs outweigh the benefits and there's no benefits for Saskatchewan people?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, since the time that Tommy Douglas was premier and John Diefenbaker was prime minister and Jimmy Gardiner was the national minister of Agriculture, all three political parties have been trying to build a good water project in co-operation with the people of south-eastern Saskatchewan, as well as the United States.

This is the first time any administration, in 50 years, has an agreement where the United States will spend something like \$57 million, Canadian funds, almost \$50 million, U.S. funds — \$47 million, U.S. funds — as well, Mr. Speaker, as get an agreement from the U.S. Army Corps of engineers and the people of North Dakota, as well as the province of Saskatchewan and environmental folks, to put together one of the finest projects you will see in the history of southern Saskatchewan.

We've got Diefenbaker Lake and Gardiner dam. That took a great deal of political work and courage, Mr. Speaker. Now we'll have a major similar project in south-eastern Saskatchewan and the NDP is against it. I can quote NDP cabinet ministers who said it was a fine idea, except they didn't have the co-operative attitude to deal with Americans and to deal with neighbours to make sure that we could build the project — and that's why you're sitting over there complaining about it and we're going to build it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Speaker, I remind the Premier, who

cannot again get even his facts right . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order. Would the hon. members please allow the member from Regina Rosemont to ask his question.

Mr. Lyons: — I would remind the Premier, who can't get his facts straight from one moment to the next, that in fact there are no benefits, direct or indirect, which benefit Saskatchewan people from this project — and he knows very well.

Even his studies, even his studies say, the environmental impact studies, which have done from 1978 on say that there will be no recreational benefit, and that even the livestock in the area, even the livestock — that the water will be unfit for human consumption.

Given his own environmental impact report, I ask the Premier once again to try to justify to the province of Saskatchewan — how, sir, can you stand in this House and defend a \$136 million boondoggle in your own constituency — \$136 million — when we have people throughout Saskatchewan suffering through health at the hands of your government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can only say that the opposition members know a great deal philosophically about buying things from the people. They've bought mines, and they've bought packing plants, and they bought pulp companies, but they don't build, Mr. Speaker. The problem is that the province of Saskatchewan are builders . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. We are getting to the end of question period, and I'm sure if we all try hard, we'll get through it, so just allow the Premier to answer the question, please.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I can only say that . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. We could go on in this vein for quite some time; just allow the Premier to answer his question.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The opposition member from Rosemont mentioned the work boondoggle. I could just say to the opposition member, for 30 years the biggest boondoggle was the fact that the NDP didn't build all they did was nationalize.

The next biggest boondoggle, Mr. Speaker, was that they took over half the potash mines in the province of Saskatchewan — they don't like to hear this — and a billion dollars in the hole because that was a boondoggle. And the third biggest boondoggle was the fact that they took over the PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company) company, lost \$93,000 a day, and they didn't know how to fix it, and now they stand in opposition and say, well, well, Mr. Speaker, if only we had the chance. They'll have the chance when they earn it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please.

ROYAL ASSENT TO BILL

MOTION UNDER RULE 39

Withdrawal of Senior Bank Personnel from Saskatchewan

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I rise under rule 39 to seek leave of the Assembly to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity. Just over this past weekend, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan received some very serious financial news. We learned that three of the five major chartered banks are in the process of sharply down-sizing their Saskatchewan operations.

This has the potential to create a very severe problem for the Saskatchewan economy, and that is the loss of local decision making in some of our major financial institutions at a time when more, not less, local sensitivity is required in such sectors as agriculture and others.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue which the legislature should address at the earliest possible moment. Its consequences could be very grave. And if leave of the Assembly is granted, I would propose to move the following motion:

That the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan views with great alarm the recent actions of certain chartered banks to withdraw senior personnel and important financial decision making authority from bank offices in the province of Saskatchewan, which actions will leave Saskatchewan vulnerable to remote, absentee decision making by some banks at a critical time when sensitive local decision making is especially essential to deal with the crisis in farm financing, the bolstering of small businesses, and the creation of Saskatchewan jobs; and this Assembly calls upon the Government of Saskatchewan to produce an aggressive and cogent economic strategy for Saskatchewan to create genuine public confidence in Saskatchewan's future, so that vital element of local decision making by financial institutions can be restored forthwith.

And I ask for the leave of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, to make that motion.

Leave not granted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Clerk at the Table

Mr. Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I would like to draw your attention to the following. I would like to introduce to the Assembly, Ms. Sandra Clive, Clerk of committees to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. Ms. Clive will be a guest Clerk at the Table for a portion of the current legislative session.

I ask all members to welcome Ms. Clive to our legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

At 2:34 p.m. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bill:

Bill No. 31 — An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 2:36 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 30 — An Act to amend The Land Titles Act

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to move second reading of The Land Titles Amendment Act, 1987.

This amendment is required to ensure that financing proceed on the NewGrade upgrader project. Unlike the circumstances in the vast majority of financing arrangements, the owner of the real property is not intended to own the fixtures which are being placed on the land by NewGrade, at least at the initial instance. NewGrade's interests will be by way of a licence to enter upon and use the land for its business purposes, and to remove its fixtures at the end of the licensed term. This legislation protects that interest.

Essentially a provision is being added to The Land Titles Act stating that with regards only to the land involved in this transaction, a right to enter upon the land in order to sever and remove fixtures from the land, or use the fixtures attached to the land, are interests in land to which those fixtures are attached. This Act also ensures the creation of this interest in land in relation to this project; it does not displace the priority scheme established under The Personal Property Securities Act, as negotiations regarding the project are not complete.

The legislation provides that additional land in the immediate vicinity of the land now involved can be added by regulation in the event that that is required. This legislation will allow the financing arrangements related to the upgrader to proceed, but will not change in any way the laws of general application as it relates to real property not involved in this transaction. And that's why it's specific to this particular project.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to move second reading of an Act to amend The Land Titles Act.

Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened with interest to the explanation of the minister for the amendments that are contained in this Bill. He will appreciate that there was no way of telling from the content of the Bill just what the purpose was, although I had guessed that it was connected with the upgrader, having regard to the legal description and the reference to some of the Regina street addresses. I had also imagined that it was connected with the financing of the project.

But in light of the fact that we weren't clear until today just what the purpose was, we would need an opportunity to consider the legislation in detail and to consult concerning it. And I therefore beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 21 — An Act to amend The Mineral Taxation Act, 1983

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to move second reading to The Mineral Taxation Amendment Act.

Under the terms of this Act, the mineral rights tax will change from its current level of 50 cents per acre to \$1 per acre.

The mineral rights Act was first passed in 1945 and was set at 3 cents per acre. In the years following, Mr. Speaker, it has since increased on three different occasions. In 1969 it was set at 10 cents per acre; in 1972 it doubled to 20 cents per acre; and two years later, in 1974, it was again increased from 20 cents per acre to its rate today of 50 cents per acre.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, the mineral rights tax was last changed in 1974. Between '74 and today the prices for goods and services in our Canadian economy has risen 174 per cent. Put in this context, an alteration in the tax over that 13-year period does not appear to be unreasonable.

Mr. Speaker, approximately \$3.3 million is currently raised from the mineral rights tax. We now expect that this will rise to 5.5 million. The majority of freehold mineral rights are owned primarily by large corporations, which means approximately 70 per cent of the mineral rights taxes will be paid by those corporations.

An additional amendment to the Bill comes in the form of an exemption from mineral rights taxes for incorporated farms. Mr. Speaker, up until now incorporated farms have not enjoyed the same 3,200-acre exemption that was given to individual farmers. For example, if they owned 1,000 acres of mineral rights, they had to pay the tax on the full 1,000 acres. Now only those who own more than 3,200 acres would pay, and they would pay only on the excess of the 3,200-acre requirement.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that there has been an inequity for farmers, particularly a farmer who incorporates his family farm to be liable to the full mineral rights tax, when his neighbour, who has not chosen to incorporate, has the exemption of up to 3,200 acres. We believe they should be treated the same. A choice to incorporate should not remove the 3,200-acre exemption. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, the Bill before the Assembly will provide that the same 3,200-acre exemption will apply to incorporated farms as to individual farmers.

Regulations will be developed under The Mineral Taxation Act to provide the details of the definition of agriculture corporation. The definitions included in the regulations under The Saskatchewan Farm Ownership

Act will be used as a guide. The intention is to make sure that the exemption applies to legitimate and corporate farms where the shares are owned primarily by active farmers.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to move second reading of The Mineral Taxation Amendment Act, 1987.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the member for Saskatoon South, will wish to make some comments on this Bill. I will therefore, in a moment, be moving adjournment.

I want to raise a couple of points arising from the remarks of the minister. We can deal with them more fully in committee, but I want to in effect give notice of them now.

(1445)

One deals with the question of giving a definition for an agricultural corporation. We're dealing here with a tax Bill, and I think I would prefer to see, in the Bill itself, the definition of agricultural corporation. Because I think it is, at least in principle, undesirable to have people subject to tax or not subject to tax depending upon the terminology in an order in council rather than the legislation. I think all of us, at least in principle, agree with the proposition that when we're deciding that someone should pay taxes, the someone should be defined in the Bill. That may not be an important point, but I think it is one worthy of note.

The second point I want to make has to do with the use of incorporating agricultural corporations. I would have no quarrel with the basic premise outlined by the minister that farmer A and farmer B, who are in all other respects similar in their circumstances, except that farmer A had decided to hold his land in his personal name or her personal name, and farmer B has decided to incorporate and hold the land in the name of an agricultural corporation owned by him or her, that there should be no difference in the tax.

What I would not wish to see is someone with 10,000 acres decide that he is going to form agricultural corporation X and agricultural corporation 6 and then hold 3,000 acres in X and 3,000 acres in Y and 3,000 acres in Z and 1,000 acres in his own name, and pay no tax; whereas under other circumstances he would have paid, he or she would have paid, the tax on the amount over and above 3,200 acres.

This is a point which I think we should pursue because all of us know that corporations are used very frequently as a basis for tax management. And we ought not to lay ourselves open to allowing agricultural corporations to be incorporated *seriatim* in order to move a person from the category of paying tax on his surplus acreage over 3,200 to the position of not paying any because no single corporation owns more than 3,200 acres.

As I indicated, Mr. Speaker, these are questions of a technical nature that we can pursue in committee. But I want also to give my colleague, the member for Saskatoon South, an opportunity to say a word on second reading. And accordingly I beg leave to adjourn the

debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Justice Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 3

Mr. Chairman: — Would the minister introduce his officials?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Yes, Mr. Chairman. The officials present with us today are Brian Barrington-Foote, sitting beside me, who is the deputy minister of Justice. Beside him is Terry Thompson, who is assistant deputy minister of Justice, specializing in the area of corrections and justice services; Kathy Langlois, behind me, and director of administrative services; and Ellen Gunn, director of public prosecutions. In the next row is Gary Brandt, executive director of court services, and Doug Moen, co-ordinator of legislative services, plus a variety of others in the back.

Item 1

Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The basic thrust of the opening remarks that I'm going to make, as well as the questions that I'm going to be directing to the minister, are based on the accusation that the minister is not fulfilling the responsibilities that are placed upon him by the province of Saskatchewan.

There are certain parcel or package of responsibilities that fall to be discharged by the government, which have been delegated to the Department of Justice. These responsibilities have various roots, primarily their legislative responsibilities, but there are others that are not squarely founded upon a piece of legislation, but none the less are responsibilities which must be carried out.

I'm not suggesting that the minister is deliberately choosing not to discharge responsibilities. What I'm saying is that the responsibilities are not being discharged properly. And when I say that, I know that I am attacking the government's restraint program, but frankly, we attack that program for a number of reasons.

We attack it because of the unfair way in which it's impinged upon the poor people of this province. We attack it because it reflects misplaced priorities, and, in the case of the Department of Justice, we attack the restraint program because some things are simply too important to be restrained. There are some services in our society which a government must deliver. There are some responsibilities which a government must fulfil, and those responsibilities must be fulfilled regardless of the financial problems that the government, as a whole, encounters.

The Department of Justice, the administration of justice, and the delivery of many of the services in this department are simply not areas where governments are free to economize. Governments must look elsewhere in

order to effect their cut-backs, and save their money, and try and balance their budget. Now over the next few days, Mr. Minister, we'll be getting into some of those, but I want to touch on some of them in my opening remarks.

We have again and again raised and seen raised by other groups within our society the situation in the provincial courts. In particular there is a long-standing concern about the backlog of cases that are before the courts. I recall having a press conference in the month of June of this year in which I brought to the attention of the public the fact that the courts, particularly in Saskatoon, are running six months behind.

The specific example I gave was the case of an indictable offence, a major offence of some relatively complicated evidence — as those cases usually are — where the evidence would take two days to introduce before the courts on a preliminary inquiry. And the fact was that in June of this year in Saskatoon, a person pleading not guilty to such an indictable offence would be faced with a wait of six months before the preliminary inquiry could be heard in the provincial courts.

Now then, if that person were committed for trial at the preliminary inquiry, which is quite a common result of preliminary inquiry, that person would then have to wait an additional period of time before the transcript of the preliminary was available. and as the minister knows, nothing can happen until that transcript is available. In other words, there won't be a trial. There won't even be a trial scheduled until that transcript is prepared.

And what we were seeing is that, and what we're still seeing is that accused people and their lawyers can wait for up to six months for those transcripts to be delivered. Then following the delivery of the transcript, that matter goes before the Court of Queen's Bench and a trial date is set, and a trial takes place normally within two or three months after that.

But where that becomes a real problem is for the people who are in custody during the proceedings that I've described. And that is not an unusual occurrence. People may be held in custody because they're not able to get bail. Bail is either not accorded to them, or they're not able to raise or satisfy the conditions of their bail. and we know of cases where people have sat in the remand centre of the correctional centres waiting for their preliminary hearing to come up, and then after their preliminary inquiry where they've been committed for trial, to then wait for the transcript. And you can actually have cases — cases are possible where people would spend over a year in jail waiting for their trial.

Now everyone in our society is presumed innocent until they're proven guilty, so these people who are sitting in remand in the circumstances I've described are innocent people sitting in jail without having been convicted of anything. And the only reason that they're sitting there for that length of time is that the justice system of this province has not been working properly.

Now something has to be done about it. now I'm certain that this minister would recognize that that is the case, and I have to acknowledge that he is taking steps to try

and resolve the problem. But at least in my city of Saskatoon, the problem persists. The backlog is almost as long as it was when I raised the matter last June. It is as long as it was when the matter was raised a year ago. His predecessor, Mr. Dutchak, was acutely aware of the problem and, as a matter of fact, set up a committee in order to study that precise problem in March of 1986.

Now in his tenure of office which was abruptly brought to an end last October, he wasn't able to grapple with the problem of the backlog. And this minister, while he's trying to cope with it in the city of Regina, still has not addressed or adequately addressed the problem in the city of Saskatoon. And I am going to be raising this matter a little later in estimates to try and impress on the minister that this is a situation that can be resolved, and that must be resolved, and that the government must commit the resources that are necessary to right this situation, and must commit them soon.

A justice system, in order to have any impact on our society, must work properly; it must be credible. People looking at the justice system must feel a sense of comfort and a sense of adequacy — must feel a sense that it's running the way it should. People are looking at the system now, and they're seeing a system which they think just doesn't work.

Now the criminals are having a wonderful time with it, you know. The hard cases are, if they are detected for an offence, they know that by pleading not guilty they get another six months on the street before their preliminary inquiry comes up. And if they're committed at the preliminary inquiry stage, it's another six months before the transcript comes up; they've got another year on the street even if they are detected for a crime that they've committed now. It seems to me, on the basis of the information I have, that there are many of them who are playing the system. The public can't have any confidence in a system that allows this sort of thing to happen.

So not only is it the person who's been charged with the offence and has it hanging over his head, not only is he affected by the inadequacies of the system, but all of us are affected when we talk about the hard cases who are playing the system from their perspective and are staying on the street, as I say, staying free and continuing their life, even though they have been charged with a major crime.

(1500)

Now we also know, we also are aware of problems at other levels of the courts in Saskatchewan, and I think particularly of the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal has an enormous volume of cases that they are required to handle at the present time. My information is that the case-load of the Court of Appeal is between 700 and 800 cases per year at the present time. Six years ago the case-load of the Court of Appeal was 450. So the court is facing a work-load that is 70, 75 per cent larger than it was a scant six years ago, and there is nothing around to indicate that that load is going to lighten.

I think it's a fair guess to say that that load will continue to get heavier. I say that because, for example, the number

of Charter cases continues to increase, and the numbers of cases generally that are started in our courts has continued for some years to increase. For some reason our society seems to be coming more litigious, and the justice system has to accommodate to that public attitude and that reality.

And in the case of the Court of Appeal I think that the backlog is of general concern throughout the legal system. We have seen newspaper reports in past months about cases that have been before the court — backlogged before the court for a long time. Now I think — I freely concede that the Chief Justice, the present Chief Justice, has made improvements to the way in which the Court of Appeal operates so that a large number of cases go through on an expedited basis and are decided in a very short time. I happen to practise in the field of labour law and administrative law, which involves quite a large number of Court of Appeal appearances, and the court now hears those cases, for example, on an expedited basis. And we're getting those cases through the Court of Appeal faster than ever.

But for the general run of litigation, the queue for having these cases heard gets longer and longer, and the time required by the court to consider these cases is considerable, so that what we have is justices running out of time. They don't have time to do such a large volume of work.

Now that problem was recognized, Mr. Chairman, back in the early 1980s, and the government of the day, the NDP government at the time, passed the necessary order in council to increase the number of Court of Appeal judges from five to seven. Those positions were not filled before the 1982 election, and following the election the then minister of Justice, who is now the Minister of Finance — he wasn't any better as a Justice minister than he is as the Finance minister — got into a squabble with his counterpart in Ottawa and decided not to appoint those two justices.

So the Court of Appeal, then faced with a work-load that they couldn't handle, were forced to carry on with five judges for a period of, I think, two years before that dispute got squared away and the sixth and seventh members of the court were appointed. And there is no question, Mr. Chairman, that the Court of Appeal is understaffed again. Seven judges are just not sufficient to do the job.

In addition, there are things that the government could do in order to make that court function more effectively by way of the appointment of support staff and other staff for the court, and I'll be returning to that at a later point in the estimates.

I'm also going to ask questions of the minister, Mr. Chairman, concerning the court reporting service that we have in the province, and try and reason with him on the subject to see if we can't get back to a system of court reporting and producing transcripts that works. I mean, there's nothing particularly wrong with the present system, except that it doesn't work. Transcripts don't get produced in a timely way. Transcripts don't get produced in an accurate way, particularly so far as the criminal

courts are concerned. And I'll be addressing that with the minister in my questions.

Two other subjects that I'll be touching on is the native court worker program, where this government has by its own decision eliminated a very, very valuable and necessary program and laid off a large number of native court workers who were performing an excellent service. That service is no longer available, and our justice system is much the worse for it.

And finally, I intend to ask him questions concerning question of legal representation for all people — the legal aid plan of this province.

Now we move outside of that court system and we come to the corrections system. And I'm not going to go into that now, but I have questions for the minister concerning the functioning of the corrections system. And again, I will be arguing, trying to make him understand that he is not fulfilling his responsibilities so far as the operation of a corrections system is concerned.

Now the other area that I want to talk to the minister about, Mr. Chairman, concerns the term "privatization", which we've heard in this House and which is of a special concern to certain elements of the legal system. This whole business about court reporters, that I referred to earlier, first arose in the context of the privatization ideology of the then Minister of Justice, now the Minister of Finance. And I believe it is correct to say that that was the first, or one of the first efforts of this government in the direction of privatization, and it is a decision which, in my submission, has done more harm than good.

We now hear talk of privatization with respect to other areas of the minister's department. I hope they're not true, but in due course in these estimates I'll be wanting to ask him questions about rumours that we have about privatization of the land titles system and privatization of the personal property security system. Nothing would make me happier than to hear the minister stand on his feet and deny that there's any substance to these rumours, but if there is, we certainly want to hear what the minister has in mind with respect to the ideology, the right-wing ideology of privatization and how it may affect some of these essential services.

Now, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, these questions that I've briefly referred to in my opening remarks are crucially important. They transcend any political considerations. They are responsibilities that fall upon any Department of Justice in any province. They are matters which the government has a solemn responsibility to undertake, and to undertake at the highest level, the highest level of quality available, because it is essential that the public have full confidence in the way in which the system works, because also it is necessary that the public is properly served with respect to this system.

Now we have examined your estimates for this year with some care, and we have not seen in your estimates any of the items that we would have expected to see if these problems were to be sensibly addressed and resolved, and my fear is that you've no intention of addressing and

resolving them. And that is a matter of grave concern because, frankly, all of the actors in the system, knowing that there are serious deficiencies with it, want it to work — judges want to be able to hear cases on a timely basis, and have the time and resources to produce a decision; litigants want their cases heard, and heard within a reasonable time, and decided within a reasonable time; lawyers depend upon the system to work, and to work properly, in order that they can give a proper service to their clients. And the ends of justice must be served.

Now to repeat the important point that I tried to make at the beginning of my remarks, Mr. Chairman: some things must be exempted from a restraint program. and one of the things that must be exempted from any restraint program is the administration of justice in the province. It's far too important to feel the lash of fiscal restraint. It provides services that simply must be provided, come rain or shine. And my fear is that this government is simply not intending to provide those services at that level.

now I'd like to give the minister an opportunity to respond to those general remarks before we get into more detailed questions.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the hon. member could refer initially to the budget summary in the *Estimates* on page 13, and you will see that the spending estimates for this year are 3.7 billion compared to 3.6 billion. So you had about a \$100 million increase in spending over the entire government which, by I think anybody's standards, is a fairly modest growth of spending by government.

If you then refer to your Department of Justice . . . And you make the observation that Department of Justice should somehow be exempted, it's different, it should be excluded from that same fiscal restraint — that, we can argue whether we have to do or don't have to do. but if you look at the overall growth of government, you're looking in the area of maybe 1 per cent, or less than 1 per cent.

If you go to the Department of Justice and the spending estimates for the Department of Justice this year, you see an increase in spending of 17 per cent, or just slightly below 17 per cent. And I would indicate to the hon. member that I think those numbers somehow speak to the same thing that he was talking about, in the sense that there are dimensions in the Department of Justice that, whether you want to practise fiscal restraint on, you are not capable of doing it, nor should you attempt to do it.

If you look at the spending estimates of the Department of Justice, you are seeing a spending base this year in excess of \$126 million. And I think the important part, if you break down those spending estimates into groupings, if you like, as to how the money is allocated, the money is allocated in the following way: by and away the largest part of the budget is to cover RCMP costs and policing costs. Now those increased this year \$2.5 million. And I suppose one could argue that you can cut back policing costs, and that primarily cut-back will be involved in the rural part of the province, one- or two-man or three-man detachments. That's a very difficult choice. That spending

this year accounted for almost 32 per cent of the budget.

You then moved to corrections, which you referred to, and that amounts to 26 per cent of the budget. so now you have those two things — corrections and RCMP costing picks up 58 per cent of the budget for the Department of Justice.

(1515)

You add to that the costs of the facilities used by Department of Justice or by the courts or by the corrections, and then the courts themselves and the various legal services provided by the Department of Justice, you have over 90 per cent of the budget right there in those particular items. And then if you throw into that the land titles system that you referred to, in effect what you have left is about 5 per cent of the budget is involved in what we might call discretionary spending.

But I think your question was wider than that in the sense that even with a 17 per cent increase in spending we still need more courts, and we still need more jails; we still need more people working in the jails. And I'm sure you can add a series of others — native court worker program; and the list goes on.

At some point in time you have to say, just a minute, is there a balance or is Department of Justice to carry on sort of unaffected by the fiscal realities in which we live? My suggestions is that I think for the most part the Department of Justice budget has fared fairly well this year, with a 17 per cent increase in spending. Now one might argue, and I'm sure one can, regardless of whether we're on opposite sides of the house, I suspect that three lawyers in a room would all have a different way of solving the problem and allocating the money. My observation would be that the key and important areas are, in fact, being dealt with.

But I think it begs an even larger question and that is: can we solve the problems that the hon. member refers to, the problems of does the public have confidence in our justice system, in our legal system, in our corrections system, and can we give them the security they need; or can we give them the confidence they need simply by appointing more judges, more prosecutors, more police officers, more correction workers? Can we solve the problem that way, or do we have to address the question and look at the question of the justice system perhaps in a different way and say maybe the answers will not come from adding more and more people to the delivery of the service? Is there other ways by which we can come to grips with that?

In my initial response, I will avoid getting into some of the detailed questions that you referred to. I'm sure you're going to come back on those. In any event, we'll deal with those one at a time.

But given that, I think that the approach that we have to take, the approach that I would favour that we take, is for the users of the system to quite frankly sit down and in a very honest way ask ourselves, does the system work properly, and what parts of the system do not work properly, and what would be a meaningful way of coming to grips with that particular problem?

And very often that type of debate doesn't take place in politics because it's much easier to simply say, spend more money here; no I can't; yes you can; no I can't; yes you can; and on goes the traditional political debate of this country.

My view is that the confidence factor in our court system and legal system goes far beyond simply whether or not we need some more judges or some more police officers or some more prosecutors. I think people have lost confidence in a system, or are beginning to lose confidence in a system, or are beginning to lose confidence in a system, because somehow they don't see that it deals fairly with what they see the problems of the law to be.

Now I think, in fairness to your opening comments that somehow justice must stand aside from the normal fiscal realities of government; justice also must stand aside from the normal realities of political pressures — you guys should do this or you should do this or you should do this — perhaps no more obvious than the recent debate on capital punishment in parliament — did you vote on that question based on what the polls say, or do you vote on that question because of what you believe in or how the system must properly work?

So I think you have those two thing. I suggest that too often government is left with the job of simply doling the money out, while it doesn't have the ability to perhaps ask those questions. Does the Attorney General have, and should he have, the right to ask questions of the Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal as to how he is going to run his court? Should he have the right to ask questions of the provincial court as to how it is run, and should he be involved in doing that?

I tend to take the view that you should not, and I would think the bulk of authority would tend to agree that a politician and Attorney General should probably stand back from that, to a degree, and I have pursued that particular approach. I happen to believe that, quite frankly, at the end that we have to look at new ways by which we deliver justice and new ways by which we deliver the process of justice to the people now and, more importantly, into the future.

I'm often reminded of a . . . which I think is a significant statistic, that in Canada there are 1,500 times more lawyers per capita than there are in Japan. Reverse, there are 1,500 times more engineers in Japan than there are in Canada. Now I don't think justice can be blind to that fact. By the same token, I don't think you should be blind to somehow thinking that you can superimpose a Japanese model upon a Canadian economy, but I think there's something that can be learned from both.

My view, and the area that I would intend to pursue over the next year in this department, one of the main areas of concern is the whole area of arbitration and mediation. I think that's an area that we should explore with some degree of aggressiveness. One might say some radical views, almost. But I think you want to live out on the edge on that particular issue if we're going to come to grips with some of the main questions that you've referred to in your opening remarks.

Mr. Mitchell: — It's an intriguing prospect, Mr. Chairman, the minister makes with respect to bringing the users of the system together to assess the system and try and work out some improvements to it that would make it work better. I can't purport to speak for all the elements in the system, but I do know some of the elements quite well, and they would welcome any initiative that would address that issue. They would welcome the opportunity to participate in a process whereby the existing system can be assessed and alternative remedies fully considered and solutions arrived at.

I appreciate the minister's remarks, because it was a serious response, and I appreciate it. That's in distinction to some of the responses that we've had in this House in previous estimates, and I want the minister to know how much I appreciate his approach. I agree that the matters that I raised are not resolved simply by appointing more people. That's not the whole answer. It is part of the answer, I think, to some of the matters that I raised. We'll get into that shortly.

But in general sense, we are talking about a system that, while it needs more money, while it needs more support and resources, has problems within it that require a good deal of discussion and debate and solutions that really have nothing to do with money at all.

Now the minister has invited — I interpret his remarks as inviting me and my colleagues and others that I know, to participate in this process also. And I want to tell the minister, Mr. Chairman, that we have a lot of ideas about how various parts of the justice system can be improved. I think their progressive ideas . . . I'm not sure how the minister define radical, so I'm not able to say whether or not they meet his test of being radical, but I think they are progressive, helpful, and humanitarian ideas which can't help but work improvements to the system, and work them at little or no cost. And so I offer all the resources that we have to whatever review the minister would like to initiate, or whatever process he would like to initiate to tackle some of these problems.

Mr. Chairman, the minister expresses some reluctance to get involved in the administration of the courts, and I can appreciate his remarks from one perspective.

The judiciary branch of government is separate from the executive branch, and of course it ought to continue to be separate. At the same time, the minister knows that some of these courts have encountered and are living with very large, significant problems. I speak particularly of the Court of Appeal. I speak also of the provincial court. And at the risk of leaving them out, I include Queen's Bench also. And there must be a conduit of course, between those courts and the minister's office so that the minister will have a full appreciation of what these problems are.

Now I would think that the courts involved would appreciate a feedback from the minister, or the minister's office, as to the problems that they're having. What does the minister think? How does the minister think these problems can be addressed? And while I would be the last person to recommend that you should be telling the courts what to do or how to do it, none the less, I'm

certain that they would appreciate a level of dialogue that would show them that their problems are understood and are being appreciated, and hopefully attended to by the government.

Now at a later point, I hope the minister will find an opportunity to develop the idea of arbitration and mediation which he's mentioned, because if they are a part of the resolution of the problems of the justice system then we're certainly interested in hearing about them and understanding them and contributing our thoughts to them.

Now I want to go, Mr. Chairman, I want to go to the matter I raised about the operation of the provincial court system. And I want first of all to address the problem of the backlog. Now I know the minister is fully aware of this problem. He's heard me on it in the budget debate; he heard me on it briefly in my opening remarks today; and he heard about it when I was raising the matter in public in the early part of last summer.

It has to be described as a chronic problem. I'm not suggesting to the minister that he invented the problem, because I'm aware that it's existed for some time. But in my city, Saskatoon, it is really a crisis. I mean, it is a matter of no small concern that a person charged with a criminal offence has to wait six months for a preliminary hearing. And that concern exists to everybody who's charged, but it's a particular concern to the people who are kept in the correctional centre on remand. And they're being deprived of their freedom, their liberty for that period, through no fault of their own. The only reason why they're there for such an extended period of time is that the court system can't hear their case any earlier.

Now I concede it to you, Minister, but I'd be interested in hearing the details that you've been trying to resolve that problem in the city of Regina. Now that may be on an experimental basis. But I would appreciate hearing the details of that.

In a larger context, I would like to know what your plan is for the rest of the province, including the city of Saskatoon but not limited to that city. There ought to be some way that the ingenuity of human beings can attack the problem of having to wait such an extraordinary length of time before a preliminary inquiry can be run.

(1530)

Now I've noticed that this backlog has remained more or less at six months in Saskatoon for some time. And the court system can keep it at that level. So what occurs to me is that if you could bring the backlog down from six months to about two months or six weeks or one month — whatever's feasible from the point of view of prosecuting the case — if you can get it down to that level then you should be able to keep it at that level, considering that the backlog has remained static at its present level for the length of time it has.

So my question to you, Mr. Minister, is: what are your plans with respect to dealing with the problem of the backlog?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — The hon. member obviously raises a point that he has some knowledge of as it relates to Saskatoon. And Saskatoon is, my information now, from six months down to five months. So that there has been some progress over the last three or four months, of reducing that backlog down somewhat.

The city of Regina, on the other hand, is something like 80 days, compared to 150 days in Saskatoon. I suppose the questions that we pose to the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan in the provincial court is: what is necessary to move Saskatoon into the similar situation as Regina? It almost sounds reminiscent of the hospital waiting lists, and I'm sure for totally different reasons. But why is it different in Saskatoon than it is in Regina with, I assume, a similar number of judges in both places?

What we have to do, I think, is, as I understand the . . .

An Hon. Member: — Pump a little more money into the system.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — No, it's not just pumping more money into the system, as I understand that if we could get into having cases heard on Fridays, it would be a progress in the sense that you'd pick up an extra day. I think one trend that you're seeing across the country is more sessions of the provincial court being held at night. Is that something that could be done to move it forward, and that type of thing?

Saskatoon is further complicated now with the appointment of Judge Wedge, or elevation of Judge Wedge, to the superior court. We're clearly looking at appointing another judge into Saskatoon. Is there a need for a further judge into Saskatoon? And that's a legitimate question — something that we hope to deal with so that other ways in which we could manage that court that the process comes down?

If you look then across the rest of the province so that we're not sort of, of the view that Saskatoon is reflective of the rest of the province, and the rest of the province is in fact probably below the Canadian standard as to time in which to get into the court and into the court system.

So I take your point that you raise in Saskatoon. Clearly it is something that we have raised and I have raised personally with the Chief Justice. It's something that we would hope that he would be able to deal with. And I have been given some hope that in fact that there has been progress made over the last two to three months, and I would hope that when we stand here a year from now, significant more progress has been made. Just as to how you do that, I only simply want to again say that if we need further judges, then that's something that we would certainly consider. But I would hope that the system considers more than simply trying to add more judges.

Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the minister about this committee that his predecessor, Mr. Dutchak, appointed in March of 1986. It was a committee whose terms of reference, according to the newspapers, was the very problem that we're talking about. Can the minister indicate a number of things. First of all, who was on that

committee? Did it make a report? And can we know what the recommendations of that committee was, if in fact it did produce a report?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Yes, I'm advised that the members — and I haven't the names but I'll give you the positions — the members of the provincial court utilization committee consisted of the chief judge of the provincial court, a member of the provincial court judges' association, senior defence counsel, general counsel for legal aid, and senior Crown counsel.

The report, I'm advised, has been completed and will be forwarded to me shortly. Recommendations, as I understand, are (1) the establishment of pre-plea conferences in Regina and Saskatoon, and these for the most part have been already introduced; a recommendation of trial co-ordinators in Regina and Saskatoon; and a recommendation in a number of changes in the rural circuit points for Saskatchewan, which means that you take a lot of the smaller towns that held court and either reduce their sittings from two to one, or four to two, or eliminate them altogether.

And while the first two are easy enough, I would have to advise the hon. member, and I haven't seen the final report as to what they're recommending, but small town Saskatchewan — I know what they're going to say because I happen to represent some of those small towns, if you say the court's no longer going to sit in your town and you have to drive 30 or 40 miles to go to court, whether it's to enter a plea of guilty to whatever. So that recommendation I have not seen.

But I would I indicate to the hon. member that having lived in the rural part of this province for a long time and practised law in the rural part of the province, while I think there are changes that can be made there, I think care must be taken as to how you deliver that, how you make those changes, and is there something that can perhaps replace the provincial court sitting in that particular town.

Can it be perhaps the justices of the peace would have more say and authority? Could they handle a wider range of hearings, perhaps? And I think those are questions I think deserve fair debate and fair discussion. But certainly the committee report, I will give serious consideration to it, and certainly make it public and prepare to act on what I see as would be appropriate for us to act on.

Mr. Mitchell: — Now with respect to the situation in Saskatoon, Mr. Minister, may I make a suggestion for your consideration. I think that a colleague was correct that that was a situation where you just have to provide some money. And I say that in this sense, that in order to rid the system of the backlog, at least on a temporary basis, you have to have more court rooms than you have now, and you have to have more judges, and you have to have more prosecutors. I'm not suggesting these people are permanent long-term employees, or that the court room is permanent long-term space, but we're talking here about reducing the backlog from six months or five months, as you say, down to an acceptable level.

You might tell me, Mr. Minister, what your view of

an acceptable level is, but say it's two months. It seems to me that with the injection of new . . . of temporary people into the system to hear cases, that you could easily bring the backlog up to date, and then those people could return to their other lives, and the present system may be able to more or less keep that on line.

As I said earlier, the backlog in Saskatoon has remained more or less static for months now. In fact, the present system has even improved the situation a bit. So if you could get the number down, you would have perhaps resolved a good portion of our problem.

What I'm asking for your reaction to, Mr. Minister, is the idea that you make a crash effort, a crash effort to bring the Saskatoon backlog into manageable proportions. I think you could find the judges. You know, there are retired judges around who could be brought back. There are experienced members of the bar who might be prepared to take appointments on an acting basis for a short period of time. There are prosecutors around. Some of them are former employees of your department, others are people in the private bar who would be prepared to prosecute cases on a fee-for-service basis which is something that your department is doing to some extent anyway, and in that way, just resolve this situation in Saskatoon, I know that you consider it to be unacceptable, Minister, and I propose that as one means of resolving it.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I'm advised that in Saskatoon today . . . you made reference to six months to get to a preliminary hearing. And I'm advised that that was in fact the case. Now I'm advised that if you're held in custody, you're into your preliminary hearing within two months, which is the same as we have presently in Regina. So I think that you must acknowledge that there has been some progress made with regards to that.

I'm also advised that we hope to have a pilot trial co-ordinator in Saskatoon appointed this fall. The decision has been taken to go forward with that. It's just now a matter of staffing up and how we deal with that; also that we have moved, or the court has moved, Judge Seniuk from Meadow Lake down to Saskatoon and appointed him in Saskatoon. And perhaps that will assist in dealing with the backlog as well.

I take the advice of the hon. member as a possible solution to that. I can undertake to discuss those particular suggestions with the chief judge and see whether we can move it in that direction. I can only undertake to do that.

And I tend to agree with you. If the backlog is always this high in Saskatoon — six months — and out of step with the rest of the province, and it never gets any worse, although we're seeing some improvement now, one would hope that perhaps a little shot in the arm might get them down to the two-month average.

And if you can do that and then it stays there, fine. If it goes up again, then I think we have to ask ourselves, maybe that wasn't the way to do it; maybe there's something else in Saskatoon; it's maybe the way the lawyers function, or whatever, that maybe caused that

problem.

So I mean, I think we would like to get down to the Regina standard. Following down to Regina standards, then we will see where it goes from there.

Mr. Mitchell: I want to turn to the Court of Appeal, Minister. I made some brief efforts in my opening remarks to the Court of Appeal, and I told the minister that a number of cases are being heard in an exemplary way — in a way that is the envy to the rest of the court system.

In the areas of administrative law, through its expedited procedures, the Court of Appeal are dealing with appeals to them in a matter, literally, of weeks. And it's an innovation introduced by Chief Justice Bayda and has worked in quite a satisfactory way. But in general, the Court of Appeal is behind and is having a very difficult time trying to keep from falling further behind, having a very difficult time coping with its backlog. And this has resulted in problems over the years that have gained some notoriety in the press, and it's a situation that is regrettable but understandable in light of the increasing work-load that the court has been facing over the years.

(1545)

There's another aspect to this problem, Mr. Chairman, that I know the minister is aware of. And it is that to an increasing degree the Courts of Appeal of the provinces are becoming the court of last resort in our judicial system. There was a time when important cases were appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, most of them as of right.

As I recall, the question of whether you could appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada as of right depended, in many cases, on the amount of money involved, so that the Court of Appeal in Saskatchewan was merely a step along the way in an important case, in the vast majority of cases. That's no longer the case. The reality now is that for the vast majority of cases, the Court of Appeal of Saskatchewan is the last resort in the judicial system so far as Saskatchewan residents are concerned.

In order to appeal a case to the Supreme Court of Canada now, you require leave of the court to appeal to it. You have to make a special application for leave, and those applications are rarely granted. The Supreme Court of Canada will only entertain the appeal if it raises a question of national importance and they happen to feel that it's important that they decide that national question in the context of your particular fact situation in your particular case. And what it means is that, except for about 15 cases a year or so, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal speaks finally on our civil actions and many of our criminal actions — most of our criminal actions.

So at this time in our history, the work of the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal has become more important than it ever has been. It is the last word in justice here, and so a greater onus lies on that court than ever before to produce decisions that are sound and solid and just, and all of the other things that a judicial decision should be. Now I'm not suggesting that they're not; you must understand that. I'm only suggesting that the

responsibility on them has become much, much greater than it was just a few years ago.

The resources available to that court to handle the increased work-load and this increased responsibility haven't been keeping up with the times. The addition of two judges in the 1980s has been important, but it is, in my submission, not enough. And the workings of that court, I think, are being handicapped by the fact that these resources are not available.

Now I want to point out to you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, that as I said in my opening remarks, that six years ago the court was hearing 450 cases a year. It is not hearing between 700 and 800 cases. And I want also to draw to your attention the fact that other provinces are handling this situation much differently. I draw a comparison with the British Columbia Court of Appeal, which hears a slightly lower average number of appeals a year — approximately 700 appeals — and yet has 15 judges in the Court of Appeal, more than twice as many as we have.

And my question for you, minister, is whether you're giving any consideration to the problems being faced by the Court of Appeal and, specifically, whether you're giving any consideration to increasing the number of judges in that court?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I can advise the hon. member that the lobby for more spaces on the Court of Appeal comes from more lawyers than yourself. The statistical case-load of our Court of Appeal of appeals filed: 1983 was 871; '84, 774; '85, 768. If you look at the number of appeals heard: 730 in 1983; 665 in '84; 606 in '85. So you see the number of cases heard are, in fact, reducing.

I'm further advised that the Court of Appeal, 80 per cent of the appeals — which I think is where you'll find a difference between our court and the court in B.C. — 80 per cent of the cases held, or the appeals held in our court, are criminal in nature.

If you look at the present statistics of the Court of Appeal, length of time to hear an appeal once it is launched: on sentencing appeals is 15 to 30 days; on expedited criminal appeals is 30 to 45 days; expedited civil appeals, 30 to 45 days; regular criminal appeals, 30 to 60 days; and regular civil appeals, eight months. So I think your point is perhaps the strongest as it relates to civil appeals. You also, I think . . . where a fair degree of the delay appears is in the writing of the judgements. And I take it that you are referring to that when you say that the need for two additional positions on the Court of Appeal.

I would indicate to the hon. member that that's something that is being considered, something that I will consider over the next period of time, and move accordingly. You know, the cost of that is not a large factor for us because it's picked up by the federal government. So it's something that I would intend to discuss with the Minister of Justice in Ottawa at some future distance, not in the too distant future.

Mr. Mitchell: — Another suggestion on that same point, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, is the employment of

law clerks in the Court of Appeal. At the present time, the seven judges of the Court of Appeal have two law clerks to support their work. You will know that the law clerks do research and draft preliminary drafts of judgements for the judges of the Court of Appeal, and their work is invaluable to the judges to whom they're attached. There are other jurisdictions where each of the judges of a Court of Appeal have a law clerk attached to them, and in some courts in this country more than one law clerk is attached to a judge.

Now the minister is also probably aware of the situation in, say, the United States Supreme Court where a judge will have three or four law clerks attached to him or her. And if you read a book like *The Brethren*, you will see the role that a law clerk can play in helping a justice to do the work which he or she has to do in considering an appeal. And it's quite a dramatic story and quite a dramatic improvement to the quality of product or quality of a judgement that a judge is able to put forward.

Now the interesting thing is that these law clerks can be hired in Saskatchewan for something like \$1,500 to \$2,000 a month. Their salaries are compared to the salaries of articled students at the private bar, and the cost is not excessive. And a real improvement could be effected by hiring five more law clerks, and arrangements exist through the law society to allow them to have that time count towards the articles. And it's an invaluable experience for the student as well. The graduate law student gets an inside look at how the courts work, how judgements are arrived at. And for a very small expenditure the government would be supporting the work of the Court of Appeal to a very large extent. These students can save a judge hours and days of research by reading and briefing cases, by drafting memoranda on points of law that arise on a case, and enable a judge to do his work quickly and more effectively.

So I would sincerely propose that you consider that extra expense which, as I said, is not large and which would dramatically improve the way in which the Court of Appeal could operate.

While I'm on my feet on this point, I might draw to the minister's attention that the Court of Queen's Bench could use a similar kind of support service. They now share, I think, in Regina, one law clerk. And how you divide the services of one law clerk among so many judges is a little hard to understand. But obviously it would be a good expenditure of departmental funds, and a small expenditure of funds, to work quite a substantial improvement in the operation of the system. And I'd like your reaction to that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I'm advised that there are two law clerks at the Court of Appeal presently. This matter was brought to my attention some time early in the budget process, and people from Justice in fact did explore this potential with the Court of Appeal. And I was advised that it was not seen as a high priority by the Court of Appeal and by the fudges at the Court of Appeal, and therefore was not further pursued as a potential option.

Perhaps we might re-look that again in another cycle, but it certainly the last time was not seen as a key and

important way by which to deal with the particular problem that we face in our Court of Appeal.

Mr. Mitchell: — Well that's certainly news to me, Mr. Minister. I can tell you that it is the opinion of large segments of the private bar that this ought to be a priority of the Court of Appeal, but that of course is for the Court of Appeal to determine. And I am glad to hear you say that you're prepared to look at it in the next cycle if the court does consider it to be a priority.

I want to now turn to the court reporters. Now there was a time in this province when trials were conducted in the presence of a court reporter. The court reporter would take down in shorthand, either with pen and ink or on a shorthand machine, the evidence which was given in the court, and would then transcribe that evidence and produce a transcript.

Now those transcripts are the basis for a great deal of what happens in the legal system, in the judicial system. A transcript has to be produced in respect of every preliminary hearing. A transcript is produced in every trial where the matter is being taken to an appellate court. The transcripts have to be timely and, above everything else, they have to be accurate.

Now we saw in Saskatchewan, on the election of your government in 1982, some changes to the court system as it affects court reporting services. We saw the then minister making a decision to introduce, to privatize the service. Now I think it's fair to say that no one knew exactly what would be involved in the privatizing of the service, including perhaps officials in the department. But in any event, the service was said to be privatized. A number of court reporting services were established, and they're doing a number of things. They take examinations for discovery and produce transcripts, and I can say, minister, that that part of the system seems to be working very, very well. And I don't think anybody's complaining about that.

Where the problem comes is in the provincial court system, again.

(1600)

Now I don't know what words you'd use to describe the reporting situation in your provincial courts, but I would call it chaotic. I would call it totally inadequate and a failure, and I would suggest that it's a situation that you ought not to live with. You ought not to tolerate the perpetuation of such a system. It is the cause of about half of the problem that I outlined earlier. The waiting for a transcript has kept young men and women — some not so young — in our correctional centre on remand for unacceptable lengths of time in quite a number of cases. In addition to that, the system that has been put in place just simply doesn't work.

Now I hope, minister, that you don't stand on your feet and tell me that the system does work, because if you say that, then you're about the only one who would think that. Everybody else seems to accept that it doesn't work. The transcripts not only are late, but they're of abysmal quality. What's happening now is that the evidence given

in the provincial courts is being transcribed on a tape machine onto a tape, and that tape is then shipped to a typing service and the typing is done. So that the tape is converted into a transcript, and the quality is simply not acceptable. Your prosecutors don't find it acceptable. Defence counsel certainly don't find it acceptable. The Court of Appeal has in a number of cases found it not to be acceptable. And it will never be acceptable, Minister. It is just simply not going to work. Now not only does it not work in Saskatoon and Regina where you have judges sitting in the same courtroom day after day with a piece of equipment that doesn't get moved around — it stays there — but you're using the same system all over the province.

Now I know in many places in the province that's been the way it is, because you can't have a court reporter travelling around to hear all of the trials that occur. but what's coming out of the end of the pipe are transcripts that are useless in many circumstances.

Let me give you an example. It's hypothetical, but it's real in the sense that it's happened in a number of cases. A preliminary hearing will be heard in a provincial court, say in Regina. The witnesses of the Crown are all called, and they all give their evidence, and they are all cross-examined. And the object of the preliminary inquiry from the court's point of view is to determine whether there is enough evidence to justify a trial.

From the defendant's point of view, one of the prime objectives of the preliminary inquiry is to hear the Crown evidence and to test it through cross-examination. Many of the questions and answers that are asked and answered on that inquiry are extremely crucial to the defence of the accused when the trial comes. Now if those questions and answers, particularly the answers, don't come through on the transcript, then they're gone — they're gone for ever; they're of no possible use to the defence counsel.

And, minister, I can give you a list of names of defence counsels in this province who have run into that problem again and again and again. They'll go to a preliminary inquiry; they'll cross-examine a key witness for the Crown; they'll get an answer that is absolutely vital to some element of their defence, and when they get the transcript, the answer's not there. It's inaudible, or it's just blank. You know, the words "inaudible" appear in the transcript, or else just little dots indicating that the typist couldn't hear what the answer was. And that just . . . the system just can't work that way. The system has to work better than that.

Now we've had this problem in some of the places where only tape recorders have been used, you know, if you have a preliminary hearing out in a small centre where there's no reporter present. But in the larger centres — and there are quite a number of them in Saskatchewan — where there have been court reporters, there have been adequate transcripts. A live reporter, sitting in a court room, will pick up answers that the tape recorder just mumbled yes, whereas a person working from the tape just doesn't pick up the nod. They're not video tapes, they're audio tapes, Minister, and I'm sure you know that.

So, what you've done by this decision to get the live reporters out of the court room is to really harm the administration of justice. What I'm talking about is a very important part of the fair conduct of a criminal trial, and the absence of those court reporters has damaged the system in that way.

And I suggest, minister, that you haven't saved very much money by doing this. I suggest that if you balanced up all of the costs involved, including the costs of new trials and including the money thrown away in prosecutions that go afoul because there's no transcripts produced, or appeals that go afoul — if you totalled everything up, you really haven't saved very much money. You managed to get rid of a bunch of court reporters, fire them, but when you look at the bottom line in the balance sheet — and I think the Deputy Premier is nodding agreement with me — the cost saving is just not there. The budget is pretty much the same.

And when we're out consulting, as you suggested in your response to my opening remarks about how the system can work better, and when we sit down and talk to some of the actors in the system, including the defence counsels of this province and your own prosecutors, I think we'll find very high on their agenda the reintroduction of live reporters into the court room. And so there should be.

Now I would invite you to respond to that, Mr. Minister. And I do hope that you've got good news for the legal community when you're framing your response.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I would make two observations. The first question you raised was the concern about the time. I'm advised that, from a time point of view, the time between a preliminary hearing and readiness from a transcript is now down to one month in Saskatoon for people in custody.

Now if that's in fact the case, there's been some progress made there in the area of backlogs of transcripts. And that backlog has been dealt with in the sense of farming it out to cottage industry people to do the typing, not unlike your proposal to farm out the provincial court judge positions in Saskatoon, to get that backlog work down.

With regard to the concept, I suppose we can disagree on whether or not we should have a court reporter sitting in the court or whether or not we should have the machine followed by somebody typing it out.

My view is that while some of the machines may have been less than perfect, and certainly I have experienced that practising law in small town Saskatchewan, where the recorder gets bumped around in the trunk of the judge's car over some rough roads — and I understand that — but I would think that if we look at the progress that we've made in science and the progress that we've made in recording and electronics equipment, surely we can find recording devices that will pick everything up that's said in the court. And having done that, it's a matter of then putting it to people capable of transposing that. And if there's a problem, you fall back on your tape. I'm advised that there has been a couple of situations, one a trial and one a preliminary hearing, that had to be redone

because of inadequate recording equipment and inadequate transcript of that.

I would simply say that I think we must push forward though, and if there's shortcomings in it — and I don't know that there are; I have not heard that particular point driven home as you have today, something I will look into — but my inclination would be that I would tend to want to first deal with the recording equipment. And if it's inadequate, we can deal with that, at not a great cost. And then you deal with the second question, and that is: can some people sit down with a proper piece of recorded equipment and not transcribe that into a document? My guess is that should be able to be done. But I take your criticism of it.

An Hon. Member: — But will you act on the criticism?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I'm advised that the time lines are becoming far less than they were before, and I suspect that give the system a little time and it should work.

Mr. Mitchell: — Well, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, we have very interesting consultations in store as the elements of the legal system get an opportunity to speak to you about how these things are or are not working. My information, quite recent, is that tape recorded preliminary hearings are taking an average of 5.6 months to be produced, and they're getting longer.

Now I know you said for people in custody, and I appreciate that. I take it that your information is correct, and I think that that is a substantial improvement. That certainly wasn't the case last spring where we did have people in remand waiting extraordinary lengths of time for their transcripts to be available. There are cases of preliminary hearings that we have learned about where the transcript has been outstanding for seven months.

Now, Minister, the technology is there. It's going to be very interesting as you get into the subject because the technology is exciting, and it's available and it's state of the art, and it's not expensive. I mean it's not expensive considering the way in which the whole system is expensive, in any event.

And a computer-assisted court reporting can produce, for example, a transcript immediately available — immediately available. And consider the way in which that would improve trials if a witness's evidence were available moments after they've given it. Think of its importance in cross-examination and in the conduct of a fair trial. And consider the significance that would have for a judge who's trying to sift through the evidence to determine questions of credibility in the context of deciding a particular decision.

So this technology is available. And I shouldn't give you a false impression, Minister; it is initially more expensive than what we're doing, of course. You're going to go out and buy the equipment; there'll be a capital cost involved. But amortizing that capital cost over any significant period of time and balancing that against the cost of the system that you have in place now would, I think, encourage you to go with the technology.

We've got to prepare the legal system for the year 2000 and beyond and we should be looking forward. And frankly, your tape recorders are a big step in the wrong direction. They're a big step backwards. They're not working. And you may buy different recorders, and they may do a somewhat better job, but the major weaknesses in that system are going to persist.

And one of the actors in the legal system that you'll be talking to as you pursue your plans is the court reporters' association, who have a great deal of information about available technology and a good deal to tell you about how you can go about fixing up some of these weaknesses.

Now I should just, before going on, give you an opportunity to comment on that, Minister.

(1615)

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I'm advised that . . . You indicated that five and a half months for a transcript on a preliminary hearing. I'm advised that that was in fact the case to the end of June of this year; that we are now . . . our present turn-around time is at two months.

And I suspect that we could talk a fair degree on technology, and I'm not going to get into that because it'll take me a long time. It's an area of significant interest to me. Although I would say that if you are looking at the voice translator into a document, that's till very expensive equipment, and I think a ways down the road before it is really into a practical sense of being able to be used.

Certainly it's something that I would consider. And with the way technology changes, certainly it's something, I think, that we could look forward to in the future. But I would suggest that it's probably not here at this point in time.

Mr. Mitchell: — The technology that I was specifically thinking about at the time involved a live court reporter typing, or whatever the appropriate word is, onto a machine that was hooked to a computer which produced the transcripts. So the live court reporter is part of the system, but gives you an overall system that is cost effective and also cost comparable, if I can use that term — not out of line with what the system is now bearing.

I want to now turn to the John Howard Society, minister. You've heard me before express my outrage at the way in which the society was treated by the government in this budget, and I'm going to repeat the essential elements of it. The provincial government did not renew its grant to the John Howard Society this year. That grant was \$193,000. The John Howard Society had been receiving provincial funding on the basis of which a good part of its program proceeded since the year 1958, as I recall, and had received that funding year over year up until this year.

The John Howard Society administers, delivers some of the most important programming that is available in the justice system. Now I use the term "most importantly" and that's not quite what I mean. They're providing the

most important services for convicted criminals, and their work is extremely important. And the importance of their work has been acknowledged nationally, internationally, and at every level. The importance of their work has been understood and appreciated. And you, yourself, your department was making use of the services of the John Howard Society in connection with the way in which you were discharging your responsibilities imposed upon you and the department.

The first question I have to you is why, why you would turn to the John Howard Society and decide that the service that they were offering was not of sufficient importance to justify maintaining that grant, and why it was justified, in your mind, to terminate that grant and thereby terminate many of the very important programs being delivered by the John Howard Society?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well a couple of observations. First of all, I think the observation by you, and the statements by you, would indicate that funding of the John Howard Society has been discontinued. As the hon. members knows, that funding to the John Howard Society has been reduced, not discontinued, and the grants from Saskatchewan Justice, corrections division, represented 15 per cent of John Howard Society's total funding — 15 per cent was, in fact, what was reduced. They're still funded by the Department of Social Services, and we still continue to contract the John Howard Society for administration and community services.

Now your next question is going to be, or the follow-up question is going to be, that's fine, but you still cut back on John Howard Society, and justify that for me. I suppose in a world where we did not have revenue restraints, and therefore expenditure restraints, one would have probably continued to fund this. I was left with looking at the budget where you took the funding, as I said, for the courts and for the police and for the corrections and for the Land Titles Office — all things that are pretty fundamental that you couldn't very well cut — and you're left with about 5 per cent discretionary. And that 5 per cent discretionary, I guess we came down to contribute some money to holding our budget intact as much as we could.

We had to take those choices, and the two choices came down to the John Howard Society, cutting back some of the funding to them, and eliminating the native court worker program. Those decisions were taken. They're the type of decision that I can assure you that a minister does not take easily and take lightly. They're the type of a decision that you would just as soon, as a politician, not have to make because, obviously, you don't receive many accolades for doing that.

It's simply a case of having to take some difficult decisions, and one took those difficult decisions. Now you can, I'm sure, say well you should have cut some place else, and I guess we can debate that for some time. That's the decision that we took, because in looking at the package that I was responsible for looking at, specifically, was the Department of Justice. And perhaps you can argue that we should have had a 20 per cent increase in Department of Justice and a lower increase some place else. That is what came down. That was the decision that

was taken.

As I indicated to you, that that's not to suggest that either one of those services did not provide a service; they clearly did. It's, I guess, a question of making decisions and choices. You have to do that when you're in government. Those decisions were taken, and I guess one would have to live with them. Should the revenues of the province, primarily from resources and farming, improve, as we all hope they will, then certainly they would be given every consideration to reinstate in those programs. But other than that, I guess we can simply argue that: yes, we should; no, we shouldn't. But I think it's based upon that narrow view that we both look at.

Mr. Mitchell: — Minister, you're perfectly right that we can argue about whether or not you should have cut this grant, and I'm going to make the case that you shouldn't have cut it. And I want to debate it, I mean, I think you were wrong. For \$193,000 you lost a lot. You were getting a big bang for your buck from that \$193,000, and by wiping it you wiped out very, very significant services that have been provided in this province for years and years to people who are among the least fortunate, suffering from all sorts of problems, coming out of prison, or not going to prison, or being convicted. The significance of not going to prison becomes obvious when you see what you've cut.

But what the \$193,000 was doing was funding the core program — the core program of the John Howard Society — and provided rehabilitative services, counselling, public education, victim assistance, and citizen involvement in justice programs.

Now you yourself recognized the importance of these services in February of this year by declaring the week of February 14 as John Howard Society week. And two months later you withdraw this grant funding. Now we became . . . Saskatchewan became the first province to lose these services that I'm referring to — became the first province to lose these services offered by the John Howard Society. The society will no longer be involved in assisting with pre-release plans for inmates leaving provincial correctional centres. These people are just going to be released out on the streets all on their own to cope.

Secondly, the fine option program, which allows first time offenders to avoid a jail sentence or a fine by doing community work, may be in jeopardy as a result of the cutting of the grant. And inmate programming, programming for the inmates and their families which was previously available — including parents of young offenders — is in jeopardy also. The society has had to reduce its staff by one-third, and this has seriously affected their ability to function and their morale, and they've lost the skills and experience of people who've worked in this area for many, many years.

Now I want to quote for your information and for the record, from the executive director of the society, Bob Ruttenberg. And I quote:

The John Howard Society acts as a vehicle for public participation in our criminal justice system.

Our service, citizen involvement, is a core component of any successful and thoughtful justice system. In every province across Canada, these services exist, supported by provincial, federal, local and charitable funding. Ours is the first government in Canada to discontinue financing for community participation in justice.

Now, Minister, I think this is a matter that should be reconsidered, to say the least. I've said it on previous occasions, and I say it again, this is a service that was being provided for the benefit of some of the least fortunate people in our society. It's more than just a matter of throwing money at the people, it's a question of providing the service that would help them in the problem that they were having, whether it was coming out of jail or whether it was working off the penalty for having committed the crime, without having to go to jail or without having to pay a fine with money that they don't have. Very progressive ideas that have been in effect in our society for some time, and the cutting of your grant has placed these programs in very serious jeopardy.

Now I respectfully submit, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, that it's a decision that you ought never to have taken. I think it fair to say that you . . . maybe I'm being too generous here but it's a decision the implications of which you didn't realize at the time you were making the decision.

But in light of all the criticism that's come to you from the society and from us and from other people interested in penal issues in Saskatchewan, surely it's time to review that idea and to go to the former minister who himself is a strong supporter of the John Howard Society — now the Minister of Finance — and discuss the possibility of reintroducing this grant. I mean, the shape that you guys have got this province in, \$193,000 just isn't going to be noticed. But the service here is so vital, so important, that it deserves being right up near the top of the list of things that you ought to change your mind about and reintroduce. Will you do that, Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — The hon. member makes two observations. Number one, he makes the observation that the fine option program is in jeopardy because of this cut to the John Howard Society. I can assure the hon. member that the fine option program is not in jeopardy. The John Howard Society is but one of 280 community-based agencies the Department of Justice has contact with to act as fine option agents in the province of Saskatchewan. John Howard Society acts in the city of Saskatoon and the city of Regina and that service is still being provided, still being contracted to the John Howard Society. So his observation he made just a minute earlier is in fact not true.

With regards to the other services provided by the John Howard Society, I'm advised by the officials that in fact the correction workers can do some of the work within the correctional institutions to prepare the particular inmate for his time when he is to leave that institution, and that work can properly be done by corrections workers.

(1630)

But with regard to the fine option program, I can advise the hon. member that his allegation that that will be in jeopardy and that will be discontinued is not, in fact, true.

Ms. Simard: — I just want to ask a question on this point because we're dealing with it, Mr. Chairman, of the minister. There's a program whereby individuals may be charged with an offence but the charges are stayed in the event that the accused, and the person who's pressing the charges, or the person who is alleging they have been offended by the accused, come to some sort of an agreement — it's not the fine option program, but the other one.

Now it's my understanding, Mr. Minister, that that program is not available in northern Saskatchewan — to Northerners . . .

An Hon. Member: — What's it called?

Ms. Simard: — The name of it just escapes me right now. I'm not sure of the name of it, but a program whereby charges are not proceeded with but are stayed as a result of discussions between the accused and the person . . .

An Hon. Member: — The mediation diversion.

Ms. Simard: — The mediation diversion, that's the name of it. Now that program's not available in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister, and I would suggest that that leaves a very wide gap in the administration of justice in the province in as much as it discriminates against Northerners. It discriminates against them because it leaves them unequal in the eyes of the law. And I would just like to know whether there is any movement on the part of the Department of Justice to ensure that that program be implemented completely throughout northern Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I'm advised, if you're talking about the diversion program, that for adults it's only available now in Saskatoon, and no other place in the province. It has been for some time. If you're relating it to the young offenders, as it relates to young offenders, I'm advised that it's in place across the entire province.

Ms. Simard: — It used to be available in Regina. Has it been pulled out of Regina?

An Hon. Member: — For young offenders?

Ms. Simard: — For adults.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I'm advised that it used to be provided by John Howard Society in Regina, and their funding was cut in 1973 and not provided thereafter.

Ms. Simard: — It was provided thereafter because I used it after '82-83. Okay. That may be the case. Well I would strongly urge . . . I thought that was an excellent program, and when I was in the private practice of law I had opportunity to use it on behalf of clients and I thought it was excellent. And I think that that program should be

made available right across the province for adults and young offenders. But you are telling me that it is available for young offenders in northern Saskatchewan as well. Could you then advise me what agency is acting as mediator?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I can advise you, as you indicate, that this should be in Regina. It is in Saskatoon. It's an area under the arbitration and mediation thrust that we are pursuing, that we would hope to have a white paper or a similar type document by which we can then consult as to where we're going, some time this fall. That's one of the thrusts that we're looking at to explore with mediation across the province, and that's one area that we can deal with it on the criminal side. The bulk of it will be dealt with on the civil side, but that would be one area that we would intend to explore with a variety of service organizations that could become involved — self-help organizations that could become involved in this.

While I don't have an exact answer for you today as to what we are going to do, it's certainly one thing that we will put out, or we anticipate we would put out in this document, is something that would be explored and consulted with over the next year.

Ms. Simard: — That certainly might be one way in which justice, the costs of administering justice, would be alleviated inasmuch as the individual doesn't necessarily go into court, and it certainly is, from my understanding, a very effective way to bring home to the individual who allegedly committed the act that he or she is hurting real people. So it probably in the end is far more effective than putting that individual through a court system, in bringing home the point and in saving costs.

But I had asked you the name of the agency in northern Saskatchewan, or agencies, that are administering the mediation diversion for youth offenders, and I don't believe you gave me that name.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I'm advised that that's a Social Services program and does not fall under Justice, and therefore you'd more appropriately ask that question of the Minister of Social Services.

Ms. Simard: — Okay then, I'm going to move on to another area, Mr. Minister, and that is the Pine Grove Correctional Centre. And I just want to bring to your attention, which I'm sure has been brought to your attention on many occasions, and that is the serious discrimination against women in the correctional system.

In making these comments I want to make it perfectly clear that I'm not in any way criticizing the staff associated with the correctional institute. I believe they are doing a very good job. But I am going to make some comments with respect to the lack of training programs and the lack of community training houses in Saskatchewan for women, which I understand is primarily a question of lack of funding.

Services in the correctional institute are provided to men, that are not being provided to women. For example, there are five community training residences or half-way houses for men, Mr. Minister, in the province, and there's

not even one for women. But the existence of these community training houses allows for alternatives in sentencing and intermittent sentencing and it allows for the gradual reintegration of women into the community.

With respect to the educational program in Pine Grove Correctional Centre, to be more specific, Pine Grove has only, I am informed, one part-time teacher and no vocational courses or shops, and there are no opportunities for educational upgrading or vocational training. The majority of women in there have not completed high school and have to pay for correspondence courses if they want to upgrade themselves, Mr. Minister. And I'd like to compare that to educational programs at men's correctional centres — or when we compare that, it is highly inadequate.

So the end result, Mr. Minister, is that when women leave Pine Grove they are no better trained to reintegrate into the community than when they went into the institute inasmuch as there are no educational upgrading training programs or skills courses being provided, according to our information.

Another point that I wish to bring to the minister's attention is that there's no medical unit available at Pine Grove, so women who become ill are placed in segregation. And this creates a particular problem for women with drug and alcohol abuse addiction problems because they do not receive the special medical attention or counselling that is necessary. And in fact a 1986 survey of Pine Grove inmates shows that 79.3 per cent admitted to having addiction problems; 79.3 per cent of the women in Pine Grove admitted to having addiction problems. And yet, Mr. Minister, there is no special medical unit at Pine Grove to deal with these problems. And this, in some cases, poses life-threatening situations or could create a life-threatening situation when one is going through withdrawal symptoms.

The other point I wish to raise on the Pine Grove institute, Mr. Minister, is the fact that there's no private family visiting area, and when 83 per cent of the inmates are mothers, this presents a very serious problem. As you know, it is extremely important for parents and mothers, in this case, because I'm referring to Pine Grove, to have contact with their children. And if society is going to remove them from the general mill of society and put them in an institution, surely it is necessary for us also to provide proper and adequate facilities for these mothers to visit with their children, not just from the mothers' point of view but mostly from the children's point of view, because they do need this contact and this continuity with their mother.

The other point I wish to bring to your attention is a point respecting confidentiality. I have been informed that counselling that takes place in the institute does not necessarily remain confidential and that guards don't have any particular training with respect to counselling. And I would like the minister to comment, as well, on that in his general remarks.

I want to refer you back now to community training centres and ask whether or not this government will make a commitment to provide community training centres

throughout the province, and in particular, to make one available some place in southern Saskatchewan forthwith so that women do not have to be sent to Pine Grove, so that there is some alternate location to put them, and so that it also allows for alternate sentencing, because right now they have to be located at Pine Grove.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I'll make a couple of observations. I'll begin with some statistics. Proportionately, females represent 5.2 per cent of all incarcerated individuals, and expenditure for females represent 5.1 per cent of all dollars spent on incarceration.

So the first point is that those are fairly equal, but they are very low, and I acknowledge that. The budget growth at Pine Grove since 1982-83 has been 31.3 per cent; in the min (minimum) centre, it has been 19.1 per cent. So while it's not being solved, or some of the problems you referred to are not being solved overnight, the trend lines are such that they're moving in the correct and proper direction.

I'm also advised, as it relates to family visiting, Pine Grove offers a very liberal access for children and other family members to visit women in the centre. In recognition of the fact that most of the women in Pine Grove are single parents, the facilities ensure that children can visit frequently and for long periods of time, as opposed to the case of the male institutions. Women in Pine Grove also have full access to the family visiting unit located in the min's facility. In 1986, 19 women used this facility to visit with family members for several days at a time. A number of women used it more than once, and no women are denied access because the facility is unavailable.

The other question that you raised with regards to the question of education. And I thought that the first part of your question — correct me if you're wrong — was that they go in there with not a great deal more education than they had before. I think we have to also understand that problem is that the average stay in Pine Grove — and this is a rough estimate, so take it as that estimate — is approximately 50 days. And I think, as you know, that given that type of a short period of stay, it is somewhat difficult to get into a great deal of training of any degree of sophistication. Now certainly that can be started. It's an area that we are beginning to address, where the plans are to allow women from Pine Grove to participate in some of the class-room activities within the Prince Albert institution. So we're trying to address that in that particular way.

The other question that you talked about is the whole question of chemical dependency, of many of the people that are in there are chemically-dependent people. And I think that is an area that we have tried to make a start at beginning to deal with, with the new facility in Yorkton.

While perhaps not directly related to these type of people, very often the chemically dependent can be young people. And that's perhaps the most tragic of all types of situations, whether they're young women or young men. And so that's the type of situation that we would hope to begin to deal with, with the facility in Yorkton.

And I acknowledge the question that you advance. It's an area that all society, whether it's here or in any other parts

of North America, are having a difficult time to grapple with. And I take your concern on those particular areas.

Ms. Simard: — Just one brief comment about the statement you made about the funding being 5.1 per cent, and 5.2 per cent of the inmates being women; in other words, you're spending a proportionate number of dollars. The problem, of course, is that we're going to need to put in extra money with respect to Pine Grove because the programs have to be established, even if it is to a smaller population.

(1645)

So what I'm urging the minister to do is to prioritize . . . reassess his priorities with respect to spending in correctional institutes so that these training programs and the community training residences or at least — I'm not suggesting five — at least one in southern Saskatchewan, so that women do not have to be sent to Pine Grove, be implemented as soon as possible, because I regard that as a discriminatory practice.

So I just want to ask the minister once again whether his government is committed to establishing a community training residence in southern Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I'm advised that there are not present plans . . . if you mean to build a facility in Regina, if that's what your question was specifically referring to — although what I'm advised is a lot of the effort is put in assisting people that are, maybe, out in the community with the type of work that you're referring to, that are in the community and not in a particular facility themselves.

But if the question is: am I planning or proposing to build a facility like Pine Grove in Regina, which I took the basis of your question to be, that is not presently the plans of the department.

Ms. Simard: — I was not lobbying for Regina, Mr. Minister. I was lobbying for southern Saskatchewan. I used the word southern Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — And I'm not doing this out of a case of self-interest. I'm doing this because mothers are going to Pine Grove now, far away from their homes. They're being denied accessibility to their children because they are so far because this government has not seen fit to build a facility in southern Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I'm advised that one of the problems is that the total number of women in the system for the entire province is approximately 50. And of that 50, about 15 are maybe from the southern part of the province at any given time. And so I think you can appreciate that when you have such a low number of women that are in fact in these facilities, it's difficult to build a number of the facilities around the province and to be able to do it in a proper way.

I'm advised that of those 15 that would come from the

southern part of the province in any given year, about five would be able to get into the community training program, so we're really dealing with maybe 10 people. So I think you have to appreciate from the size of the problem that we're dealing with; you can appreciate that there is some problems there. And I take your concern to be very meaningful, but I hope you would also recognize that the numbers that we have to deal with here are meaningful as well.

Ms. Simard: — Okay, I understand what the minister is saying, but I don't believe it's necessary to have an elaborate, first-class institution that, you know, could house 50 or 100 inmates. We could look at a community training residence that is smaller than that, that still operates efficiently, that would, say, house the 10 or 15 that may have to be housed at a particular time.

And I really urge the government to look at that because I concur with Judge Boyce's decision, ruling on June 29, that said it was sex discrimination to send a woman to Pine Grove to serve her intermittent sentencing. And I think the government should pay attention to that judge's ruling and pay attention to the opposition's concern.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Now I have referred to educational and training programs at Pine Grove, and I would like to know from the minister: what programs are available at this time to develop employment skills and to obtain vocational training for inmates in Pine Grove?

An Hon. Member: — What was that question, please?

Ms. Simard: — The question is: what programs are available for vocational training and for upgrading and employment skills?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — In regard to the judgement that you referred to, I think that I can say that we in fact met that particular requirement of that judgement for that particular individual.

With regard to the programs: remand inmates are offered access to all programs and activities within the confines of the physical facilities; academic training is provided by a part-time teacher; a variety of extra-curricular short courses supplement the school program; basic training and work skills is provided in cooking, cleaning, laundry, sewing, and landscaping; special classes are provided in personal development, life skills, addiction education, parenting, family violence, sexual abuse.

Pre-release programming is a significant part of the case work in programming. Major emphasis is placed on utilization of community resources for work, education, training, and recreation. Distance placement is a component of the community training program. Every woman in Pine Grove who has an interest and a need for educational upgrading has the opportunity to participate in this type of programming at Pine Grove, at the present time employing a teacher half-time.

Some of the new areas that are being done where Pine Grove would be able to use the facilities of Prince Albert

Correctional Centre . . . And the specific question, I think, that you referred to, some of the classes now being taught for Pine Grove inmates is motor mechanics, carpentry shop. Both of those are being used in the Prince Albert Correctional Centre — carpentry and motor mechanics. That's the specific, I think, vocational training that you referred to, plus the other general one that I talked about.

Ms. Simard: — Just a statement with respect to the type of training that's available. I'm wondering how much training of a non-traditional female nature, like you have referred to laundry and cleaning, and I'm not suggesting that that's not good; there's good to that too, but those are traditional female jobs. And that particular type of training isn't necessarily going to help these women get out of the rut that they may be in and advance themselves in society and find high-paying jobs.

So I want to know what training is available for these women in a so-called, non-traditional female area, or in an area that would provide them with skills that will make it possible for them to find employment that will pay them a decent wage when they get out of Pine Grove. That's the sort of training that I want to be informed about and I would like to see in Pine Grove.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well as I indicated, two of the courses that have just been introduced, one is motor mechanics, and I would think that's not a traditional type of education program you're talking about. And the other one is carpentry.

Now again let's go back to the question. You say that what you want is these particular individuals having the ability to get into society, to get a proper education to get into society.

Now if you're looking, number one, at the fact that the average stay is going to be 50 days, I think is somewhat optimistic for anybody to think somehow that we can take people that have, probably for the most part, have a poor education by our standards in the sense that most of them have probably not graduated from high school and many of them maybe have not even attended high school. In order to get them educated in a proper way, to get them meaningfully into the work-force, I think it's going to take sizeably longer than 50 days. And for them to get into that type of program, my guess was that we should be looking into the areas and dealing with that question more through the field of education and the field of social services — that type of thing — which I'm sure in fact is the case.

I don't think it would be realistic to think that somehow a person going into Pine Grove for 50 days is going to come out better trained, able to go out into the work-force and find their place in the work-force. I think we would be hoping too much to think that we could do that. Perhaps we could get in, even to the position of encourage them to at least pursue some further education when they are out, to pursue it over a period of time. I think that would be the only hopeful way that we could in fact deal with what I think everybody would like to see.

Ms. Simard: — Okay, Mr. Minister, there are women who stay there longer than 50 days, and for these women,

these programs should be available. But even if they're only there for 50 days, Mr. Minister, or less, this is a unique opportunity for society to introduce them and to show them what they may be capable of, and to help to rehabilitate them and point them in the correct direction.

So, Mr. Minister, I'd now like to ask you about the infirmary at Pine Grove, or the infirmary that isn't at Pine Grove, I might say; and I want to know why there are not any trained, permanent, medical staff at Pine Grove.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I'm advised that there is a nurse on duty half-time. I'm advised that there's a doctor attends the facility twice a week. I'm advised that there is a contract with a dentist who will attend the facility as and when requested. The problem again gets back to the size of the inmate population.

You have but 50 as an inmate, and the question becomes, there is not a first aid centre there, or a hospital facility if you like, because I suppose of the size of it. And traditionally what they have done is the nurses there, they're three miles away from a health care service, and in the past they have used transportation — instead of building a facility there, have opted to use transportation to take that particular individual to the health facility.

Now you can maybe be critical of that, but coming from rural Saskatchewan, that is not unlike the way many people in rural Saskatchewan live, that there may be, instead of three miles away, they're 20 miles away or 40 miles away from that type of facility as well.

So I think that given that — given that a nurse visits, given that a doctor visits, given that a dentist visits — that while perhaps it's not perfect, I think it as a service perhaps is good as one would be received by the people in many, many parts of rural Saskatchewan where they in fact live.

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Being near 5 o'clock, this committee is recessed till 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.