

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — I hereby lay on the Table a petition which was presented to the Table yesterday, and under rule 11(7) I report that I have examined the petition and now read and receive the petition:

Of certain citizens of the province of Saskatchewan praying that the Legislative Assembly may be pleased to urge the Government of Saskatchewan to retain the school-based dental plan.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Duties on Saskatchewan Potash Industry

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Who didn't clap? That's what I want to know.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, the member from Kindersley. Yesterday the Minister of Trade, the member from Kindersley, was widely reported as saying, in respect of the potash situation in the United States, that his government had taken some steps to try to stir up the very important and powerful farm lobby with respect to the opposition, or possible opposition there, to what the United States is planning in terms of Saskatchewan potash.

Yet this morning an executive member of the United States National Farmers' union replied in a radio interview in Saskatchewan that he had not heard of this development, except short of being notified by the radio journalist.

My question, therefore, to the Minister of Trade is as follows: what has the government done, with specifics, to date to communicate to this important American farm lobby that this action by the American government itself is going to cost them a lot of money, and that we can make common cause here, Canadians and Americans, to try to stop this regressive step by the United States?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well I certainly welcome the return of the member from Riversdale, the father of the potash corporation and various other things, and I welcome him into this debate.

Now you ask the question as to what we have done with regards to the lobby in United States. I indicated to your hon. seat mate yesterday that what we have done for the most part with the lobby effort, bearing in mind that it's a

legal dimension of it between company and company, has been to deal with the lobbyists, if you like, to deal with some of the players in the Department of Commerce, to deal with some of the players at the administration level as to how, in fact, the potash ruling could impact upon us and, in turn, impact upon the U.S. farmer — by our calculation as much as \$15 an acre costs of fertilizer increase just with this particular anti-dumping action.

Now the reality is that we have dealt with the lobbyists in the United States. We have found that the U.S. Congressmen, particularly the Democrats, do not want truck or trade with anything that says anything but: build higher walls, build higher walls around United States to protect United States' interests.

I think that when the Americans . . . sometimes they need a crack on the side of the head to wake them up. Perhaps this is going to start to do that.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Trade and Economic Development. I think we're all aware of some of the protectionist sentiments that are about in the United States. So I do think, with the greatest of respect to the minister, he need not repeat that and its importance to us.

My question to you, sir, is this: in view of the fact that you and your Premier and the government were aware, knew of, the United States action on potash for months before the actual determination — this was not a secret — in view of the fact that some several days have now gone by, why cannot the minister, why cannot this government, communicate to the people of Saskatchewan something more than the fact that they've been caught flat-footed and unawares and unprepared to deal with this? Why can you not tell the legislature and the people of Saskatchewan and the thousands of potash workers, a specific game plan? Will you give us that specific game plan? Will you give us that specific game plan now; what have you done?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I will not give you the specific game plan now, but I will say . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please. I think if we just stop the interruptions now before we get very far into question period, we'll have a more fruitful question period.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — What I indicated to the hon. member is that you will not have to hold your breath very much longer until you will see unfolding the game plan of this government as to how we intend to, one, deal with what we see as a very unfair decision and attitude by the U.S. government and the U.S. producers and the U.S. quasi-judicial process. That's number one; and how we will deal as well with what we think was a billion dollar mistake orchestrated by you, architected by you, in buying the potash corporation with the people's money, I think that is the billion dollar boondoggle, and we'll be talking about that for some time as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, further supplementary. I think our side would welcome the discussion about the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan and the fact, Mr. Speaker, that for six to seven years the potash corporation made a profit and never was once attacked by the United States Commerce department, but, in the five years of this government, has been attacked by the United States Department of Commerce and can't make any money. We'll talk about that.

But my question is this, to the . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Perhaps we're getting into a situation where there is a little bit of debate beginning on both sides of the House here. So let's keep our preambles down, and let's keep our answer at reasonable length.

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to direct specifically the question to the Minister of Economic Trade and Development.

Today, according to news reports, your Premier is now talking about an embargo to the United States on potash, which seems to be yet a new strategy unfolding on the go, depending on whose microphone is put in front of the Premier or the government of the day. Is this in fact the position of the Saskatchewan government that an embargo is a possible retaliatory action by the Saskatchewan government which is being seriously considered, and if so, how can you justify that kind of an action which can only but help penalize 3,000 or more Saskatchewan family workers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I can assure the hon. member that we have a great interest in the 3,600 – 3,800 employees involved in the potash industry, and we're going to do what we can do to deal with that particular question. The hon. member somehow now . . . yesterday his boss was telling us: you guys better stand up and take a strong stand against the Americans. Our Premier stands up and tells the Americans how it is. And what do we hear from the new leader? You shouldn't do that. Now either you take it one way or the other.

Our view is this: is the only thing the Americans are listening to today, and these days, is hard talk. And if it's going to be hard talk that all that they will listen to, then that's exactly what they're going to get – hard talk and hard action. And you will see in the days to come some very hard action that we will take against the Americans.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary, if I may, to the Minister of Economic Trade and Development. I'm sure that President Reagan must be quaking in his shoes as a result of the announcement that the Premier of our province is now going to get real tough with him. But let's be realistic about it, Minister of Economic Trade and Development.

Why don't you simply fess up to the people of Saskatchewan that you've been caught flat-footed by this

action, that your government has been negligent in its responsibilities not only to PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan) but to the potash workers of Saskatchewan, and that you really have no game plan in mind. And what you're trying to do now is struggle in a fact-after situation to come up with something to try to save the potash industry and save your political hides. Why don't you tell us the truth?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — If the hon. member from Riversdale will show up in this House, and promise to show up in this House more than but once every week, show up for the next couple of days in this House, show up for the next couple . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order. Order, please. I think that all members should heed that call and allow the Minister of Justice to continue. It's difficult to hear him. I am sure there are other members who wish to hear his answer, but we can't hear the answer if there's noise in the House.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, let me assure the hon. member. If he shows up in his place tomorrow or Monday . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. And I would ask the member from Quill Lakes to please keep his comments to himself from this Chair. And I will decide if the answer he's giving is on the topic or not. I rule that at this point it's on the topic.

An Hon. Member: — Where's the Premier?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — The members opposite ask where the Premier is. The Premier is at the premiers' conference like every other premier across this country – all 10 of them.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member from Riversdale that this government will be acting very soon. We have been looking at this problem for some period of time. That will be clear when we announce what we will announce very shortly, very shortly in this House.

Sunday Shopping

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Urban Affairs, and it deals with yet another example of your government's flat feet. I'm talking about your government's inability to show any leadership whatsoever on the question of Sunday shopping. In light of the ruling by the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal, which brings into question that section of The Urban Municipality Act which prohibits Sunday shopping, what action do you plan to take so as to ensure that no stores will be opening for business in Saskatchewan this Sunday?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Speaker, with all the urbanites in the opposition benches, I'm really pleased to finally receive a question on the 64th day of this session.

In any event, we are dealing with a very complex situation, Mr. Speaker. We are still studying and analysing the decision. It's not a clear black and white decision, and there are several options that we can consider, and we are looking at all of those options.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Supplementary to the Minister of Urban Affairs, Mr. Speaker. When are you going to get your act together? You've known since Monday what the ruling was. You've known that this ruling, or that that section, has been under attack for a number of months, but you say that you're still studying your options. The question is: are you saying that your department had no contingency plans whatsoever on this question?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Speaker, I suppose it's fair to say that we had all kinds of contingency plans ready to go, if we assume that our legislation was going to be looked at by the courts. It's not a unique situation. In each jurisdiction in Canada, the matter of legislation is challenged in the courts, and as a result you don't deal with that until the particular situation arises. It's ludicrous to think that you'd have legislation and alternates available to it.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I would like the minister to provide very clearly on his government's very clear position on this issue. Do you oppose, or do you not oppose, Sunday shopping in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Speaker, at this time we're looking into all the oppositions to restore the legislation to its status quo. And with the co-operation of the opposition, when the time is right to do that — and obviously those options are still not yet complete because there are so many — it will be done.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you're quoted as saying that the law still stands and that prosecution will continue. You know that these prosecutions are now being paid for by urban municipalities to enforce a law that is now questionable. The question is: will you do as the city of Moose Jaw has been suggesting, and that is to enforce directly — either that or pay the cost for municipalities to enforce the law?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Speaker, the member has misquoted me. I didn't say that at all. That's number one. And number two, although the effect of the ruling renders that portion inoperative at the present time, the obligation to live within the law is still there because one of the options clearly is to appeal. And if the appeal is won, then prosecutions would occur. So I caution all the business community to be very careful with the decisions that they make in the next while, while we're dealing with it.

Funding to PAMI

Mr. Upshall: — In the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, I would direct my question to the acting

minister. My question deals with the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute of Humboldt. As you know, you've reduced funding this year and are planning to totally eliminate funding next year.

Mr. Minister, this is a world-class institution. It provides important services to farmers in research and development. We have delegations coming every week from other parts of the world to help Saskatchewan machinery implement manufacturers.

Have you reviewed this decision, Mr. Minister? Have you reviewed this decision, and will you show some leadership from your government today and tell Saskatchewan farmers that the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute will be there next year, and for many years to come, with funding from your government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Relative to PAMI (Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute), Mr. Speaker, as I recall that involves three provinces, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba, and I'm led to believe that there are negotiations under way across the three provinces, and including the research council.

I can't give any more details than that, except to say that our Premier and our government very much recognize the importance of research in agriculture. Did we not recognize it, we wouldn't have increased the funding through the ag (agriculture) development fund like we have to research across the board.

So I think the hon. member ought not be concerned that somehow research funding is drying up, or we're not committed to it, because in fact we are. And as I recall from this past budget that was brought down, the commitment to the ag development fund went up, not down. And as well you will know that after 25 long years our Premier has given the green light to building the new agriculture college at the University of Saskatchewan — very important to our farmers when it comes to research, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, this institute provides a very important function to farmers who have limited dollars when they're making purchase decisions. You can talk about all of the money that you're putting into research, but you've cut funding to PAMI this year, and you're going to eliminate funding to PAMI next year, you say. How is that supporting it?

There are small-business manufacturers in this province who need that to promote their business and their equipment. The farmers need it. You're cutting the funding. Will you show some leadership to the farmers of this community? Reinstate that funding, perhaps taking some of the money from your \$20 million advertising campaign self-serving the government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker . . . as I understand it, relative to that institute, there are some negotiations under way. I have no more particular

information than that. And as I said earlier, our commitment to research is loud and clear, and it shows in our budget numbers this year again, Mr. Speaker.

Provincial Agreement with Gainers

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. It's been nearly two years since your government announced that Saskatchewan taxpayers would be providing some \$21 million in loans, 10 million of which was forgivable, to Alberta millionaire, Peter Pocklington and his company, Gainers.

Now what we would like to know, Mr. Speaker, from the minister, is that to date not one of these agreements has been tabled in the provincial legislature. And I would like to know from the minister when, exactly, you are going to let us know the terms and conditions of the agreement between the province of Saskatchewan and Peter Pocklington and Gainers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — This might come as a surprise to you, but this is not the first time this question's been asked in the House and has been at some time.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order. I would like to ask the co-operation of all members in the House to allow the question period to proceed, not to interrupt the questioner, and not to interrupt the minister who is giving the answer. I'd ask for your co-operation in that.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me say this. I think what the hon. member is referring to is: was there a loan between Sedco (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation) and Pocklington or Gainers? And there was, in fact, a loan between Gainers and Sedco. And there's been loans between Sedco and a variety of companies and a variety of individuals across this province over a long period of time.

The governments of today and of yesterday and of before that, when Sedco was first born, have taken position, as do all chartered banks, that that type of information should remain confidential; that the government should not be required to list out every person that has borrowed money from Sedco and how much those loans are.

Now that's been a time-honoured tradition that you did not provide that information public, just as you would not expect a credit union to do it, just as you would not expect a bank to do it. And we have taken that position for some period of time. And that position has been taken by governments before us and, I think, for just reason. And I think that we will stay on that particular course.

Mr. Anguish: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I'm quite well aware that this question's been asked many times before in this legislature and you've never given us an answer . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — . . . never, never given us an answer. I'm not asking for your confidential information on Sedco. What we want to know is: when are you going to release the agreements, the terms and conditions under which Gainers are operating in the province of Saskatchewan? At first, on December 11 in a press release from your government, they said they were going to build a \$3 million bacon processing plant and a \$20 million hog slaughtering plant, another \$3 million pork processing plant, and there was all kinds of talk about increasing the production of hogs in the province of Saskatchewan. None of that . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. I realize the member wants to make a point, but he's taking too much time in making it, so please put your question again and you'll get your answer.

Mr. Anguish: — My question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister is that we don't want the information about Sedco and what they've loaned and what they're going to forgive, whether it's \$10 million or not. We want the agreements. You've done it for Weyerhaeuser. When will you table the agreements between Gainers and the province of Saskatchewan in this legislature so the people in the province know what's going on in this big scam?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Let me put this to you very clearly. What happened with Weyerhaeuser is we made what I think is a brilliant deal in selling a losing pulp mill, a pulp mill that members opposite again tried to buy up. They lost millions on it — \$91,000 a day . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Now we're not going to get answers, and we're not going to get questions which are acceptable to the House if these interruptions continue. And sometimes we don't particularly like the question and we don't like the answer, but that's part of question period. So I'd just like to ask the members to allow question period to go forth in a reasonable manner.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Let me go back and say that we have turned an operation that was losing \$91,000 a day into one that is (a) making a great deal of money today, and is building a new paper plant.

Now I have a hard time understanding the member from The Battlefords. He comes in to this House; he complains about a project where 100 new jobs are created by Gainers. He complains about a project where 100 new employees are created by Hunter's. He complains about another project with High R Doors. He is against any economic development going into the city of North Battleford. I will pitch the chamber of commerce. I wonder why he — not like everybody else in this province . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please. Next question.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker. You make me on the verge of being ill. December 11 . . . New question, Mr. Speaker. December 11 you acknowledged, in the press release, \$3

million for the bacon processing plant.

Why is it that maybe you're a little bit nervous about this whole situation? Could it be that Sedco has a mortgage filed against the title of the property for Gainers in the city of North Battleford, and along with the money that the city of North Battleford gave to Gainers, they have been given more money than the \$3 million that you acknowledged that the plant would cost to build? In fact, about \$6 million that we can trace that went to Gainers for a \$3 million bacon plant. What we complain about on this side of the House, and the people of North Battleford, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that it's bad economics for them.

What I want to ask the minister to confirm is whether or not there is a subsidy being paid to Gainers for every pork belly they have to bring into the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Again, Mr. Speaker, let me talk to the hon. member from The Battlefords. Again he sits now, and not only does he criticize us for economic development in the city of North Battleford, now he's attacking the city council. It's not enough to attack the chamber of commerce; now he's attacking city council of doing a bad deal as well.

Mr. Speaker, the deal that was done in North Battleford with Gainers and with the cities to create jobs in North Battleford was a good deal, Mr. Speaker. It's created a lot of jobs. They don't like, they don't like Gainers; they've made that clear. It's a good job, and it's created a lot of activity in the city of North Battleford.

Now I'm sure you'll come to the next point of your statement in the media to the effect that: you people had better listen to me in the city of North Battleford because I am going to be a powerful cabinet minister some day . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Time has elapsed. Time has elapsed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. I think hon. members should try to remember that when the Speaker is on his feet, there shouldn't be constant talk going back and forth across the House. I would like to state that members from both sides of the House are guilty, and I would ask their co-operation in the future on this.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Human Resources, Labour and Employment Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 20

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to enter into this review of the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment. And I have a series of questions I would like to direct to the minister regarding services to seniors, and including specifically

the Seniors' Bureau, which has now been shifted, as we all know, from the Department of Social Services into this Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment.

It may be somewhat indicative of the priority placed on services to seniors that the Seniors' Bureau was now found in the same department as what was formerly the department of Labour, the employment development agency, the women's secretariat, the native secretariat. And kind of obscurely attached to that, it seems, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, is the Seniors' Bureau.

Now I think, as we review the actions of this government over the past couple of months, and the impact that the changes that have been brought about through the budget and otherwise, we see, Mr. Chairman, that there are two groups in society in Saskatchewan today who have been most directly impacted by those changes. And I speak, specifically impacted in a negative kind of way. Those two groups, obviously, Mr. Chairman, are the poor in our society in Saskatchewan as well as the second group, large group, nearly 128,000 people who are directly affected, and I refer to those who are seniors here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, all too often those two groups overlap, and many of our seniors in Saskatchewan also fall into the category of being Saskatchewan's poor. And I would like to just quickly do a cursory review of the cuts that have been made that have impacted on seniors.

In the last three or four months, or less, Mr. Chairman, we've seen home care rates for seniors, who are still living on their own but need some assistance in order to live independently, we've seen home care rates rise by up to 67 per cent. We've seen nursing home rates increase now by some \$80 a month. We've seen seniors who . . . many of whom have lost their property improvement grants, some of whom admittedly have had those replaced by heritage grants, but not all.

We've seen the part of our population which is most directly affected by the prescription drug plan changes being the seniors of our province. And I've talked to several pharmacists and doctors who've expressed their abhorrence at the move that has been made by the government, and particularly their concern for the impact on the senior citizens of Saskatchewan, particularly the low-income seniors, many of whom they've expressed concerns for the fact that instead of taking prescriptions that they should be taking, because of lack of finances many of them will be showing up to increase our ever-lengthening hospital waiting lists.

And that's the next point as well, Mr. Chairman. Every one of us, as MLAs sitting in this Legislative Assembly, have had an increasing number of approaches by many people, but specifically again seniors, who are affected by the long and lengthening waiting lists in the hospitals here in Saskatchewan. Seniors have been affected by the whole raft of tax increases directly or indirectly imposed by this government. By the cutting back in funding to municipalities, we've seen seniors, along with the rest of the population, whose property taxes will be rising as a direct effect of that. That's certainly true in my home city

of Moose Jaw, as well as other municipalities around the province.

Seniors have been hit by the reintroduction of the gas tax again. Seniors have been impacted by the hold on nursing home expansion, and a particular scam – I think is probably not too harsh a word to use – being the withdrawal of support for the St. Anthony's Home in Moose Jaw to provide facilities for seniors who are needing level 3 and level 4 care.

Well that's just a partial list, Mr. Chairman, but I think it spells out the context of what's happening for senior citizens in Saskatchewan today, and most significantly for seniors who are on the low end of the income scale.

I was a bit surprised – appalled is probably not an inaccurate word, Mr. Chairman – yesterday when the minister stood on his feet and somehow, which is not yet clear to me – it wasn't yesterday, and it certainly hasn't been as I've reread *Hansard* – in response to my colleague from Cumberland's statements about systemic racism, stood up quite contrary to what my colleague was saying, demonstrated that he didn't understand the issue that was being put to him and somehow made some – irrelevant to the discussion – but made some comment to the effect that he's not a racist and that's proven by the fact that he paid \$41,000 a year in income tax last year and that his family, as a matter of fact, paid \$50,000 in income tax.

Well, Mr. Minister, you may pay \$50,000 a year in income tax – I'm not talking income, I'm going by your words that you pay \$50,000 a year in income tax — Mr. Minister, it'll be, I hope not a surprise, but maybe it is a surprise to you that there are many seniors in the province of Saskatchewan who pay no income tax at all. And that's not because they're taking advantage of all the tax breaks and loopholes, it's because their incomes are not sufficiently high in order to qualify to pay income tax.

And so I think it's in that context, Mr. Speaker, that you've spelled out through your government's actions – I don't think we can attribute all of these things directly to you, they're obviously endorsed by your Premier. I don't think you're doing anything in this department or elsewhere that your Premier does not endorse; obviously he does. You've spelled out through your changes that seniors are a reducing priority, particularly the seniors who are the poorest of that 128,000 seniors who live in the province of Saskatchewan today.

As you're aware, Mr. Speaker, the Seniors' Bureau has offered a number of services in the past which are intended to help seniors shuffle through the red tape and bureaucracy of programs that are intended to be of assistance to them. And one of those programs has been the Seniors' Outreach Service, commonly known as SOS to many people who've made use of this telephone service, a toll-free number which was well publicized around activity centres and senior apartment blocks, and provided information to seniors to assist them in dealing with life's problems and crises as they were confronted by them.

My first question to you today, Mr. Minister, is, in the

years of 1986-86 and '86-87, can you . . . not can you, because I know you can, will you please tell me the number of calls that were received by the Seniors' Outreach Services, or the SOS line to assist seniors in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I understand yesterday my microphone wasn't working, so if that's a problem again, possibly the clerk could advise me and we'll switch desks again.

What we're looking at here is a misconception in the mind of the members opposite that somehow there has been government cuts to senior citizens. Overall, senior citizens have fared well under this government – exceptionally well. Senior citizens live with me and around me, and are part of the community I live in. And as a matter of fact, in my constituency senior citizens are one-third of the adult population. And so senior citizens are very much a part of my community, and our community, in this province.

We have a different perception of senior citizens and how they live than the members opposite, and senior citizens have a different perception of themselves. They consider themselves very much a part of the community in Saskatchewan, certainly not, as a group, affluent, but on the other hand then you are looking at people in retirement, and you're not, for the most part, looking at people who are earning incomes or any large kind of incomes.

But the public should know – and I think senior citizens, if they sit down and do this calculation – that there is very much a minimum income standard for senior citizens in Saskatchewan. And these may not even be the total figures because of some other federal tax changes that have been made recently. But at present if you're a single senior citizen in Saskatchewan and if you have no other income, you're entitled to old age security of \$300.34. This is effective June 30, 1987. The old age pension, \$300.34; guaranteed income supplement of \$356.94, and Saskatchewan income plan of \$65 – for an income of \$722.28 per month. A guaranteed income to a single senior in Saskatchewan of \$9,447.36, plus a single senior receives \$500 from the Saskatchewan heritage program, which would bring that single senior citizen's income to a guaranteed income in the \$10,000 range. In addition, many senior citizens live in subsidized housing where their rent is no more than 25 per cent of their income.

In the case of a married couple who are senior citizens, the old age pension is \$600.68. The guaranteed income supplement is \$532.81. The Saskatchewan income plan is \$105, and the members opposite will recall that there's a substantial increase under our government. Whereas you paid single seniors \$25, and couples 45, we have more than doubled that to 65 and \$105. The income of that couple then would be \$1,238.49 per month – a yearly income of \$16,121.88 – plus \$700 under the heritage payment, which would give that single seniors couple an income of \$16,821.88, plus some benefits under the federal tax changes that were made this spring under tax reform.

So while that is not a large sum of money for a single senior or a couple to live on, it is certainly the largest sum of money compared to the cost of living. And calculated in any manner you wish, it is the largest sum of money that senior citizens in this province have ever had to live on. And while I don't indicate that senior citizens can live high on that sum of money, I would submit that senior citizens who were used to a lot less money when you were government, and when the Liberals were government, and when this province had no money at all to pay anyone anything, those senior citizens appreciate the sums they are now receiving from the federal and provincial government. And those senior citizens have indicated to me on many, many occasions that they can get by, and that they appreciate what the province, and the federal government, and the younger generation is doing to help them.

You indicated that there was a question on Outreach. We've noted that the number of calls to the senior citizens' line was down considerably, which would suggest that senior citizens were having fewer problems and fewer questions. And we found that with a number of calls, a general telephone line was adequate and it is working adequately.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, you go on an interesting discourse, I guess it would be. Obviously the facts you bring forward are not totally accurate because not all seniors families have two seniors and so on. Although I recognize it's not within the confines of this department that's before us today, it's within the confines of a department that's also under your responsibility, the Department of Social Services, whereby you require the poorest of the poor of those who are not yet technically seniors — they're not 65 years old but over 60 years old — to take early Canada Pension Plan benefits if they're eligible for social assistance and, as a result of that, save some money to the Department of Social Services and also condemn them to reduced Canada Pension Plan incomes for the rest of their entire lives.

(1445)

That does not sound to me — although it's not in this department, it's in the department under your responsibility, Mr. Minister — as though that's the act of a sensitive and conscientious kind of leadership that you purpose to be providing.

I note, Mr. Minister . . . And perhaps both of us can stick closer to the point, and we'll make some rapid progress through questions that I would like to have answered, and I repeat my first question because you didn't answer it. The SOS line, in '85-86, how many calls did it receive? In '86-87, how many calls did it receive?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — We don't have statistical information on how many calls came in. As you know, it was an 800 number which doesn't keep track of the number of calls. The number of calls coming in did not seem to warrant the cost of an 800 number. As you may be aware, and have alluded to, we are combining many services to senior citizens in the new branch of my department. Senior citizens had come to me, eve before

I was elected, and indicated that they, first of all, would like to have their own department, and at the very least would like to have a department outside of the Department of Social Services since they felt that they were on pensions and were not clients of Social Services.

We have been able to go far enough to have seniors included in the Department of Human Resources. In the down-sizing of government and a smaller cabinet, which your colleagues had asked for quite some length of time, it does not warrant having many more government departments. So the senior citizens have been included in this new Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment. Senior citizens are a human resource. We consider them to be a human resource.

There are 128,000 senior citizens in Saskatchewan out of, I believe, 640,000 or 641,000 adults. So you can see we're looking at about one-fifth of our population, and very much our human resource, and should not be in the Department of Social Services.

In addition, we are consolidating more and more things with regards to senior citizens, and all of these things will be consolidated into our department so senior citizens will have what you might call, in modern terminology, "one-stop shopping."

With respect to your question on the 800 line, it just wasn't justified on the number of calls that were coming through. We don't have the exact figure of how many thousand it was.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, as a matter of fact, you know and I know that statistics were kept on the number of calls reached, the numbers of calls made by seniors to the Seniors Outreach Service telephone line. I know that, as a matter of fact. I am asking you what the number of calls received was in 1985-86, and the number in '86-87? We both know that statistics were kept on that fact, and will you please report them to the House.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — I don't have the information right now. The head of the branch has been summoned to join us today and has not yet arrived. When Dr. Skoll arrives, we'll see if he has that information. So we'll make a note of it, and if we can give you the exact figures, we will.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, that's slightly different from your first response in which you said you didn't have those figures. Is this to be expected as we go through the review of your department and services to seniors that this will be the nature of the exchange, that you don't have the answers available until you're pressed two or three times to provide them? I hope not.

We will pursue that later, Mr. Minister. And I would ask you to explain to me why it was then that the civil servant who was manning that telephone — I'm advised a civil servant who was well-informed as to seniors' services within the Government of Saskatchewan was encouraged to take early retirement and did. And as a result of that, after having had in place in this province a toll-free number that seniors could call to get advice about government services for them — a very popular service I might add — that effective this budget year, that

toll-free number, I believe, has been eliminated. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, am I correct in that understanding? Is there still a toll-free number available to seniors to get advice as to seniors' services within the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well if you really want to play silly games, I suppose we can play silly games. I told you earlier that I didn't have the figures. My staff advised me that they could get the figures, and if we can get them and if I do have them, I will give you the figures.

I do recall Ruth Dafoe, though. I think we all know her from her days when I was with the party — your party, that is. And I think I recall her taking early retirement with much fanfare, and I expect that you probably have the figures. So why don't you just tell me, rather than us wait?

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, if you want to play silly games, I guess we can play silly games. It's my assumption we come into this legislature to review the operations of your department, to do that seriously in the interests of the people of Saskatchewan.

It is your responsibility to answer questions; it is my responsibility to ask those questions to hold your department accountable. If you want to play games with that, then maybe we'll have to play games. I hope that we won't have to.

Mr. Minister, I ask you the same questions, and it seems to be taking . . . we're going through a painstaking process here to start what should be a very simple exercise. You've told me that you'll try and get me these numbers. I ask you — let me put two questions in one and try and get an answer from you. When will you give me those numbers; and secondly, is there in Saskatchewan today a toll-free number that seniors can call to get advice about services to seniors in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, we have the arrival of Dr. Louis Skoll, who's in charge of the seniors' branch of our department, and he advises me that I was in error, I was ill-informed, that we still do have a toll-free number, which is better than I had announced earlier here. He also advises me that we receive, on average, about 300 calls per month, approximately 3,600 calls per year, and that the calls are being taken by the general staff of the department. So the only real change is that Ruth Dafoe is no longer with us, and other than that, it's business as normal.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, are you saying then that the number is the same and that the usage of that line is the same? Is that what you're telling me? I'm trying to phrase the questions as simply and clearly as I can; I would appreciate it if you would put the same effort into the answers.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Dr. Skoll advises me that the usage is down. We don't have the exact figures on what it is down; that's what it was running at when we last checked. He advised that the usage is down on that toll-free line and seems to be continuing to decrease, which would suggest that senior citizens either have all

the information they need, or understand what this government is doing, or probably, as I suspect, they're quite satisfied with what this government is doing.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, I quite for the life of me cannot understand why you would refuse to respond directly to my questions. These are not complicated questions. I asked you, is it the same line as is? And will you also tell me, is it continuing to be advertised?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, the answer is that the number, the telephone number that you call is the same and that it will be continued to be made public as much as possible. We are revising the seniors' directory, and it will be in the new directory which we hope to have out in the not too distant future.

Mr. Hagel: — While we're on the topic, then, of the directory, Mr. Minister, will you tell me what the target date is to have that new directory out, and will you also advise as to why, at the Seniors' Bureau in Regina today, that there are no longer many, if any, pamphlets available that used to be available to seniors to advise them of services available to them? So both of those questions, same time: why are the number of pamphlets down? What is the target date for the new directory? That's the directory of all services in the province of Saskatchewan that can be made available to seniors so that they can find help for themselves.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — The best information I have is that the pamphlet stock is running down; that they're planning to revamp the pamphlets and have a new printing of the pamphlets. The target date for the new seniors' directory is January 1988, this coming January.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And can we go back to one other question you failed to answer before that I asked: when will you provide me the statistics on the usage of the SOS line? You can answer that at the same time as you answer the next question. I think it's probably just an oversight on your part.

Mr. Minister, there has been funding by the province of Saskatchewan to seniors' activity centres. And it is my understanding, Mr. Minister, that the funding formula has not been revised for some time. First of all, can you tell me what was the last date that the funding formula was revised upwardly for seniors' activity centres?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well the answer to the first part of your question, that the best information we have on the statistics of the number of telephone calls coming in on the seniors' inquiry line was approximately \$3,600 per year . . . 3,600 calls rather than dollars, when Ruth Dafoe was doing the answering and running that part of it. We don't have statistics on what they are running at now. We would have to go back and monitor the calls for the next month to see how many come in in the next month, so we don't have an exact figure of what they're coming in at the current rate. The traditional rate was 3,600 per year, and it is down somewhat now. That's the best information I can give you on that.

The formula funding for seniors' centres in the province . . .

We are planning a revision of the formula for next year's budget – next year's budget year. We don't have the exact information available right now as to when it was last revised. It was a few years ago. In any event, that is sort of history. We're planning a revision for the next budget year. I don't expect there will be any major changes in the formula or major changes in the funding. So I wouldn't want senior citizens to be apprehensive in next year's budget, and I wouldn't you to go about the country scaring the senior citizens suggesting that somehow there's going to be a massive change.

What I should really say is that the formula will be re-examined and I don't expect it to be changed in any major way, but I expect it, possibly, to be fine tuned to be brought in line with the needs of the various seniors' groups and modern reality, and get a better balance between some of the groups as to what they're receiving money for, and how much they're receiving.

(1500)

There are a few groups in Saskatchewan that are receiving, per capita, a sum of money that is substantially out of line with what the great majority of senior centres are receiving. And we would be looking at a balance there so that the formula would be spread fairly evenly across all the senior citizens' groups.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, I'm pleased to hear that there will be a revision, and I would hope that you're implying that would be an upward revision of the funding formerly for activity centres, although when I hear this government talking about revisions to formulas it isn't always the case. You may want to confirm that.

Given that you have said, Mr. Minister, that you don't want to be scaring seniors, and it's a little difficult as they listen to the news and what your government announces month by month and week by week, and day by day, for them not to be frightened at times, Mr. Minister. Many seniors, unfortunately, become frightened about the security for their future because they see that being jeopardized by your government.

Let me repeat my question again because you like to use the words – the words are: that the services to seniors are a priority for you, but you haven't bothered to . . . it hasn't been a high enough priority to bother revising the funding formula for a few years, you say. Mr. Minister, will you please be more specific. How many years ago was it that the funding formula for senior activity centres was revised upwardly?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — The overall formula remains intact and has not changed since 1983-84 . . . '82-83 . . . '82-83 is the base year, and there has been no major change, up or down, since '82 or '83, in the funding.

Traditionally there was, back in 1978-79, a formula, 40 per cent of approved operating costs, and also our department has put money into start-up costs for senior citizens' centres. Of course, they are quite prevalent throughout the province right now, and there's not much demand for start-up costs. Also, the seniors, for the most part, having been self-sufficient for 65 years before they

retired, are quite self-sufficient in the operations of their centres, and there hasn't been a great deal of demand or need for large increases in the grants for the operating of their centres – it has not risen as an issue in my constituency, and I have one in virtually every town.

So the funding level has remained more or less constant from 1982-83 budget year.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, I find it a bit odd or contradictory. Maybe I'm unique. Maybe there are others who share the opinion that I have that . . . it strikes me as a bit strange that a service that is considered to be a priority service hasn't had an increase in funding from your government since it came into office five year ago. That's an odd way to treat a priority, and I guess I would say heaven forbid those who aren't a priority.

Mr. Minister, let me ask you a question, and this will be of concern to those who are charged with the responsibilities of operating senior citizens' activity centre. There has been some concern expressed, related to words coming out of the federal Progressive Conservative government, that the federal PC government is talking about pulling their cost sharing of activity centres out of the funding. And I would ask, Mr. Speaker, if it is your view that as a matter of fact that's going to happen? What is your reading about whether the Progressive Conservative federal government of Canada is going to pull its funding out of senior citizen activity centres?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — With respect to federal funding, there are some discussions, Mr. Deputy Chairman, between my officials and federal officials, and these discussions are not quite at a negotiation stage because we wouldn't negotiate with the federal government for something that we feel is partly their responsibility. We consider it highly unlikely that the federal government of Brian Mulroney would reduce funding to senior citizens in this country. I would say that anybody that is saying that there will be federal reductions to senior citizens would either be speculating, politicking or fear mongering.

Mr. Hagel: — Are you referring to the same Brian Mulroney, Mr. Minister, who attempted to de-index senior citizen pensions? Are we talking about the same Brian Mulroney that, do you suspect, may not attempt to reduce federal funding to senior activity centres? Because if this is the same PC Brian Mulroney, Mr. Minister, there seems to be a somewhat different impression that you have from the rest of the Canadian nation, both seniors and otherwise, who I recall striking up a strong resistance to Brian Mulroney's attempt to de-index senior citizens' pensions.

Mr. Minister, will you give assurance and a guarantee to senior citizen activity centres in Saskatchewan that, should Brian Mulroney and the PC federal government decide to pull out some or all of their funding to activity centres, that the province will ensure that your intention to raise the funding formula next year will still hold true in terms of the bottom line, and that's the money that they have to operate with. Will you give them that assurance today, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, we certainly wouldn't pick up what we consider off-loading of federal expenses on to the province of Saskatchewan. There are a few instances where the federal government is not continuing special funding to some senior citizens groups.

One example would be the Extra Years of Zest society in Moose Jaw, which may be in your constituency of Moose Jaw North. I have recently written them a letter dated July 29 advising them that this year's funding will be continued to them in the sum of \$74,452, and I've also added, "However, this will be the last year this level of funding will be maintained." And that's why I indicated that there will be a re-examination of the formula. I have indicated to them also that the federal government has terminated cost sharing for their society.

Now this particular society has a special arrangement not common to other senior citizens groups in Saskatchewan, and have a payroll with employees on staff, and I'm sure the member from Moose Jaw North will have an idea of how many employees are on staff by this society. And there is a considerable sum of money going to this particular group in Moose Jaw, \$74,452, and in this year's budgetary process I didn't notice that there was an inequity here. And because I couldn't give them any notice, I advised them that the amount will be continued for this year, but I've advised the Extra Years of Zest society in Moose Jaw that they cannot expect another \$74,000 next year because the money that the province has for senior citizens has to be spread more equitably.

And it doesn't cost that much money, \$74,000, to run a senior citizens' centre. In Goodeve, Saskatchewan, in my constituency, I admit somewhat smaller than Moose Jaw, they receive \$1,552. This is the home of the former member for Melville for 16 years, John Kowalchuk, and I know that he adequately took care of the people in his home village. He was the mayor there, and that amount has been fairly consistent for the Goodeve group.

There's a consistent pattern. At Grayson in my constituency, they receive \$1,552. This was 1985-86. They're eligible for the same amount, but we don't have the final amount that they've qualified for, for this year. But there's a fairly consistent pattern: in Grenfell, Saskatchewan, it's \$2,075; in Hafford, it's \$1,665; in Glenavon, it's \$2,000 exactly. You can see the consistent pattern of the amount that senior citizens' groups are getting throughout most of Saskatchewan.

And if there's an adjustment in the formula, the adjustment, as I've indicated to the Moose Jaw group, would have to be to equalize and spread around this. And I acknowledge that Moose Jaw is a larger city and requires more money, but the discrepancy between a senior citizens' group in Moose Jaw receiving \$74,000 and a senior citizens' group in other parts of Saskatchewan — and I have almost every town in Saskatchewan here, they tend to run in the 1,200 to \$2,300-\$2,500 range: Craik, for example, is \$3,000 ... yes, Craik is \$3,000; and Coronach is \$2,483. And there's a consistent pattern there.

And so I've given the Moose Jaw group advance notice of about six months that they could not expect \$74,452 next year. And the federal government had put special money into some of those groups, that being one of the examples. That's where we will not pick up any reduction in federal money, because the federal government under all political parties — I suppose it's never been under your political party, so I can't accuse your politicians of doing this, but I'm sure you have many people of your persuasion in the federal bureaucracy.

So all three political parties are represented in the way the federal government operates. And the federal government has always had a habit of putting up a block of money for somebody to start something, and then waiting for two or three or four years and then saying, well, we gave you the start-up money and now you're on your own. And then these groups come to the province and say, well, now we don't have any money; the federal government isn't giving us the money they ... And in most cases, it's money they shouldn't have given them in the first place.

So the province will not accept off-loading. We will continue to maintain services and support senior citizens' groups throughout the province on an equitable and fair basis, and therefore, the formula will be reconsidered to make adjustments, to distribute the money in a fair manner.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, that was a long and rambling non-answer to my question. Just in response to one of your red herrings, though, I would add the observation that in my constituency and around the province of Saskatchewan, I am getting senior after senior after senior who are telling me that they wait for the day when a New Democratic Party government will take place in Ottawa and bring good government, finally, to the country of Canada.

Well, Mr. Minister, it's a little difficult to put your answers together here. I hesitate to say this, but at times they sound a bit like mush. And let me ask you again for clarity, and I would ask a simple question; I'd ask you to provide a simple answer.

It seems to me, then, that what you've said here this afternoon is that you're reviewing the funding to senior activity centres; they will not necessarily provide increases in funding for activity centres; and that you anticipate the possibility of federal funding reductions, and if that happens, do you provide no assurance to activity centres that they will be compensated for the loss in federal funding? A simple yes or no would be sufficient, Mr. Minister, for purposes of clarity.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, from what we can gather, the federal government will continue regular funding to senior citizen centres. And special funding is special funding, and that's up to the federal government whether special funding is necessary or prudent.

(1515)

We will not replace special funding. We will continue

with regular funding. In the past, we have on occasion replaced special funding, as I indicated in the Moose Jaw group, and we will not continue to replace special funding.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, will you explain why there has been no funding allocated to the seniors' provincial council, and who is performing the function formally carried out by the seniors' provincial council?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, we recognize the Saskatchewan seniors' provincial council as the legitimate spokesperson for senior citizens in this province. They continue to receive full funding — same amount of money. The difference is that their administration has been absorbed into our department staff, and we pay the staff, rather than giving the money to them, and they pay the staff.

They are meeting regularly. We are in a process of replacing three people whose term has expired. We are not replacing these people as fast as we would have liked to, but I am operating on a principle that there should be some rotation from time to time, and other senior citizens should be given an opportunity to serve. So rather than immediately renew people whose term has expired, we are examining giving a rotation system. So out of the 128,000 senior citizens, they would get a fairer chance of rotating on the council and seeking this experience which they find is very rewarding.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, I understand that in 1983 and 1985 — please correct me if I'm mistaken; I'm sure you will with great glee — that there were seniors' forums held that provided the opportunity for seniors to dialogue with cabinet ministers in the province of Saskatchewan. It's my understanding that these seniors' forums were conducted through the Senior Citizens' Provincial Council, and will you please confirm whether the last two were in 1983 and 1985, and what your plans are for 1987 for the seniors' forums so the senior citizens of Saskatchewan can dialogue face to face with cabinet ministers of this government, and if there's ever a year that it's critical to do that, it's in 1987. Are you planning to do that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, I'm pleased to indicate that these forums were, as far as I recall, organized in 1983 and 1983 by my predecessor ministers in this government, and that we will carry on with that tradition and there will be a forum in Regina, October 26 through October 28 of 1987, which is not too far from now. And we expect that this will be a very useful forum, as the ones in the past have been exceptionally good.

Mr. Hagel: — Well I appreciate and am pleased to hear that, Mr. Minister, and I would sincerely hope that the cabinet minister is going to that dialogue and that seniors in Saskatchewan will go with their ears open.

Mr. Minister, can you please advise me what the advice given to your government from the seniors' council has been regarding the implementation of the prescription drug plan which requires senior citizens to be saving countless receipts in order to be eligible for the reimbursement after they have paid their first 50 or \$75 of

their deductible, and then have to submit receipts in order to get 80 per cent reimbursement of their actual prescription drug costs?

This is, I know — you and I both know; well I know — I assume that you get the occasional call from your constituent that you listen to, and we both know that this has been a particular problem for seniors to be collecting these receipts. And I'm simply asking: what has been the advice to your government from the seniors' council regarding this particular policy implemented by your government?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well I haven't had any complaints from seniors throughout the province or in my constituency about having to save their receipts and send them in for reimbursement. This year, because it's a half year, it's a \$25 deductible so some of them are already sending their receipts in.

As you may be aware, and I'm sure you are, that there is a crisis in potash and agriculture in this province, revenue is not being generated to any great extent, and we, as a government and as taxpayers, don't really have a lot of money to hire extra people to go through a large bureaucracy, and we appreciate very much that senior citizens are prepared to take time, with all other citizens, and gather their receipts and send them in, which reduces the amount of government bureaucracy we need. And the people are doing some of their own work and saving themselves taxes at the same time.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Minister, further on to the seniors' advisory council, I would ask when was the last time you met with the council, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, as far as I recall, it was February that I last met with them directly. My deputy minister and my assistant deputy minister have been able to attend almost every meeting. I don't know; I'd have to check with them to see if they've missed a meeting or not, but they've been attending regularly, and from time to time I've met with their president personally, and we have a good working relationship.

They are . . . when I met with them in February, were working on some projects, are now getting to the completion stage in these projects. And I intend to meet with them to discuss the projects that they were working on and see what the findings were. One of them, in particular, was with native senior citizens and the special problems related to their situation. And I look forward to meeting with the council in the not too distant future.

Of course the seniors' forum is coming up within a month or so, two months, and all in all they are doing good advisory work. But more than advisory work, they are doing research and they are formulating policies which they pass on to us and which we've listened to closely, and many of the suggestions they have made have been implemented, and in particular, the transfer of the branch from Social Services to Human Resources.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Minister, I would like to know . . . you alluded to earlier the three vacancies on the board. If you would, could you explain to us today the make-up of

the board, the number of members on the board as it exists now, and when you might be inclined to fill those three vacancies? And as well, where those vacancies are from?

Mr. Saxinger: — I would ask leave to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Saxinger: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce you to Pastor Ulmer, Howard Ulmer, and his wife Glorie from Southey. They are sitting in the Speaker's gallery, and their guest is Oliver Guske from Germany. Oliver is here for a youth exchange. He is taking in grade 12 at the Southey School. I am very proud to have young people coming to Canada on youth exchange. And I would welcome him to Saskatchewan, and I'd like to say a few words in German, Mr. Speaker.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in German.)

Mr. Speaker, would you want to help me welcome the guests to Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Human Resources, Labour and Employment Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 20

Item 1 (continued)

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, the members of the Senior Citizens' Provincial Council are Ted Azevedo, chairperson, Nipawin, Saskatchewan; Mary Findlay, Swift Current, Saskatchewan; Moira Gautron, North Battleford; June Clark, Saskatoon; Ernest Crowe, Craven. I'm not certain, but I think if I recall correctly, that's Chief Roland Crowe's father. I recall meeting him, and now that I read it on a list I'm quite sure it is Chief Roland Crowe's father, and he's a very fine gentleman. I was very impressed when I did meet him. Sam Haggerty, Regina; Frances Petit, Saskatoon; Len Heming, Regina; John Herne, Hudson Bay.

The other three positions, we have a target area of filling them with someone from western Saskatchewan, someone from northern Saskatchewan, and someone from the general area of Prince Albert.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Chairman, if I might, I too would like to welcome our guests in the gallery. And I'm especially pleased to welcome the young gentleman from Germany; having come from a German background, I certainly appreciate the fact that he's joining us here today.

Mr. Minister, it appears to me that you have terminated three people from the council. My understanding is that the people who are no longer on that council came from Melville, Unity, and from my home town, Prince Albert.

And I ask you, Mr. Minister, you indicated in a letter dated March 13 to me that you were currently reviewing the mandate, and in light of the budget review you weren't sure what was going to happen. I would like to say, Mr. Minister, it's been almost a year that those three areas of this province have had no representation. And I would urge you to fill those vacancies as soon as possible.

Mr. Minister, possibly . . . You indicated earlier that you have had no interaction with seniors or no complaints in terms of the changes your government has made to the drug prescription plan. I would want to say to you that possibly one of the reasons that you have had no input from the seniors is twofold.

You possibly haven't got representation on the seniors' advisory council, and I find it strange that you haven't met before the budget. I would ask you, Mr. Minister, have you had any contact with the council, and has there been any discussion, any dialogue, regarding your government's decision to increase the fees for nursing homes?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: I indicated to you earlier that in replacing people on the council we would give consideration to some new people getting an opportunity to serve. Mr. Tom Hardy of Melville, I know personally, I used to see him when I had time to play golf. I used to see him on the golf course quite often, and we used to talk.

(1530)

He's an excellent individual, but he acknowledges that someone else should have a chance to serve on the committee, and him and I discussed that matter. And it doesn't seem unreasonable that other people should have a chance to serve when there's 128,000 senior citizens in Saskatchewan. It's not that we don't meet with seniors and consult with them. The Minister of Health personally met with the provincial council in, I believe it was, North Battleford, and discussed changes there.

When you come to the topic of nursing homes and the fees of nursing homes, you've touched a sore point with me, and I am somewhat of an expert in that area. My great-grandfather lived in a nursing home, St. Paul's Lutheran Home in Melville, and died there – he lived out his life there – at the age of 87, as a matter of fact; he was well taken care of. Didn't live there long, but he was there. And my grandfather, the same, a man that taught me a great deal; lived at St. Paul's Lutheran Home in Melville and died there at the age of 82. So I was quite familiar with the history of nursing homes in this province.

And I also recall that my grandfather and both my great-grandfather, under your jurisdiction as government, had to pay their life savings in order to live in that nursing home. And my grandfather paid it. You know, after Tommy Douglas had resigned, and my grandfather, while he had respect for Tommy Douglas, lost faith in your party because you took his life savings. And many other of my constituents had to sell their houses, had to give their property away and hope that they wouldn't have to go to a nursing home for five years. And under your

government there was real fear among senior citizens with respect to nursing home rates and how the charges were made.

And I recall just before the 1981 election – after I lobbied very hard, not so much as a politician but as a lawyer and a friend of senior citizens in my constituency – just before the 1981 election, or the '82 election in 1981, your government then changed the nursing home formula and no longer made it necessary for senior citizens to give up their entire life savings. And my grandfather did spend his life savings on your nursing home fees and left me an inheritance, as modest as he could, and I'm very proud of it. He left me a very nice desk lamp. That's all that you left him with to give to his grandchildren was a desk lamp. And the other grandchildren received very small items because you, the caring government, the wonderful, democratic socialists of Saskatchewan, took the life savings of senior citizens like my grandfather, like other people's grandparents. And now you have the audacity to come to us and say that we have done something very nasty with nursing home rates.

You know very well that the old-age pension and the guaranteed income supplement received by senior citizens will cover their bills at the nursing home and that they will continue to be covered. And you know very well that the amount of money that senior citizens who are living in a nursing home are entitled to keep for their very own use has increased under our government. And it was just before the 1982 election that somehow your government felt they had a heart for senior citizens and stopped taking all of their savings, including their houses.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Minister, your family background, and hearing about your desk lamp from your grandfather, is all very interesting. And the fact that you paid \$41,000 in income tax last year was also interesting, as you shared with this House the other day. And that's all fine and dandy, Mr. Minister, but I would like you to answer the question.

Are you telling this House that the seniors, whose rates you have increased \$73, if I have the figure correct . . .

An Hon. Member: — Over 80 now.

Mr. Lautermilch: —Over \$80 now, my colleague tells me. Are you telling me that the seniors of this province have not been complaining to your department? Could you answer that? We don't need a 20-minute speech or your family background or your history. Just please answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: Mr. Chairman, what the member opposite is really saying is he doesn't really want to hear how the NDP treated senior citizens in nursing homes. And I think that people in this province have a memory, and they recall how senior citizens were treated in nursing homes.

I recall that just before the 1982 election, a 99-year-old lady, was about to have her 100 birthday, was being sued – threatened to be sued – because there was no place in a nursing home and she was in a hospital. And there was nowhere for her to go, and they were

threatening to sue her for I don't recall how many . . . it was in the range of \$100 a day, or in excess of \$100 a day, because there was no nursing home for her to go in – a 99-year-old lady.

And I recall writing your minister at the time and giving this information to your minister. And I recall that just before the election you changed the policy again; all of a sudden you found a heart for a 99-year-old lady, just before the 1982 election. I've a copy of the letter. I could go back to Melville and get it for you.

You also know, and the citizens of Saskatchewan know, that nursing home rates charged by our government have not increased as fast as the increases in the old-age pension, and that senior citizens have more disposable income now – whether they live in a nursing home or whether they live in their own homes or in subsidized government housing – than they ever had under your government or any other government that has governed this province since the day God created it.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Minister, surely you understand what these estimates are about, and if you don't, let me refresh your memory. These estimates are to scrutinize the spending that your government has done. These estimates are to scrutinize the decisions your government has made – your government – not Tommy Douglas's government, not Bennett's government. And if you want to go back to all of that, before you and I were ever in this legislature, we can do that.

But I want to say, Mr. Minister, that the kind of a display you're putting on in these estimates directly parallels the kind of display your colleagues put on in question period today when they wouldn't answer a single question from the 25 minutes of questioning they got from the members on this side of the House. And the show that you're displaying in front of some possible million people in this province is shameful.

I have asked questions. My colleague has asked questions for the last three-quarters of an hour, and not an answer from you. What do you think the people out there are thinking about your department and the kind of answers you're giving?

I'll tell you. You're never going to find out from the senior citizens in Prince Albert until you appoint someone to the seniors' advisory council, which you have failed to do since you removed the person that was acting on that council. And nobody was suggesting to you that you removed the wrong person. We were only asking you when you're going to put someone on that council, Mr. Minister. And something as simple as a question like that you couldn't even answer to this House and to the people of this province.

I only say that I'm frustrated. I see absolutely no sense standing before you asking you any more questions because you haven't given a single answer. And what I'm telling you now is I'm going to turn it over to my colleague, the member for Moose Jaw North, because perhaps he can get some answers out of you.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I'm very pleased

that the member is not going to ask any more questions because he accuses me of not answering questions. He's asking questions about the Department of Health. He hasn't asked questions as to how much this government spends on nursing homes. The Minister of Health is here. I'm sure he will confirm that this government spends \$183 million a year on nursing homes. I just happen to know the answers to questions in the Health estimates because I am concerned as to how much we spend, and I am pleased that we do spend \$183 million on nursing homes. But I can't understand how the member opposite asks me a Health question and expects the minister of seniors to answer a Health question.

What are the nursing home rates? The nursing home rates are part of the Department of Health. And you will have your opportunity to find out that this government spends \$183 million a year on nursing homes; that this government has built a record number of nursing homes.

And I answered the question of the member opposite. He said when are you going to put three more people on the council. I said we're planning on doing it now; we're going to do it soon. Soon is a simple, four-lettered word – s-o-o-n, soon.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Minister, the questions, I thought, were very specific, and they weren't questions that should have been addressed to the Department of Health. The question was: have you had any interaction with the seniors' advisory council, and did they indicate that they felt the rate increases of some \$80 were unfair? That's what the question was, and that, Mr. Minister, is what we were asking you to tell the people of this province.

But it's clear that you don't want to talk about that. And it's clear you want to do these estimates in a fair fashion, and for that reason, Mr. Minister, I throw my hands up in the air and I'm turning it over to the member from Moose Jaw North. Perhaps he has more patience with you than do I, but I tell you, after this budget was delivered and the kinds of statements that people are making about you, it's no wonder that I'm believing, and that the people of this province are believing, that you're not going to be sitting in cabinet very long.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — You indicated you were of German background, and I'm not the resident expert German any more in this caucus, but . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, please. Order. I don't think that we can have these extraneous conversations going on. I would suggest we do it behind the rail, or somewhere, so that we can hear the minister give his answer please.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Thank you. I don't really know what the question was that the member opposite asked. It was some kind of dissertation about how he wouldn't ask questions any more, and that's okay with me.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, the question is very simply: when are you going to fill the vacancies on the council? That was a simple question. Do you have a simple answer?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, soon.

Mr. Hagel: — Just for the record, I'm not sure I heard clearly what you said. Could you please answer that question for me again please, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, soon. Soon we will fill the positions.

Mr. Hagel: — I find it hard to comment on that. I think my colleague has said all there is necessary to say in terms of the quality of your answers.

Mr. Minister, under the previous government in November of 1980, Geriatric Assessment Unit and Day Hospital was officially opened at the University Hospital in Saskatoon, and the purpose of this was to . . . of the unit and day hospital was to assess, treat and rehabilitate elderly persons whose ability to continue living in the community is threatened. My question, Mr. Minister, is whether this is still being funded, and are there any other units like it in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, the unit the member refers to is funded by Health and under the jurisdiction of Health. As far as we know, it continues, but we wouldn't know any details. As pointed out by a colleague to the member opposite, we are in the senior citizens' estimates and the Minister of Health will answer those questions when we get to Health.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, about 110 seconds ago you told my colleague from Prince Albert-Duck Lake that the Minister of Health was here in this House and that he would be prepared to provide information if it was related to Health and seniors. What has changed in the last 125 seconds to affect your attitudes that you are not able to simply say: does that unit still exist; is it still being funded; are there others like it in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I've just conversed with the Minister of Health, and he says this is within his jurisdiction and he will answer those questions when his estimates come up.

(1545)

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, it's my understanding that Dr. Skoll has proposed changes in service delivery for seniors in the areas of recreation programming, senior's transportation, senior's housing. It's also my understanding, Mr. Minister, that you have had, and let go, an employee who was gathering information on elder abuse, a topic of increasing concern not only in Saskatchewan, an employee who was looking at other jurisdictions to deal with family violence involving seniors.

I ask you simply to tell me, Mr. Minister, in these four areas; I know you're had proposals put forth to you regarding recreation programming for seniors, transportation, senior's housing, elder abuse. Can you tell me what your department is doing about those, please, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, there is an

interdepartmental committee that is meeting weekly, or bi-weekly, on this particular project and this topic, and we are dealing with the problem of elder abuse. We really don't know to what extent it may be a problem. I would certainly hope that it would be very, very limited.

There is a problem that I recognized when I practised law, in that there are all kinds of people who will try to take advantage of senior citizens if they don't understand contracts or the sale that's being made. There are a few citizens that will take advantage of senior citizens with respect to their pension cheques and the assistance with their pension cheque. We would do everything to stamp that out, and the interdepartmental committee is working on it.

I believe the employee you're referring to would have been one Ralph Smith, a temporary employee with the Department of Social Services. There are two Ralph Smiths. I'm not sure if he's the Ralph Smith that worked at the NDP caucus office.

An Hon. Member: — No, he certainly is not.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Somebody says he certainly is not, so he must be the other Ralph Smith. So that's all I know; his name is Ralph Smith.

Mr. Hagel: — I'm not sure you've answered my question, Mr. Minister. Let me give you a chance to take another crack at it if you would. Will you tell me a little more specifically, other than that there are some occasional meetings going on, what your department is doing to review and deal with elder abuse; what your department is doing to review and deal with recreation programming for seniors; what your department is doing to review and deal with the issue of seniors' transportation; and what your department is reviewing and will do by way of providing for seniors' housing?

Will you tell me something a little more specific other than that there are occasional interdepartmental meetings going on, or is that the extent of the plans of the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment in terms of dealing with the 128,000 senior citizens in Saskatchewan and their needs in these four very important areas?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, in the last four or five years this government has gone a long way towards the building of senior subsidized housing which has spread throughout the province in the form of high-rises in Regina and Saskatoon, enriched housing projects across almost every part of Saskatchewan.

And we're reviewing what more can be done. We are reviewing what policies can be changed and programs implemented. When we have decided, we will make an announcement; and up until then, the members of the opposition will have to either speculate or rely on leaks to get their information. But we will announce the policy when we've decided what it will be, and what changes will be made.

Mr. Hagel: Well, Mr. Minister, that gobbledegook sounds to me as though there's not a whole lot happening

right now. And there are a lot of people, not just the 128,000 seniors in Saskatchewan, who are looking for some progressive steps from your department in dealing with these four very important issues, Mr. Minister.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I look at the *Estimates* book, and cast my glance to item no. 21, I note that the item referred to as "Grants for Senior Citizens' Services" has been reduced from 1986-87, a total figure of \$1,581,440 to this year, \$1,141,000 — a reduction, Mr. Minister, of \$440,000 this year, as reduction of 25 per cent. I would welcome an explanation to this House, Mr. Minister, as to the rationale for reducing grants for senior citizens' services by \$440,000, by 25 per cent this year.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well I am advised by my officials to keep track of money, Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairman, that the amount budgeted this year is identical to the amount of expenditure last year, and that the full amount budgeted last year was not spent in that area. I'm not certain at present why the full amount was not spent, probably because it was not necessary to spend it. And we do not spend money just because a certain sum has been budgeted. So this is one of those instances where we came in within budget, and slightly under budget. And we have budgeted for the same amount as last year.

Mr. Hagel: — So what you're saying, Mr. Minister, is that last year you had money available for services to seniors that . . . Are you telling me it wasn't asked for? Or are you telling me that it was refused to be granted, and therefore you're keeping it to the same line this year. Is that the message that you're trying to deliver to people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — What we do with a seniors' grants is, we budget a certain sum that a group might be eligible for, and then we see how much senior citizens apply for. And senior citizens, in some cases, don't apply for the full amount — this is senior citizens' groups, for their centres and things — they don't apply for the full amount, from time to time.

For example, my records indicate that the Fort Qu'Appelle senior citizens' club, under their amount of entitlement it shows: foregone, which would suggest to me on that information that they raised their own money and didn't ask the government for the amount that had been budgeted for them. So because some of the senior citizens' clubs are self-sufficient, some are very frugal, the amount expended last year was less than the amount budgeted. And I think we should all congratulate senior citizens' groups for coming in under budget, overall, and not asking for money that they didn't have any use for. So I would like to personally congratulate these senior citizen centres that were frugal and that became more self-sufficient last year.

As far as we can ascertain, all the requests that came in, that were within the formula, were honoured last year. And so therefore we weren't being stingy with the senior citizens groups. Those that asked for money and were entitled to money were awarded money.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, in the time that we've spent this afternoon talking about services to seniors, for

seniors, and things that can and should be done to help seniors in Saskatchewan to increase their security and their quality of life, we've reviewed a number of areas, Mr. Minister. You and I have both recognized that there are 128,000 seniors in the province of Saskatchewan. You and I have both recognized that you paid \$50,000 a year in income tax last year, and that many of the seniors in Saskatchewan pay no income tax at all, and that not everyone is, in this province, unfortunately, able to enjoy the amenities of life as you are — being an individual who pays over \$50,000 a year in income tax.

We've recognized that there are concerns about home care and nursing home rates; access to nursing homes; loss of grants to improve their homes and living situations; the hardships that have come through the prescription drug plan that your government has introduced; the long waiting lists in hospitals; tax increases because of the cut-backs to municipalities that your government has imposed.

We've recognized that there's need to make progress in the area of recreational opportunities for seniors. We've recognized here this afternoon that we've got a ways to go by way of providing for transportation resources for seniors, that seniors' housing is not sufficient, and that the issue of elder abuse is coming to the attention of the public — an issue that many seniors have known for some time.

In light of all of these things, Mr. Minister, it is my view that the priority of services given to senior citizens in Saskatchewan, many of whom have been the pioneers of our province, who have dedicated their efforts and their labours for generations, as a matter of fact, to contribute to the quality of life that you and I and our children enjoy in this province . . . that when we look at the responsibility of the province of Saskatchewan to the seniors of Saskatchewan, I think you and I both have to admit very clearly that there is a lot that needs to be done.

And so in light of all of that, Mr. Minister, I come back to a point that you raised very early in this discussion, and that has to do with the suggestion that you said many seniors have given to you: that a time has come to introduce into the Government of Saskatchewan a department for seniors, a department which will co-ordinate and give proper priority, proper priority, to the needs for senior citizens in the province of Saskatchewan.

And I ask, Mr. Minister, if you will give consideration in making recommendation within your own cabinet to your Premier to increase the priority of services to seniors, and to bring about, in the structure of your government, the introduction of a department for seniors?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, we have a dilemma here. When this government had 25 cabinet ministers, there was a large hue and cry — and I admit it didn't come from the member opposite.

An Hon. Member: — You are a super minister.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — It didn't come from the member opposite, because he wasn't here, but it came from his party — a hue and cry that the cabinet is too large.

Personally, I would like to see a department of senior citizens, or something similar to that. The member opposite shouts from his seat, I am a super minister. I don't know if I am a super minister, but I have a large load to carry, and senior citizens are part of that responsibility. And I carry the senior citizens' responsibility very happily.

And if the members opposite could designate or agree that we should have 25 cabinet ministers, or 27, then we could have a different department for just about every group of citizens. But in the meantime, I will have to carry on with this super department. And I take that responsibility very seriously, and I'm very pleased that senior citizens are part of my department.

(1600)

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the minister a question about youth employment programs and the very significant cut-back in youth employment programs that the PC government has chosen to implement in the current fiscal year.

Mr. Minister, as you know, your department, at your initiative, chose to eliminate the access youth employment program in fiscal year 1987-88, essentially doing away with a three and one-quarter million dollar program for unemployed young people between the ages of 18 and 24. And your government also, Mr. Minister, chose this year to cut the Opportunities '87 program from \$10.5 million last year to only \$4 million this year — a program cut, Mr. Minister, which resulted in 6,100 fewer jobs being created in the summer of 1987 for students, in comparison with the summer of 1986.

You also, Mr. Minister, chose to make volunteer organizations in Saskatchewan, which were an important part of a summer employment program every year in this province since the program was originally initiated by the NDP — you chose to make them ineligible for funds under Opportunities '87. And, Mr. Minister, as a result of doing that, you have caused a great deal of hardship to students in my constituency of Saskatoon University and to students pursuing post-secondary education throughout this province.

Now, Mr. Minister, I want to bring to your attention the fact that in May of 1987 there were 98,000 young people employed in this province. In May of 1986 there were 104,000 young people employed in this province. There were 6,000 fewer young people working, Mr. Minister, in May of 1987 than there were in May of 1986. And I suggest to you, sir, that that directly corresponds with the 6,100 jobs that you chose to eliminate from the Opportunities '87 program as compared with the summer of 1986, Opportunities '86 program.

And my question to you, Mr. Minister, is: how can you justify this very unfair cut-back which has resulted in 6,000 fewer post-secondary education students being able to work this summer? How can you justify that? Because you have denied them an opportunity for work experience; you have denied them an opportunity to earn money this summer. They will therefore be either forced to take larger student loans or, in some cases, be unable to

return to university or technical school at all.

So my first question to you, Mr. Minister, is: how do you justify those cuts? And my second question is to you, sir: next year in 1988, will you give this legislature your assurance that the \$6 million that you cut from summer employment for students in 1987 will be reinstated in 1988, and that volunteer organizations who were made ineligible for summer student employment funds by your government will be eligible for summer employment funds in 1988.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, the member for Saskatoon University is not new to this Assembly, served as a back-bencher in the NDP government, and would have some idea of the financial structure of government in this province. The government, of course, in this province, as all other provinces, has only certain ways of raising revenue — taxes, federal payments. Our federal payments are not very high; we're quite self-sufficient. Other provinces like Quebec and Manitoba have very, very high federal payments.

The first question that would really arise is: where should this government get another \$6 million to put into extra hiring programs. And I suppose the member opposite would give the standard NDP answer: get it from the rich; get it from the oil companies; I suppose, get it from the potash companies; get it from the rich farmers. That would be the standard answers they would give you. But, you know, if you talk to a farmer he'll tell you a cow only gives so much milk and there is no cash cow hovering over this province. So that has to be kept in mind.

The situation with the students being hired this year, I understand, the reports I have from Canada Manpower, through my officials, are that students who wanted to get jobs could get jobs. Now that's a generalization, and I'm sure you could produce a student here or a student there who could say that they did not get a job and they wanted a job. But student employment was very good this summer.

There was a news report on Yorkton television covering the eastern part of Saskatchewan, the Yorkton-Melville-Canora-Kamsack area that indicated that 600 more students had been employed in the Yorkton manpower office area this summer than last summer. And the member opposite would want us to spend more money that the taxpayers don't have, subsidizing more jobs, when 600 more jobs were created in that area — through the private sector, I might tell you, and not through government, and not through the taxes that we all pay.

So you have to take into account some changes and adjustments that were made. This year we did not subsidize jobs for grade 9, 10, and 11 students. We did not subsidize jobs for students who would be in high school next year. And I submit that as reasonable and logical. The government should not be using tax money to subsidize jobs for grade 9's, 10's, and 11's, when tax money needs to be spent for higher education, for health, and social services.

And what about the highways? Your critic of Highways

here, Mr. Potholes, is no longer with us, and we hear nothing more about highways. Money has to be spent on all of these things. And so you have to take those things into account.

With respect to volunteer organizations, they are very, very beneficial to Saskatchewan. I am a member of the Lions Club in Melville, for example. We are a service club, and we, as a service club, do not ask the provincial government to subsidize the Melville Lions Club. We are there to serve, not to receive. And so I know that volunteer organizations could use a little extra help. But certainly, as volunteer organizations, the first priority should be service, and they should not be looking to government for subsidies for volunteer organizations.

Jobs were created — the jobs were created in agriculture and in business, and that is the mainstay of this province; that's where the bulk of our revenue comes from in this province. And it just happens that through agriculture and business, that's how we earn our keep in this province, and that's where all of our resources are generated from, every revenue that we receive in this province.

So the overall employment situation seemed to be quite good, considering the crisis in potash, the crisis in agriculture. And not to say that that crisis could be cured. But your government, when in power, had a substantial part in creating the crisis in both potash and agriculture, and the students of this province, and everyone in this province, is now paying the price.

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: Mr. Chairman, we've just gone through a train of thought, or a supposed train of thought, being put forward by the Minister for Human Resources and whatever else. The only problem with that is I think that his train has left the track a long time ago.

Sir, when you talk about resource development in this province — and you've just said that agriculture and business are the two resources which keep the province going, which is the way we find our keep — I want to remind you, sir, that the greatest resource Saskatchewan has is not to be found in the uranium mine, or not to be found in the potash industry, or not to be found in the field of wheat, but is to be found in the hearts and the hands and the minds of the people of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan's people are its greatest resource. And you, sir, you and your government, are doing irreparable harm to the future of what is the greatest resource for Saskatchewan, and that is its people.

And as the member from Saskatoon University, has pointed out to you, when you cut back and slash and hack away at programs which affect young people and the future of young people in this province, you are harming not only the people here today but also the future of people that will come tomorrow.

And it seems to be a concept, one that our party has grasped, but it seems to be a concept which has escaped

your somewhat, I would say, limited experience in dealing with things out there in the real world. Because if you don't have Saskatchewan people working, whether it's young people or whether it's old people, you are hurting the greatest resource that this province has. You are cutting off the future of Saskatchewan, and you are, as the statistics in this country pointing out, putting Saskatchewan further and further behind the economic and social eight ball.

I want to relate to you, sir, a phone call that I had this morning. In fact, I'll relate to you two phone calls, one that I had yesterday, and one that I had this morning. The phone call that I had yesterday was a constituent who lives in my constituency of Regina Rosemont. The person who phoned was a mother, from a two-income family, who has a daughter who will not be able to attend university this year. She will not be able to attend university this year because of the kind of educational policies in terms of student loans and student bursaries that your government put in place.

This girl has found a temporary job out there in the market. It is not the kind of job which will allow her to save up to attend university next year. Her future, the future of this young girl, excuse me, young woman who is 19 years of age, has been limited, has been limited by the actions of your government. It was limited by the fact that there is not the kind of job development out there in Saskatchewan which your government promised over and over and over again, from 1982 onward.

And it's been limited by the kind of economic development policies that your government has presently in place, and which are soon to be revealed to all the people of Saskatchewan as you engage in a massive sell-off of Saskatchewan's resources, whether it's the potash industry, whether it's Saskatchewan Government Insurance, whether it's Saskatchewan Computers Utility Corporation, to all the Crown corporations which were put into place to provide jobs and to provide job security and to provide economic security for Saskatchewan citizens.

And while there may be some short-term gain at least in the balance books of the corporation, or you will attempt to try to show some short-term gain, you will see the same kind of thing that has happened with Saskatchewan oil, in which a partial privatization took place when you put out shares of Saskoil to individual investors at undervalued prices, shares which were picked up by about 23,000 people in Saskatchewan. And in doing so, one of the first acts of that privatization was the loss of jobs for Saskatchewan residents in Saskoil.

Your government cut out jobs in a provincially owned, or what had been a provincially owned, oil corporation which controls Saskatchewan resources for the benefit of Saskatchewan people to employ Saskatchewan people. And when you privatized it, when you privatized it, you and your government, as an economic development strategy, decided to cut back jobs in Saskatchewan, and at the same time, and at the time, those who became the managers of Saskoil decided to undergo exploration in Alberta and create jobs in Alberta. We cut jobs in Saskatchewan; we'll create jobs in Alberta.

And I predict that the same thing will happen in terms of jobs when you begin that long and slippery road of privatization, of privatization of the oil industry, of privatization of the potash industry, or privatization of all the major Crown corporations in this province, because that's what's on the horizon for Saskatchewan people.

(1615)

And we've heard a lot of numbers and figures bandied about by members of the provincial government in terms of the potash corporation. And we've seen a whole number of things happen in terms of the potash corporation, and privatization. And how it relates to you, Mr. Minister, is very simply this: it's part of a long-range privatization strategy which your government has entered into, your government intends to impose upon the people of Saskatchewan, and will cost the people of Saskatchewan tens of thousands of jobs, because when you turn over the resource corporations to private interests – and that's on your agenda – when you do that, you and your government will have embarked on a course that will mean the end of the core and the heart of the Saskatchewan economy outside the agricultural area.

And when you do that, that means that there is going to be a major job loss for Saskatchewan people, as there has been in the potash industry since you people took over, as there has been where you have turned hundreds and hundreds of potash miners in Saskatchewan into part-time workers. It used to be before, that if you were a potash miner in Saskatchewan, you worked pretty well the year round, you worked pretty well the year round. But since you and your economic mismanagers in the potash corporation have taken over – you have taken over – you have seen the kind of steady, stable economic jobs in Saskatchewan turned into part-time employment.

So when I get a phone call in my constituency from the kind of young lady who is worried about her future and about going to university, she's worried not only about that, she's also worried about the kinds of jobs that will be here in Saskatchewan. And given your government's record, and given your own record, and given your own mind set – that future is not too bright. Let me tell you, it's not too bright.

Now you, sir, have made a great deal, a great deal of noise about not wanting to spend public moneys on public projects to provide jobs for Saskatchewan citizens; that it's somehow a sin to take public moneys to spend to put Saskatchewan people to work. I submit that, as part of your overall process of putting private greed ahead of public need, that we will see more and more and more, more and more of this kind of economic policy put in place.

I want to talk to you for a minute about the other phone call, because it somehow relates to what I said earlier in regards to the young lady whose future has been cut off. As the member from Moose Jaw North was talking about, senior citizens in this province have not been well served by you and your government, have not been well served,

particularly in the last eight to 10 months. I want to say that, particularly in the last eight to 10 months.

I had a phone call this morning from a constituent whose mother is in the nursing home in Grenfell, Saskatchewan. She's in the nursing home. Her monthly pension is somewhere, including the old age supplement of the province of Saskatchewan, somewhere in the vicinity of \$691 or \$698 a month, minus — when you take away — minus her costs of nursing home; she is left with something around \$100 a month.

Her daughter phoned me this morning, Mr. Minister, to tell me that in Grenfell, in the nursing home in Grenfell, they are planning to introduce user fees for something which was not before charged. They plan to introduce charges for the use of appliances for people, for senior citizens who are incontinent. The charges to this woman who is in the Grenfell nursing home will result in a \$98 bill for something that before was freely available to her. She will have something a little less than \$5 a month after her pension, and after her nursing home, and after the new charges have been placed on her. She is going to have to live, according to her daughter, on \$3.11.

And I think that says a lot about the kind of real care that you have for senior citizens in this province. But there's a direct relationship, on the one hand, to the cuts in education; on the other hand, in the cuts in health care to senior citizens, and the loss of jobs and the loss and cut in the labour force in this province. And you, sir, you and your government, now have to bear the brunt and have to bear the load of a number of economic things which are beginning to converge and to form a confluence.

Mr. Minister, we have seen, over the last several years, Saskatchewan's economy shrink in terms of productivity and growth. We have seen Saskatchewan's labour force shrink from what it was even three and four years ago. We have seen the number of jobs for ordinary Saskatchewan people disappear. This despite, this despite your government's repeated claim to the people of Saskatchewan, up until the summer of 1986 or thereabouts, that jobs were going to be the first priority for Saskatchewan citizens. It is obvious to everybody in Saskatchewan that that has just been so much hot air and so much rhetoric from your government; that your government's commitment to jobs, as it is to education, as it is to health care, and as it soon will be shown to be in regarding the safe keeping and shepherding of Saskatchewan's resources and Saskatchewan's businesses, that in fact it is just so much political rhetoric — just so much political rhetoric which the people of Saskatchewan have been so tired of hearing coming from you and from your government. From a government . . .

An Hon. Member: — Worn-out government.

Mr. Lyons: — From a government . . . The members here say from a worn-out government. Well I don't think that the government is worn out. I don't think that the government's worn out, but I think it is the government which is living on the leading edge of the 17th century. We have a government who is advised by people like Dr. Madsen Pirie, Dr. Madsen Pirie from Great Britain.

And the minister there, the Minister of Social Services, the minister claps his hands with glee at the mention of Dr. Madsen Pirie, and so does the member from Weyburn. Dr. Madsen Pirie — and I want to say this to the people of Saskatchewan — is the head of the Adam Smith Institute, located in Britain.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — The members opposite clap. The Adam Smith Institute was the major adviser to Margaret Thatcher after her election victory and maintains its position as major . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Chairman, I would ask you to ask the members opposite to restrain themselves. I realize they have great enthusiasm for Mrs. Thatcher. That enthusiasm is not changed on this side. I wonder if you could ask them to please keep their comments down so other members of the House who are interested can hear.

Mr. Chairman: — Okay, let's have order and continue please.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman . . .

Mr. Chairman: — I would like to remind the hon. member that the chair calls for order, not the members. I recognize the minister, please. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm trying to somehow correlate that dissertation to the estimates of the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment. And I ask my officials here: does anyone here have any expertise on the potash corporation or on Saskoil? And since none of them deal with this on a day-to-day basis, I would ask the minister opposite, or the member opposite — minister, I mean that might be his wishful thinking and my slip of the tongue, but the reality will never happen — but I ask the member opposite to try to deal with the estimates of my department here. I've been all over today. I've answered questions on health, and I've answered questions on everything you can imagine, and I will try to answer questions, but I have not been able to ascertain what really the question was that was asked.

If he is referring to his two telephone calls, if he would . . . And I don't ask people to make their information and their lives public. You know, yesterday I indicated personally what I am paid and what kind of taxes I pay, and the members opposite wouldn't tell us if they pay taxes or what kind of taxes they pay. But I don't ask the public to make public their personal information.

If those people in those two telephone calls, if the member could privately give me the information, we would look into it and see what the income is of the two-income family he refers to. We would check to see, to verify the facts of the income of the senior citizen living in a nursing home in Grenfell. Grenfell is only 38 miles from where I live in Saskatchewan, and I have never seen any hardship in Grenfell among the senior citizens. The MLA for Grenfell is present here, and he didn't receive any particular complaint.

So if this information is accurate, I ask the members opposite to send us privately that information and we'll check into it and see if, first of all, the facts that they suggest exist are accurate, because we have habitually had facts thrown out on the floor of this legislature by the members opposite that turn out not to be facts. And we would not accept these allegations made by the members opposite; we would want some degree of proof.

And my colleagues suggested there was a question or an issue of Dr. Madsen Pirie of Great Britain, a very famous and wise man. And I understand he's coming to Regina, and I would encourage the members opposite to complete their education, to have a balanced . . . to balance from what they receive and go and listen to Dr. Madsen Pirie, at their own expense, of course.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the member from Melville will have ample opportunity to deal with the case I've referred to.

As I mentioned, the daughter of the woman who is in the nursing home lives in my constituency. She contacted your department today to ask how her mother, who lives in the Grenfell nursing home, can receive social assistance so that she can live and have some kind of decent existence after putting in 80-plus years helping to build this province. You will have ample opportunity, sir, to deal with this problem. Or you or your officials will, since you have not shown one ounce of compassion for the people of this province.

For you to say that the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan doesn't have anything to do . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, please. Order. Allow the member to state his case.

Mr. Lyons: — For you to say that the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan does not have anything to do with jobs, for you to say that the Crown corporations throughout this province do not have anything to do with jobs, shows precisely the kind of unreal, fantasy, weird land that you inhabit.

How can you tell the potash miners in Saskatchewan that their jobs — those who work for the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan — and the future of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan . . . that the future of their jobs are not somehow related. Particularly after you and your government have spent the last five years firing hundreds and hundreds of workers out of the precisely, those public owned corporations. You try to tell that, you go and try to tell that to workers that you and your government have fired — people who've given their life's work for corporations like SaskTel, and Sask Power, and PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan) and the other corporations, as well as those who work in the civil service. You tell them how, in fact, employment and the fact that they've been fired by you and your government doesn't somehow relate to them.

(1630)

You, sir, are the Minister of Employment. The public sector in this province is the biggest employer in this province. And it seems to be a fact, it seems to be a fact that somehow has escaped, has somehow escaped you and your government.

Oh, I know there's other members opposite who it hasn't escaped. I know that they, in fact, know that the public sector in this province is the biggest employer in this province, and as you dismantle the public sector — as you were in the process of dismantling the public sector, so goes the jobs that go in the public sector. And you just have to ask the highway workers in Saskatchewan what their future is going to be as the freight train of privatization, with Dr. Madsen Pirie, Margaret Thatcher, and Grant . . . excuse me, the member from Melville, at the controls — what kind of future that they're going to have in this province, and what kind of employment record that we're going to see in this province as you embark on this absolute lunatic, lunatic social experiment organized by the likes of Dr. Madsen Pirie.

As I was saying, Dr. Madsen Pirie represents the Adam Smith Institute. Adam Smith was the great economist of the rise of capitalism in 1700s, and that's precisely the kind of economic theory that you and your government intend to institute in this province. You talk about the future. Let me tell you: you and your economic theorists are on the cutting edge of the 17th century, and the people of Saskatchewan have already been cut, and are bleeding enough with that kind of edge.

And we have only, Mr. Minister, the statistics . . . the statistics of employment in this province to deal with that, to prove the point of how you and the ilk over, that you sit beside, do not care about employment; do not care to put people first when it comes to creating jobs; do not, because of your own narrow ideological reasons and concerns, will not lead the way. You and your government will not lead the way in job creation.

Let's just take a look at some of the facts. Total jobs in Saskatchewan, the employment record between 1971 and 1986: in 1971 there were 334,000 jobs in Saskatchewan, and these are all from Statistics Canada's labour force survey which your officials will be familiar with. In 1981, 10 years later, there were 425,000 jobs in Saskatchewan. Now that represents, on average, 9,100 new jobs a year created between 1971 and 1982, created by a government which said: we're going to lead the way in job creation because that's one of our priorities.

And since, because private capital will not invest in this province and will not create jobs, and are concerned only with their bottom line and only with sucking up as much profit out of this province as possible, this government said, there is another way. And that way, in terms of job creation and creating opportunities for Saskatchewan young people, is to have the government lead the way in job creation, as it was between 1944 to 1964 and as it was from 1971 to 1982. So we have the record, the past record, of 9,100 new jobs created each and every year — full-time, permanent jobs for Saskatchewan people.

Then we come to your miserable record. We look between 1986 . . . between 1981 and 1986. We see the

labour force increasing from 425,000 to 457,000, for an average of 6,400 new jobs per year on average. That, sir, when you compare our approach to job creation, which is having the government lead the way in job creation, to your approach to rely on the outside interests like the Peter Pocklington and the Weyerhaeuser, stacks up to as only two-thirds as good. Two-thirds the record. Two-thirds the record of the socialists. Two-thirds the record, two-thirds the record in job creation because we believe that the Government of Saskatchewan is elected – and one of the reasons that it's elected is to create jobs and opportunities for Saskatchewan's young people so that they have the kind of economic activity in this province which will carry the province forward.

Tell me, sir, given the record that is plain for all to see, how is it that you, as the Minister of Human Resources and of employment development, can stand here and defend that record? Why, sir, are you only two-thirds as good as the New Democratic Party?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I don't intend to defend our record. As a matter of fact, if the members opposite will allow me, and if the members . . . I intend to boast about our record. There is nothing to defend there. If bragging is allowed, then I will brag about the record of this government.

I've just done a calculation – the member opposite boasts about creating 9,000 jobs per year from 1971 to 1981. And I ask everyone with a memory: what was the price of wheat during those years; what was the price of potash; what was the price of oil? And everyone knows it was excellent. Record highs in all of those three commodities. And he brags about creating 9,000 jobs per year during that period of time.

The statistics that I have, which I believe should be accurate – if they're not, someone will have to pay the price, but they've always been accurate before. From April of 1982 – we remember April of 1982 – that was the massacre of the forces of socialism in this province, and the people were fed up with socialists in this province. Not only were they fed up with socialists, they were terrorized.

People in my constituency were afraid to stand up and say, we're against socialism because we work for the socialists. They pay us, they pay us with our own money, and they may not pay us any more. The people were afraid to stand up and express democratic rights. I recall phoning people and they would say: oh, I'm sorry, I can't buy a membership in the PC party; I work for the government. That was the fear that was in the hearts of the people.

So there was a revolution in this province in 1982, and at that time the figures show the work-force in this province was 448,000 people. In July of 1987 – that's not very long ago, that's fairly recent, it's about a month ago – the statistics show the work-force at 514,000 people – an increase of 66,000. When you take into account that we have been government for five and half years, that works out to 12,000 jobs per year.

Why would I want to defend our record? I'm proud of it. I

would like to boast about it, that under economic circumstances that we are familiar with, this government allowing the people to work for themselves, has been able to create 12,000 jobs per year as compared to the socialists with our own money, for us, in the best of economic times, creating 9,000 jobs per year. Why would I want to defend our record? I'm glad to point out the comparison. I'm pleased. It speaks for itself. What more can be said? But much more should be said.

The member opposite raises a question of potash and jobs. This is a very, very interesting point, and we will hear much more about it in this legislature in the months to come. I was a member of that party, and I stood up – and the member opposite says I was kicked out; I quit. I was not kicked out of that party; I quit. I would have considered it an honour to be kicked out of that party, but I quit.

The reason I quit was because . . . and why doesn't anyone want to lead that party now? Why is there only one person in the leadership race? Why is the member for Riversdale the only one who wants to lead that party? None of them have the nerve to want to lead a party through the crisis that they have created in potash.

And the job losses – how does this tie into my estimates? The member opposite suggests that jobs tie into potash, potash is part of my estimates, and so I am going to tell him about jobs in potash. I told the member from Riversdale, face to face at their convention, don't buy holes in the ground. People were working in those potash mines; the government bought those potash mines; the same people were working in those potash mines, except from there on in, the people of this province had to pay the debt.

And I told the member from Riversdale – he was the member from Riversdale then; he was retired, and he has revamped to come and lead. But the leadership that he gave us in 1976 – if we should ever have a repeat of that, then everyone in this province will be bankrupt. The member from Riversdale stood up and argued with me that this was necessary to create expansion, that this was necessary for the people to own their resources. I said, we own the water, why do we want to buy the well? We don't need to own the hole in the ground.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Now there's so many X number of people, family men and women of this province, working in those mines, and after the government bought them, the same number of people were working in those mines.

And what did we get for our money? For our money, we got competition – something that the member from Riversdale did not believe in, nor did he want. And I told him you would get competition, because he gave – well maybe, he bought – but he took of the taxpayers' money in excess of \$600 million, and he turned it over to the corporations that he hated, the big business corporations, and they did exactly what I told him they would do. They took their money, and with that money they dug themselves a new hole in the ground in a Conservative province, in New Brunswick. And so what we did was,

we bought ourselves competition and unemployment.

And that's the legacy that the member from Riversdale has left to the people of Saskatchewan, and now he wants to come back and punish us further.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Chairman, what is interesting — this will indeed be an interesting debate over the future of the potash corporation in this province if the kind of stories, which are made up of whole cloth by the member from Melville, is used to try to camouflage the debate, and used by other members of the opposition.

Not one word of truth. Not one word of truth. Why didn't the member from Melville — why doesn't the member from Melville talk about the jobs that were created in the potash industry? Because resources, the profits, that used to go down to New Mexico or to Texas or to New York or to Chicago, were kept in Saskatchewan to create expansions at places like Lanigan. Why doesn't the member talk about that? What about the head office jobs that were brought from outside this province and put into Saskatoon; isn't that part of the expansion of the potash industry? Wasn't that the kind of expansion where we created Saskatchewan jobs for Saskatchewan people?

Now anybody in this province who would believe that the minister opposite has either the wit or the verbal acuity to tell the member from Riversdale: why buy the well when we own the water? If anybody in this province believes that, I think that they might want to call the member from Riversdale and check it out themselves, because I know the member from Riversdale has a good memory. And if you, sir, standing here and are recounting a face-to-face conversation with him that may or may not be true, I think you will want to consider maybe, sometime in the future, that you may have to withdraw those words if that conversation didn't exactly take place as you described it.

In other words, you made a direct quote of a conversation that you had with the member, and we'll discuss that with the member to see, in fact, whether or not you've stuck your foot in it again.

(1645)

Mr. Minister, the fact of the matter is this, is that government has created a few jobs. I will grant you that. You've created a job for George Hill, the president of Saskatchewan Power Corporation, former president of the Tory party in this province, someone with absolutely no knowledge or background in the question of power. You have created that position for him, and we're told that somewhere in the range of 200 to \$210,000 a year through certain contractual arrangements, which will be very interesting for this House to examine when we get that opportunity.

You've created a job for one Paul Schoenhals, and you've created that job. There didn't used to be the full-time job that Mr. Schoenhals now occupies as chairperson of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. But Mr. Schoenhals has a job now.

An Hon. Member: — Who's he?

Mr. Lyons: — And who's Mr. Schoenhals but a former cabinet minister. A former cabinet minister who was defeated, who was thrown out of office by the good people of Saskatoon, by those good people who benefit there in Saskatoon from having the headquarters of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan headquartered in their fair city to provide jobs for themselves and for their children. And do they think that Paul Schoenhals was doing a real good job for them? No, because that door in the democratic period when they had the opportunity to express their wishes, they threw Mr. Schoenhals out of a job. You people put him back in at taxpayers' expense.

And you want to talk about pouring money down a black hole — giving Paul Schoenhals the kind of money you're paying him for the president of PCS is nothing more than crating money into a black and empty hole indeed — I'll tell you that.

And then we have another job that you and your government created. We have the job that you created for Mr. Paul Rousseau. And who, may you ask, is Mr. Paul Rousseau? Well I think the people of Saskatchewan, the people of Regina, know who Paul Rousseau was. Another member of the Conservative Party. Another former member of the Legislative Assembly, and someone who now occupies the job of Agent General in London. And yes, you did create a job for Paul Rousseau, and I will grant you that.

And then I see that you created a job for one Keith Parker. Now who's Keith Parker, the people of the province may ask. Not a well-known name. Not a name someone that occupied the front benches of the legislature, but a former MLA from Moose Jaw. And the member from Moose Jaw South tells me he was the former member from Moose Jaw . . .

An Hon Member: — North.

Mr. Lyons: — North. He was the former Conservative member from Moose Jaw North and now he's got a job. Where's he got the job? Well he's got a high-paying job with the Liquor Board of Saskatchewan. And so I will grant you that you got Mr. Parker a job at \$50,000 a year.

And then I see you created another job. It's a consulting job this time, and I think the consulting fees are somewhere in the neighbourhood of a quarter of million dollars or thereabouts. And who occupies that job? Why, Tim Embury, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Tim Embury. And who is Mr. Tim Embury? A former member of the Legislative Assembly, a former Conservative member of the Legislative Assembly, a former member of your front bench . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order. I'm going to have to ask the member to start . . . I know what you're doing. You're relating it to one job at a time, but we are in the estimates of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, and I am ruling now that you confine your remarks to more specific issues in terms of what this minister is responsible for.

And having ruled that, I would ask you to be a little bit more specific. We're having a very, very wide ranging debate here in terms of the questions, and also in terms of the answers that are being given. So I'm just going to ask you to please be a little bit more specific, a little bit more on topic. To talk about one single job as job creation, I think, is stretching it a little bit. That is my ruling, sir.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Chairman, I intend to deal with the jobs that the members in the government opposite have created. The Minister of Employment raised the question of how good their job creation record was. I don't think I can be any more specific than when I get down to one individual job at a time. Your ruling is nothing more than a biased attempt to cut me off. I tell you that right now.

Mr. Chairman: — Okay, Mr. Member, I cannot let that go. You are challenging the Chair, and so I would ask the Speaker to be called in. On the advice of the Clerk, I will give you one opportunity here to withdraw that remark.

Mr. Lyons: — I will not withdraw that remark.

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, during consideration of the estimates of the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, the member from Regina Rosemont used certain unparliamentary remarks which, after having been given the opportunity, he refused to withdraw.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. The member for Rosthern has indicated that an unparliamentary remark was made. I will not allow a point of order on this. Please be seated. Please be seated.

An Hon. Member: — I have a different question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — No, I am afraid that you won't have an opportunity to address it. I'm going to give the member certainly sufficient opportunities to address it.

The member from Rosthern has indicated that unparliamentary language has been used a few minutes ago. And on that basis, I would certainly like to give the member from Regina Rosemont an opportunity to withdraw the remark. And on that basis now, I would like to give the member from Regina Rosemont that opportunity.

Mr. Lyons: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not certain of which remark I should withdraw. If you're saying that I should withdraw the challenge that I put forward to the Chairman, I'm not going to intend to do that, because that is not what the Chairman presented to you as the case.

I rose and challenged a ruling that he made in regards to a certain line of questioning, a certain line of questioning I was pursuing during estimates.

An Hon. Member: — No mention was made of parliamentary language.

Mr. Lyons: — No mention was made of unparliamentary language at all. I went forward and challenged his right. He made a ruling in regards to the line of questioning, and he said that it was too broad, or it was . . . he gave certain indications. My position is that that was an incorrect ruling.

He now stands before you and gives an entirely different story, and one not supported by the facts. So I'm not certain what it is that the member wants me to withdraw — to withdraw challenging his ruling?

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. I don't believe that the issue here is a challenge to the Chair, so much as the fact that the member apparently stated to the Deputy Chairman that he had made a biased ruling. I think that's the issue.

And therefore I realize that at times during estimates and during debates, because I have sat there, I realize that emotions get strong and members do say things. And I kind of think that perhaps the member didn't really mean what he said, but nevertheless, he did say that the Chairman was biased. And he did say that. So he had made a biased ruling. So I'm going to give the member from Rosemont, once again, an opportunity to withdraw that remark, and I'm sure that on some reflection he may want to do that.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, sir, if in fact I did say an unparliamentary remark along that line, then I shall withdraw it.

But I would ask, sir, that you give us the courtesy of pursuing the *Hansard* report because I think that upon reading *Hansard*, that *Hansard* will in fact back the allegation that I was challenging the nature of the ruling of the chairperson and not, in fact, the character of the chairperson itself — himself.

Mr. Speaker: — I will read *Hansard*, you can be sure of that, because I look at *Hansard* daily. However, the issue actually is what I stated earlier, that unfortunately you stated in some way, and I don't know the exact wording, but you did state in some way that the member had made . . . or the chairman had made a unbiased — a biased ruling rather, a biased ruling. You have risen and you have said that if you've made that type of a remark that you withdraw that remark, and I thank you for doing that. I accept your withdrawal, and we will continue with estimates.

Order. Order. Order, please. Order.

We can go back into committee. We can listen to a point of order. But I'll certainly listen to everybody's points of order. I don't know if it's really in the best interests of the House to get into that, but if members wish to raise points of order, well okay, I'll listen to it. But everybody will have the opportunity.

And I recognize first the member for Regina Centre who has been trying to get in prior to the ruling, but now that the ruling is over, I will listen.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, it's . . . I suppose the

point is past. The difficulty the member from Regina Rosemont had, though, is that the remark, when he was asked to withdraw it, the remark was not repeated back to him, and he did not know what he was being asked to withdraw. And that was my point of order, and I'd ask for a ruling on that. It seems what happened was the member from Rosthern indicated that his ruling was being challenged. That, I think, was the issue upon which you were brought back.

Suddenly, when you're back here, it's an unparliamentary comment. He was asked to withdraw it, without being spelled out with clarity what he was being asked to withdraw. And just for future reference, Mr. Speaker – if not for this case, because this case has been happily closed – but for future reference I'd like a ruling on whether or not a member who's asked to withdraw a remark should have the remark specified with clarity before he withdraws it. Obviously he has to.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I respond to the hon. member from the opposition's point that the matter is closed. Unfortunately on the issue such as this, there is precedent in this Assembly, and the procedure being that upon *Hansard* . . .

We can recall, Mr. Speaker, the government against the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden a few years back and the situation, unfortunately, does not go away that easily. And that once the record of *Hansard* is perused, we know the obligations of the House Leader. And that if allegations are made, then the appropriate privilege motion is made when the record of *Hansard* is fully before the members of the Assembly.

I think there is, pending the *Hansard* record though, there is another matter before the floor of the Assembly, and that is the second question, and that is the question of challenging the ruling of the Chair. And I think that to expedite that, we should vote on that, Mr. Speaker, and then get that particular matter cleared off.

Mr. Speaker: — I heard the hon. member from Rosthern indicating that the issue he was raising was that the member for Regina Rosemont had made an unparliamentary remark. We have dealt with the issue raised by the member from Regina Rosemont . . . I mean, I'm sorry, for the member from Rosthern. I think that we have dealt with that issue in a satisfactory way. I think that that issue is closed. And I believe, in the best interests of the House, we should go back to committee.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Mr. Chairman: — It being 5 o'clock, I leave the Chair till 7.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.