

EVENING SITTING

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mrs. Smith that Bill no. 36 – **An Act respecting the Potash Resources of Saskatchewan** be now read a second time.

Hon Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, as I was discussing just before 5 o'clock, I was talking a little bit about the history of potash in Saskatchewan, the history of politics, and I was outlining to the Assembly some of the implications of the decisions that were made in 1976 and thereabouts by the members of the New Democratic Party, and what the effects are on us today.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that nationalization has taken place but I think more importantly right now, today, what we have to look at is in light of that fact of nationalization, in light of the fact that the American government has imposed some tariffs on our potash, that what we have to really look at very, very strongly is the management of those resources and, Mr. Speaker, that is precisely, precisely what this legislation is purporting to do, is manage our resources.

I do know that members of the opposition have a great deal of mixed feelings on it. I do sense that they have some discussions and deliberations yet to take place in their caucus before they firm up what their position is. And, Mr. Speaker, because I myself have more to say on the subject, because a good number of our members have an awful lot more to say on the subject – and most importantly, Mr. Speaker, to give the members of the NDP party perhaps just a little more time, perhaps just a little more time to join with the members of the Progressive Conservative Party and stand up for Saskatchewan, and stand up for Saskatchewan people, and stand up for our resources, and stand up to the Americans – I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that I will be begging leave to adjourn the debate to give members of the opposition a little more time to mull this over in their mind, to get their acts together. And perhaps even in light of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that they are at present leaderless, perhaps someone on that side of the House will take charge of the situation and get that caucus together and fully behind the Progressive Conservative government, who is today by virtue of this legislation standing up for the people of Saskatchewan. And as such, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Social Services
Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 36

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased that we will have the opportunity to continue the review of the Department of Social Services, a department which by virtually everyone's testimony in the province of Saskatchewan has taken a royal beating from the Progressive Conservative government and particularly this year. Mr. Minister, we discussed a number of things when we were in estimates yesterday and as I remember, we concluded our discussion with your refusal to advise the people of Saskatchewan the simplest of facts. For your memory, Mr. Minister, let me remind you that we were talking about in the context of the budget of the Department of Social Services, which as a matter of fact has put forth in the estimates this year – and we compare apples to apples – a budget reduction of \$16 million, some 4.4 per cent.

Included in that, in those figures, Mr. Minister, obviously there is some \$4 million, approximately, that has to be attributed to nothing other than the payment, severance payments for early retirements for people within your department. You've told us there are 123 people within the Department of Social Services; 73 positions actually eliminated within your department; and, Mr. Minister, we were talking about the top level administrator within your department, Con Hnatiuk, who you, according to *Hansard* of June 23 in your speech in response to the budget said:

... my deputy minister has been transferred to Manitoba, where he now is the deputy minister for the Manitoba government, ...

And I was asking you, Mr. Minister, just how long your deputy minister had been working in the employ of the Department of Social Services prior to your transferring him to Manitoba, to use your words. And I was asking you specifically, Mr. Minister, what the cost to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan is to arrange for this transfer – as you so cutely call it – of your deputy minister from the province of Saskatchewan to the province of Manitoba.

Now I note, Mr. Minister, you have more of your officials here today, and let me be kind and let me assume that the reason that you refused to give this Assembly an answer to that question is because you didn't have the information available. And let me begin then, Mr. Minister, this evening by asking you again: how many years was Con Hnatiuk in the employ in the Department of Social Services prior to your transferring him to the province of Manitoba and how much did it cost – did or will it cost – the taxpayers of Saskatchewan to arrange for this transfer?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, the individual in question, our records indicate was employed with the department July 2, 1968, and at some time during that period must have been on leave of absence because I recall him being chairperson of the Parkland Community College in Yorkton and Melville – and then at some time must have returned back to the department. So I don't have the total length of service. With respect to the other questions asked, I answered those when we last convened – I believe it was yesterday or the day before – and I don't intend to give any further

answers.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, are we to assume that today we will have a repeat performance of your non answers to questions? Let me be more specific, then, Mr. Minister. Will you deny that it cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan \$120,000 to, as you say it, transfer the deputy minister of Social Services from your Department of Social Services, terminating his employment with your department? Will you deny that it cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan \$120,000?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well whatever figure that Mr. Hnatiuk may have given you, if you want to make it public that's your business. We have an agreement with Mr. Hnatiuk when he resigned and we're not about to make the terms of his resignation totally public or the amount of money that he may have been paid pursuant to his contract. As I indicated earlier, we anticipate a net saving to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, and it's hard to calculate the net saving but it would run into several million dollars.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, I find it interesting that you choose not to expand on that little item, which you've repeated, but choose not to be specific as to how you save money by paying \$120,000 to a deputy minister who you chose to let go, Mr. Minister — who you chose; you made that decision and you have the right as minister to determine who your deputy minister will be. I think the public of Saskatchewan has a right to know that it cost the taxpayers in this province \$120,000 for you to make that decision about your department — that decision about your department, Mr. Minister, in which you've let go or through early retirement you have suddenly coerced a number of people to take early retirement. And all of this, Mr. Minister, at a time in which . . . As we heard yesterday, you attribute your qualifications to serve as Minister of Social Services, and your deputy minister, to summarize the fact that you claim that you care — those are your qualifications; and at a time in which people of Saskatchewan are saying it's appropriate for the Department of Social Services, and the number of employees to serve the people of Saskatchewan, to be expanding, you're as a matter of fact slashing a net total of 73 positions, I find it odd — I find it odd, Mr. Minister, that we are spending somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$4 million grand total, starting with 120,000 to your deputy minister, to down-size the top level management of the Department of Social Services.

Mr. Minister . . . And I point out very clearly, you choose not to deny that figure. You may be a little more interested in talking about the person who held the position of executive director of strategic planning, Martin Spigelman. And, Mr. Minister, I ask you: how many years did Mr. Spigelman serve in the Department of Social Services; and what did it cost the Government of Saskatchewan, what did it cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, to terminate that employment relationship?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, that I would not have paid my former deputy, Mr. Con Hnatiuk, one red rouble had the law not required it. I didn't do this willingly or with great pleasure. We paid

him what the law required; laws that the NDP had in this province, and laws that the Liberals had in this province, and laws that continue under the Conservatives. And certainly this government did not as a matter of policy pay very many people anything to go away. When we think we need a change, we're not about to spend the taxpayers' money if we can help it.

The question now arises with respect to Mr. Martin Spigelman; I believe the same Martin Spigelman that worked in the executive council of the former NDP government, the same Martin Spigelman that was brought in from Manitoba by the former NDP government. When I took over as Minister of Social Services, I found some very strange behaviour in that department. The operation of that department led me to question the practices of how that department was being managed.

I will read to you a memorandum referring to one Ralph Smith — his name has been raised here at one time — who used to work for the Department of Social Services. And this all ties in — Mr. Spigelman and Mr. Smith, Mr. Hnatiuk — and if you want to bring other peoples' names into this, I'll accommodate you. But what we're looking at here is internal patronage, patronage that has continued, NDP patronage that has continued for four and a half years while the Conservatives were the government of this province. And we cannot tolerate the kind of things that were being done in that department.

(1915)

First of all, Mr. Ralph Smith. Just so that you have an introduction as to Mr. Ralph Smith and what he did, and we get the right Ralph Smith here, he started with this government as a research officer in planning bureau, Executive Council, September 1973 — not really this government, the government of this province — in an order in council. September of 1975 to April of 1976, the individual was on education leave with pay at the University of Manitoba; then came back from May '76 to August '76 as a research officer 2, planning bureau, Executive Council of the NDP government; then came back as . . . May 1977 to July '78, research officer 3, planning bureau, Executive Council of the NDP government of the time. In 1978 to 1979, research officer 4, department of mineral resources; '79 to 1980, administrative co-ordinator, tourism and renewable resources. You might want to ask me about some of the people in that department I used to associate with while I was in the NDP, and the patronage that carried on there. This individual carried on as a special assistant to the deputy minister of mineral resources, October 1980 to June 1981; June 1981 to May of 1982, acting director of communications, Energy and Mines; resigned on May 14 to pursue interests in creative writing. This Ralph Smith then resurfaced and he was self-employed for three years; then, until November 1985, was self-employed as a teaching sessional lecturer at the University of Regina — until November of 1985, when Mr. Ralph Smith returned to the Government of Saskatchewan, this government, as a research officer 3 in the bingo inquiry, temporary, Consumer and Commercial Affairs. November 5 to May '87, Ralph Smith was an information services officer, temporary, strategic planning and communications

division, Saskatchewan Social Services.

Then, with referring to Mr. Ralph Smith and Mr. Spigelman, here's how the affairs of that department were conducted: on October 21, a memo was sent. Now you may have noticed that October 21 of 1986 was the day after the last election, and the memo is from Mr. Martin Spigelman. The memo is . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order. All members will have their opportunity to make their comments from their feet. I would ask you to allow the minister to make his comments when he has the floor.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — This memo is the day after the 1986 election and it's from Mr. Martin Spigelman, executive director, strategic planning and communications, to Howie Alberts, director of human resources branch, re Ralph Smith:

Howie, I won't be in the office Monday or Tuesday so I'm writing you instead.

I spent some time on Friday talking to Con and Dan Cunningham and Michelle Moen about a permanent position for Ralph Smith. We want to get him into a permanent position as quickly as possible and hopefully before any post-election freezes or deletions. Our conclusion was to ask you to explore the options with PSC. We're willing to reclassify Diane Anderson's position.

Now they're prepared to move a woman in the department out of her position so that they can bring in this individual that they want hired.

Can we 7.23 him?

Now I'm sure you're familiar with 7.23 and that means, can they park him somewhere there.

Who is currently on the redeployment list?

I don't know what the redeployment list is. Somehow they were running some sort of a redeployment list down there at that department.

And to what level should we reclassify that position to ensure Ralph gets in rather than someone else bumping into it.

So now other people in scope, in the union, could not bump into this position because there was a conspiracy for Ralph Smith to be employed in there and protected the day after the 1986 election.

Ralph's current salary is \$34,000 per annum. I'll speak to you on Wednesday. Thanks. (Signed) B. Barzan for Martin Spigelman. Copies to Dan Cunningham. Dan, remember to check with Regina North.

I don't know what checking with Regina North has to do with all this, but there was a conspiracy in that department to do somebody out of her position to smuggle this man into a position because the government

might freeze positions. This is the day after the 1986 election, and this department at its management level is running a conspiracy contrary to the instructions of the government that nobody is to be hired at that period of time. You have to have faith in the people that work for the government and I cannot have faith in these people.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, it appears that these estimates have reached a new height in stupidity with your response to that question, Mr. Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — You will be just as aware as anyone else that the Ralph Smith that you seem to be referring to there is someone quite different, someone quite different from the Ralph Smith who formerly worked with Executive Council.

Mr. Minister, before we proceed, as you read from that document, will you please table that document that you just read from.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — The document before me is not the original document. It has been photocopied, contains some obliterations on it, and I wouldn't want to table that document because it is not the exact document nor is it totally accurate.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Chairman, the minister is, I believe, slandering someone who is entirely innocent. I wonder if the minister is aware that there were two Ralph Smiths. One was the chairman of our caucus and was research in caucus . . . Thank you. Clearly a political appointment. The other was a career public servant by the same name in Executive Council. And I think the minister has got the wrong person. And I believe, Mr. Minister, that you're slandering someone who's innocent.

So far as I am aware, the Ralph Smith that you're talking about — and I'm virtually certain that you've got the wrong person — the Ralph Smith that you're talking about is a career public servant. I ask you, Mr. Minister, to table that, and if I'm wrong, all well and good; if you're wrong, you owe somebody an apology.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, it doesn't matter to me whether the Ralph Smith was the Ralph Smith that they had parked in their executive council in the premier's office of the NDP or whether it was the Ralph Smith that they had parked in their caucus office. It was the Ralph Smith who got education leave from this government. Are you not suggesting that this Ralph Smith was really the Ralph Smith that was in your caucus office? . . . I don't think you have the Ralph Smith.

Mr. Shillington: — I would ask the minister . . . I've asked the minister if I'm entitled to assume that all Grant Schmidts are screwballs? By deduction, am I entitled to make that assumption?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well the member from Regina Centre can assume whatever he wants to assume.

Assumptions made by the NDP are of not much value, and I don't really care what he wants to call me. It doesn't matter to me. You have to consider where it's coming from, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

What I'm saying to you here is: there are two Ralph Smiths. This one was political enough, but the other one was even more NDP, and I agree with you. You're right.

Mr. Shillington: — But, Mr. Minister, my point is that you're treating a career public servant — and he is a career public servant — as someone who is a politico. And they are two different people, two very, very different people who have very little in common.

Mr. Minister, you owe it to the public service to table that. And if you haven't got the nerve to table it, then I think we are entitled to assume that we are right and that you've slandered a career public servant who was in government long before we came to government. And if it had been anyone other than you people, he may well still be in government. But if he isn't he would've been if anyone other than you people would've been elected. You are slandering a career public servant, Mr. Minister, who is not a political operator at all.

I ask you to table that. Have the decency. If you've only got one decent act in your entire political career, table that document so that we may know whether or not we're dealing with the research officer in caucus, who was a political operator — no one would deny it — or the Ralph Smith who was in executive council who was not a political operator but was a career public servant.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, why should I table the document? I just read it into the entire record. It will be printed in *Hansard* tomorrow. There's no reason to table any document.

But simply said here, if the information I've read here concerning Ralph Smith, if this is not the Ralph Smith who worked in the NDP premier's office, this is not the Ralph Smith who was an order in council appointment by the NDP, and we all know that even the former premier and deputy premier, the member from Riversdale, and the former premier of Saskatchewan, now the member from Regina Elphinstone, terminated many of their own political people right in executive council after the election because they knew they were political people. And now we have a discussion over which Ralph Smith we're dealing with. Is it the Ralph Smith that was in their caucus officer, a political operative, which he is entitled to be in their caucus office?

Now you're saying that the Ralph Smith that I'm referring to is the one that was in their caucus office because I haven't said anything about your caucus office. This individual was employed in executive council on an order in council from 1973 to 1982. It seems to me that the NDP was government from 1973 to 1982. And if there's any confusion, are they then telling me that I am really talking about the Ralph Smith, their other Ralph Smith, the one who was in caucus office? Well, that would even be worse.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I'm not going to pursue this any longer; to do will just further damage the reputation of a public servant. But, Mr. Minister, I would ask you to at least be consistent with what you said the last day we did your estimates. The last day we did these estimates, you started out on this discussion of Ralph Smith by referring to a person who was in our caucus and then had operated in Executive Council. You clearly thought they were the same person.

The Ralph Smith that you are talking about now — and I listened, Mr. Minister, to what you had to say in that memo — there's nothing in that memo that suggests that he was anything other than doing what was requested of him by a minister of the Crown.

You may not agree with what Elwood Cowley was asking of him, but there's nothing in that memo to suggest he was doing anything other than what a public servant should do. He was doing what was asked of him. The same as I assume your officials — reluctantly sometimes and perhaps sometimes willingly — do what you ask them.

But, Mr. Minister, you've clearly confused two different people and you are clearly being most unfair to a career public servant. I just suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that before you raise the names of public servants in this Legislative Assembly, you take some time to check out the facts because you're clearly wrong on this one.

Mr. Brockelbank: — I want to, Mr. Chairman, direct a question to the minister and find out: what is the nature of the document he's quoting from? Is it an official government document, if you could just tell us that?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, it's a briefing memo. I have already quoted it for the House. It is recorded in *Hansard*. What we are looking at here is: the NDP say that there are two Ralph Smiths — one of them is theirs; the other one they disown.

How do they know so much about both of these Ralph Smiths? That's the question. Why are they an expert in these two Ralph Smiths? And why is Ralph Smith such a sore point with the NDP?

And, in addition, I didn't drag the names of anyone into this Assembly. The NDP have asked where is Howie Alberts; the NDP have asked what about Con Hnatiuk; the NDP have asked now what about Martin Spigelman? What do they care about these individuals? They are their friends in a conspiracy against the people of Saskatchewan, not doing what they're paid to do — to serve the public.

(1930)

Instead they're trying to fix their friends in positions and bump other people out of positions and not allow other union people with seniority to bump out whoever this Ralph Smith is. That's the kind of conspiracy there is there. That's the kind of mess I am cleaning up, and I will continue to clean it up, and I don't care if the NDP are upset about the loss of their friends.

If they are upset about the answer they are giving, the clean-up in Social Services will continue as long as necessary until that department serves the public and stays out of politics, and that's how long it will take.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, I believe, just very briefly, the minister said that he was quoting from a briefing document. I listened carefully, and just a few minutes ago the minister didn't say that was a briefing document. I believe he said it was a photocopy of a document. And I want to clarify whether it's a briefing document or whether it's some official government record that he's quoting from.

Mr. Chairman: — Order. I ask members on both sides of the House to allow the debate to continue between the members that have the floor. It makes it a lot easier to conduct a committee.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, the documents are briefing documents obtained from my department, from my officials in my department. I know you would like to know exactly who prepared them, but I'm not going to tell you exactly who prepared those documents.

What we have here, Mr. Deputy Chairman, is not an examination of the estimates of Social Services but the NDP trying to protect their friends. One thing you can say for them is they take care of their friends.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chairman, I am appalled at the Minister of Social Services' ease with which he slips into slurs to draw aspersions on the characters of people who have been faithful civil servants, all with the purpose, Mr. Chairman, of creating a diversion because he is being asked justifiable questions in the estimates of the review of the expenditures of his department.

I say, and I say this on record, Mr. Chairman, he has given me a list yesterday of 14 people, 14 upper-level people in the Department of Social Services who have either been dismissed or taken early retirement, possibly with coercion, not one of whom, Mr. Chairman, not one of whom I know today as a New Democrat. And I am asking these questions today in the estimates of the Department of Social Services because I believe that the Minister of Social Services has to be held accountable to the people of this province who are paying taxes to operate this department and others. They have a right to know how their money is being spent, and that is the reason why these questions are being asked.

They are being asked, Mr. Chairman, because I have reason to believe that for his own political reasons the Minister of Social Services does not like the character, perhaps, of some people who have been prominent and faithful and qualified and credible civil servants in the province of Saskatchewan, and at a time, Mr. Chairman, in which he requires the Legal Aid Commission to remove \$500,000 from its budget in order to impose deterrent fees on the poor of Saskatchewan to have legal counsel in the province of Saskatchewan. At a time in which he imposes that regulation, that requirement on the Legal

Aid Commission, he has the gall to make fun of the expenditures, some \$4 million in total in the dismantling of the upper level — in many cases of the Department of Social Services — because he has a political agenda. And I believe that the people of Saskatchewan have a right to know the facts, Mr. Chairman.

Let me go back to my question, Mr. Minister. You obviously don't seem to be any more eager about answering this question than to answer the questions and the specifics of your dismissal, your transfer, as you like to say it, of the deputy minister. Let me ask you the same question I asked you when you began your diversionary tactics and your oratorical excursions. Mr. Minister, how many years has Martin Spigelman been in the employ of the Department of Social Services? How much do you anticipate it will cost the taxpayers of this province to terminate that employment relationship at your decision, Mr. Minister?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — To the best of my knowledge, Martin Spigelman started with the executive council of the NDP government on June 24, 1980, and commenced employment with the Department of Social Services on July 1, 1983. Just for those people who might not know what the Executive Council is, it's the Premier's office.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, how many times do you have to ask a straightforward question to get a straightforward answer out of you. I asked you how long he was employed in the Department of Social Services. I asked you how much you anticipate it will cost the people of Saskatchewan to terminate his relationship, at your initiative, I believe. Will you answer that question, please.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — I anticipate it will cost nothing, but the matter is before the Public Service Commission and they will decide. Before the Public Service Commission, they have to decide on the evidence they have before them. There is a suggestion of conflict of interest which is much stronger than a suggestion, and the Public Service Commission will have to decide that.

Mr. Hagel: — Okay, Mr. Minister, I will accept that. I'm happy to see that we're finally getting around to something resembling straightforward answers. Can you try a straightforward answer on this one. The associate deputy minister, Dan Cunningham, what was the cost to the taxpayers of this province to terminate that employment relationship?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — I advised you earlier that the total severance pay was \$197,000-and-some-odd hundreds. That I advised the day previously. And that's the total severance cost for people who have been terminated at the department or resigned.

In addition, you have the early retirement packages which are another matter which are about \$900,000. The balance of that \$4 million you keep referring to is for additional staff in young offenders, and we have a list of many things that it involves. It's for earned increments; for new non-permanent staff, mostly in the regional operations in the regions of Saskatchewan; for the early retirements at the North Parks Centre; transfers to other

departments, and those type of things.

So the total severance costs are a \$197,000-and-some – the record will show, I don't know, it was 200-and-some additional dollars – but approximately \$197 total severance costs.

And we shouldn't really drag these people through and decide how much they were paid in severance. They have to get on with their lives and the public has to get on with their business. And I have not at all at these estimates raised any of these individuals' names, nor have I brought them to this committee. But you keep asking these questions, and I really have no reason to protect these individuals, but I don't really want to continue slinging their name through the mud.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, may I suggest that it is your name that many are slinging through the mud, to use your term. And quite frankly, Mr. Minister, I do not accept your explanation. I went through, line by line, the budget of the estimates as presented by your Minister of Finance, who oftentimes calculates things within \$700 million accuracy.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, I assume that there's a bit more accuracy than that in the line by line estimates of your department. And as I went through line by line and prorated the number of positions in the estimates as you put them forward, Mr. Minister, including the additional ones granted – there is area in which there are some staffing additions – it still leaves \$4 million unaccounted for.

Mr. Minister, will you deny that Dan Cunningham's termination of employment with the province of Saskatchewan has cost the taxpayers of this province \$38,000? Will you deny that?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well no, if Dan Cunningham told you that's how much it cost, I expect that he would have given you the right information.

Mr. Hagel: — Well I note that you don't deny it, Mr. Minister, and quite frankly your a \$197,000 doesn't wash. We've been standing here this evening and we totalled two people, we come to a \$158,000 – just two people, Mr. Minister. And somehow you expect me to believe and the people of Saskatchewan to believe that the total cost for terminations is a \$197,000? Mr. Minister, that is blatantly incorrect information.

It may have been – it may have been what has been paid so far, but that's clearly, clearly not what it is going to cost, in this budget year, the people of Saskatchewan to terminate people that you don't like to have around you in the Department of Social Services. I might suggest, Mr. Minister, I might suggest that it may be, it may be that you have an aversion to people with competence. And maybe, maybe, Mr. Minister, there are people . . . have been people around you who you chose, who you chose at your decision and endorsed by the Premier of this province to let go at a cost of \$4 million in total, in your department, Mr. Minister. And I think the people of Saskatchewan have a right to know that, and I think you have a responsibility to be held accountable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, I ask you: what was the salary of the deputy minister, the former deputy minister, who you, to use your cute little term, transferred to the province of Manitoba? What was the salary of the former deputy minister of Social Services, Mr. Minister?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — The salary of the former minister was . . . former deputy minister . . . I wish ministers would make this . . . The former deputy minister, now in Manitoba, his salary was \$6,763 per month.

Mr. Hagel: — That would be some \$80,000 a year then, Mr. Minister, approximately, just calculating it quickly in my head. Mr. Minister, can you tell me who promoted Mr. Hnatiuk into his deputy minister position.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, it wasn't me.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, who promoted the former deputy minister into his position, the former deputy minister that you transferred to the province of Saskatchewan, or to Manitoba?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, I believe the man in question was an assistant deputy minister when this government took office and that he was promoted to deputy minister during the term of Gordon Dirks. That's the best information I have available.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, would you please clarify with me. I believe he was not promoted from associate deputy minister to deputy minister; I believe that is not, as a matter of fact, the case. I do quite accept that it was Gordon Dirks, one Gordon Dirks, the former minister of Social Services, the PC former minister of Social Services, who is now working . . . who was retired from his ministerial position in October of 1986 and who is now working on a contract to the Department of Education.

Would you please clarify for me, Mr. Minister, would you please present the facts accurately. He was promoted to the position of deputy minister from what again, Mr. Minister?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Of course I wasn't in charge of things at the time. I'm going by the best recollection of my staff here that . . . And I will correct this part of it. You know more about this man than I ever will, so when it comes to where he came from and what he was doing, you have some information there that I don't have. And probably you have a lot of information I don't have. And as far as we know, the individual Mr. Con Hnatiuk was the regional director in Saskatoon when we were elected government and rose to assistant deputy when Walter Podiluk was the deputy. When Walter Podiluk went to Health, he became the deputy.

That's the information I have, but if you have other information, I'll listen to it and we'll try to find out for you. I don't think it matters a great deal. I don't think it matters a great deal. Sometimes individuals get promoted to a level that they cannot handle and you have to make changes.

(1945)

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, isn't it odd that the former deputy minister was really quite acceptable to the former PC minister of Social Services – and as a matter of fact, he chose to promote him into that position – and then all of a sudden, whoopsy, he's no longer acceptable to the current Minister of Social Services.

Let's move along, Mr. Minister. Can you tell me how much – and you seem to enjoy making comparisons with our neighbour to the east – how much would Mr. Hnatiuk be paid as his salary as deputy minister with the Government of Manitoba? I'm sure that you do these kind of comparisons and would you please tell me what the deputy minister in that position in Manitoba would make. How does the \$80,000 here compare to Manitoba?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I don't know what they pay him in Manitoba. I don't really care what they pay him in Manitoba. As long as they keep him there, I'm satisfied.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, I will tell you, Mr. Minister, that in Manitoba deputy ministers are not paid at the same levels as they're paid here in Saskatchewan.

Will you tell me, Mr. Minister – this should be an easy one for you – will you tell me how much the current deputy minister of Social Services is being paid? What is his salary?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — The current deputy minister is paid \$7,008. He's worth every cent of it.

Mr. Hagel: — So the deputy minister, Mr. Sojonky, today is being paid in excess of \$84,000 a year. Mr. Minister, let me ask you: how much will it cost to terminate the current deputy minister from his position?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I expect that the current deputy minister will honourably retire at some time and there will be no added costs of his retirement. He may also go on to do other things. We really don't know what his future intentions are. As long as he does his job, he will stay. And he's such an honourable man that should he feel that he should not be in that position, he would voluntarily leave and not hold the government up to ransom. So I don't consider it would cost anything when he retires.

An Hon. Member: — We'll see.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — And the members opposite say, they will see. They would love to get a recall of the last election but that won't happen for another four and a half years and by that time I believe the current deputy minister, Stan Sojonky – a truly incorruptible man, a man of great principles – if he still wishes to be the deputy they should beg him to stay.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, it's not hard to imagine your deputy minister outlasting you as minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — You and I both know that that's in the cards. You and I both know that your Premier has placed you in the position you're in to behave the way you're behaving to provide the kind of leadership for Social Services that you're providing for the people of Saskatchewan. You and I both know that you've been placed in that position by your Premier because you are carrying out his plan of action to deal cruelly with Saskatchewan people in need. And that has been your track record, Mr. Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — You and I both know that your term in the position that you're holding as we sit in this Assembly tonight will be done as soon as the dirty work has been done, because that is the game plan of your Premier, Mr. Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, I ask you: is the deputy minister who is currently employed in your department on contract, and if so what are the terms of his contract in the case that his employment is terminated? What I'm asking you to tell me is what is at least the formula, if not the exact number of dollars, that it will cost the people of Saskatchewan should that decision be made by you or by some other minister of Social Services.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, Executive Council is in charge of the hiring and changing of deputy ministers. I have never seen the contract. I am informed and advised that it is a standard deputy minister's contract, that all deputy ministers would have, and there is nothing unusual about the contract.

You suggest that I am a cruel man. That of course comes from a partisan member of the NDP and I wouldn't expect you to be complimentary.

We have done many, many things. The members opposite say, how many letters do you get? Well, here's a handful of letters here expressing thanks for the things that have been done in my department, and they are very specific letters. I will not table the letters. From time to time people appreciate what is done, and do write. And I realize that the members opposite try to wallow in negativism.

Many positive things are being done. Foster care has been improved greatly and continues to be improved. The young offenders system is being improved; new facilities are being opened. And the list goes on and on and on of the improvements that are being made in the Department of Social Services. And so if you want to get down to specific improvements that you would want to see made, I would consider them. If you want to get down to budgetary figures of where more money should be budgeted, I would consider them.

But if you're going to continue with name calling and raking former employees through the mud, there's no need for that. I of course have to give the explanation if you ask those kind of gutter-politics questions, but let's get on to serving the people of Saskatchewan. And I can

give you many, many good examples of how good service is being provided.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, if compliments are in order, I don't hesitate to give them, and as a matter of fact the record will show that in this Assembly there has been an occasion in which, as a matter of fact, I extended a compliment to you.

However, Mr. Minister, I says them as I sees them, and, Mr. Minister, the track record that you have brought to the position of the Minister of Social Services has not been a commendable one.

But, Mr. Minister, let me go back to my question again, and ask you specifically: do you deny that the contract to the deputy minister of Social Services is one in which, if his position is terminated, he will be paid at least 12 months salary? Do you deny that that he has a contract which guarantees that if his position is terminated, it will cost the people of Saskatchewan at least \$84,000.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I've never seen the contract. It's not my jurisdiction. I don't know what's in the contract because deputies are hired by Executive Council, by the Premier's office, and it's . . . All I know is that it's a standard deputy's contract, whatever that is. I've never seen a standard deputy's contract.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, your department certainly pays that salary to the deputy minister, and your department certainly pays the severance requirements upon termination, and you know that. The people of Saskatchewan know that as well.

Mr. Minister, it's been reported to me from a number of different centres and from a number of different kinds of offices that there is a practice going on in the province of Saskatchewan, when choosing employees within your department, that referrals for applicants for vacant positions are, as a matter of fact, made, are forwarded to the deputy minister's office, and then from the deputy minister's office they refer to your office where a decision is made within your office by yourself or one of your executive assistants, and that that, as a matter of fact, is the practice for employing to fill positions in the Department of Social Services in the province of Saskatchewan today.

Mr. Minister, that report has come to me, as I said, from a number of different centres and from a number of different kinds of services offered to the department. Mr. Minister, will you confirm in this Assembly tonight whether that is the case?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, we hire the best people we can find to fill the positions, and I don't really know how the hiring practice has worked in the past. I have some indications. We hire the best people that we can find, and that's all there is to it.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, will you provide for me the names of appointees to fill positions in the Department of Social Services made since November 1, 1986, and will you also please advise me as to which of those were appointed through the Public Service Commission.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — We don't have a list available of who was hired since November 1 because we don't keep such a list. I suppose it could be compiled in due time. We don't have any orders in council that I know of in our department so everyone would be hired according to The Public Service Act.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, when will you provide me a list of appointees since November 1, 1986 and whether they were hired through the Public Service Commission by competition?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — It will take some time. We don't usually calculate our year from November 1. I don't know what's magic about November 1. We could go on a government business year, which would be easier, I suppose.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, what is magic in your terms about November 1 is that it's approximately that time that you because the Minister of Social Services. What I'm asking, very simply, is: that since you became the Minister of Social Services, when — that is the issue, and I ask you again, — when, specifically when, will you provide me a list of the appointees to fill positions in the Department of Social Services across Saskatchewan, who filled those positions since November 1, 1986 after you became minister, or approximately at that time? And will you identify for me which of those were appointed to those positions through competitions in the Public Service Commission. When will you provide me that information?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we would look at the entire year and see what we could find. It would take several weeks to track that all down and bring it forward, so we will have a look at that entire year you're referring to.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, how many people have been hired in the Department of Social Services since November 1, 1986?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well we don't have the exact figures of how many were hired. There were vacant positions, there are vacant positions deleted, there's early retirements. We have nearly 2,000 employees, of which approximately one-third work at Valley View in Moose Jaw, and we had a large number of early retirements there. We're still in the process of filling some of those, so that figure would change daily, sort of thing. And I haven't kept specific track of how many have been hired.

We deal in the total number of positions we have and the total amount of our payroll and we haven't really kept track of specific hirings because there's also cross transfers from one position to another within the department. So it's not the kind of statistics we keep.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, then I am asking you again: will you provide them to me? I don't expect that you have them here in front of you in the Assembly tonight. It would seem obvious that there have been more people leave the department than come in, and I don't know what the number would be. I would guess probably 200, maybe

300, surely not more than that. How long can it take to compile that list and to provide that for me? Will you give me a date by which you will provide that information, Mr. Minister? Will you make a commitment this evening?

(2000)

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Our estimate is that there's been approximately 100 people hired in the last year. To get all the names of the people and all the positions and who bumped who and who moved up in seniority and all of these different things would take, I'm informed, about one and half to two weeks of calculations. I don't believe that kind of expenditure on behalf of the taxpayers is justified, and I really see no purpose why we should go calculating all the list and giving you all the names. I believe that the people in the directory that comes out from time to time — lists all the public servants in Saskatchewan, and there in Social Services — the people would be listed there. You could simply add them up. We don't have that information available, and I don't think it's a good expenditure to spend one and a half to two weeks just to satisfy your curiosity.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, it is broadly believed around the province of Saskatchewan to get a job in the Department of Social Services that you have to hold a blue membership card in the PC Party because the hiring practices are such that recommendations are made to the deputy minister's office, transferred to your office, the decisions are made, and that they're political decisions. I am telling you this evening that is the perception in the province of Saskatchewan.

These calculations, if everything is on the up-and-up, would only prove that your hiring practices are squeaky clean. And I would think that, Mr. Minister, given that the people of Saskatchewan are firmly of the opinion that this is the hiring practices of your Department of Social Services, that it is justifiable to make those calculations to provide that information not only to me but to the people of Saskatchewan, to ensure them, if this is the case, to ensure them that hiring within your department is on the up-and-up. And so I ask you again, Mr. Minister: what date will you provide me that information?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well I told you earlier I wasn't going to spend the taxpayers' money to do a calculation for your curiosity. People are hired according to whether they can fill a position, whether they can do the job. And we don't have a system like Con Hnatiuk and . . . I don't know if I should read that for you again to remind. We don't have a system like Con Hnatiuk and Dan Cunningham and Martin Spigelman, where they can . . . I'll just read parts of it for you to remind you:

We're willing to reclassify Diane Anderson's position no. 248510.

Can we not 7.23 him?

Who is currently on the redeployment list and to what level should we reclassify that position to ensure Ralph gets in rather than someone else bumping into it?

These days people bump into positions according to their seniority, and we don't have that kind of a system or a deployment list. We hire whoever can do the job. And I see very few of these people at any time. I'd like to have more time to get to know my workers better through the various departments. And things are operating quite smoothly. I realize that you have a few people in the NDP who are unhappy, but it can't be helped.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, it's not too expensive for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan to pay out \$120,000 to replace a deputy minister that was hired by Gordon Dirks, your Progressive Conservative Social Services minister predecessor, and yet it is too expensive for you to do some calculations to verify that the hiring practices in the Department of Social Services are on the up-and-up. And I can only assume from that, Mr. Minister, that the reason you will not provide that information, that you will not make it public, that you will not provide it to me, is because as a matter of fact the hiring practices in your department are not on the up-and-up. And I rue the day, Mr. Minister, when that practice began. One of the things that Tommy Douglas was . . . has often not been recognized for, but a great contribution that he made to the province of Saskatchewan, after he first came to office back in 1944, was the introduction of the Public Service Commission to ensure that in the province of Saskatchewan, civil servants would be hired on the basis of competence and the basis of qualifications and not on the basis of political patronage. And, Mr. Minister, I find it extremely odd that you refuse, in light of the common perception of the hiring practices within your department, that you refuse to provide the information which, as a matter of fact, would deny that.

Mr. Minister, would you please provide for me the name, title, salary of each of your personal staff. Would you also tell me if any of them has had a pay change in the last 12 months, and if so, what it was.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, while those . . . that information is being located and ascertained, the member raises Tommy Douglas, and I will find the exact quote from 1946. He gives us Tommy Douglas and what Tommy Douglas preached. And Tommy Douglas didn't always practice what he preached nor did he always preach consistently, because I will find you the exact quote from 1946 where Tommy Douglas said to the effect: and in order to have a socialist government, the CCF had to hire people who were of socialist orientation in order to ensure that their policies would be implemented. I will find you the exact quote. I have it upstairs in my files, and I will find it for you as soon as possible. But the NDP has not changed much since the days of 1946 and Tommy Douglas, and a resolution from their June 1987 convention reads as follows, and I quote:

PA44 — Whereas it is necessary to have civil servants and board members of provincial bodies who are dedicated to promoting the New Democratic program of democratic socialism, be it resolved that when the New Democratic Party is elected, a careful screening take place to ensure that such people are in place.

That's the NDP and how they propose to run this

province. We don't have that kind of a system. My criteria is simply that people do their jobs. I probably have hundreds of people that are not of my political persuasion working for me right now, and I'm very pleased with their performance because they are doing their jobs. And that's all we ask of them, is to do an honest month's work and receive their pay cheque – that's all we ask. But we do not ask for conspiracy. We do not ask for conspiracies against the policies of this government. We do not ask for . . . When I was appointed minister, the word, the word – and you have the word all the time over there – the word in my department was: oh, this minister won't last long; we'll just co-operate for a while and then we'll do as we please, as we always did. Well it didn't quite work that way. This minister has outlasted the conspirators. And so we will continue to provide professional, caring service to the people of Saskatchewan. And to do that, we have made a few other changes. We have a new mission statement at our department. The mission of Saskatchewan Social Services is to promote independence of people in need through caring and competent service.

In addition, we have a new motto at our department. This is official: the motto of our department is, caring and competent service for people in need. That's exactly what we intend to do; that's exactly how we intend to operate. And to do that, we have to have people who will carry out the policies, to provide the caring and competent service, and I'm very pleased with the people we now have.

Mr. Hagel: — Well first of all, Mr. Minister, when it comes to credibility and we get the member from Melville giving his interpretation of the words of Tommy Douglas – I think the member from Melville side by side with Tommy Douglas would not be a very forbidding or foreboding . . .

An Hon. Member: — Formidable.

Mr. Hagel: — Nor would he be formidable by comparison. I would suggest, Mr. Minister, that within the province of Saskatchewan there is a distinct difference with the credibility assigned to Tommy Douglas and the credibility assigned to the member from Melville.

However, in the oratorical ramblings that you engaged in here again, you forgot that I asked a question and again, it's not a terribly difficult question. Let me remind you. I asked simply for the name, the title, and salary of each one of your personal staff and whether any of them have had a pay change in the past 12 months, and if so, what it was. And, Mr. Minister, if I could ask you to please respond to the question.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — The answer to that question is an MA (ministerial assistant) 4, chief of staff, Len Schell, salary of \$3,692 – I thought I paid him more but his salary is \$3,692; Lyle Krahn, ministerial assistant 2, \$3,016. I believe he's the one that's had a raise. Yes, July 1, '86, Mr. Krahn had a raise from 2,637 to his current salary of \$3,016. He had been with the office for some time – was there before I took over as minister – and is showing excellent work. He's the only one in my office who has received a raise, while I might say others have deserved raises. MA 2, Brenda Barootes is at \$2,637 per

month; Judy Lozinski is an MAC – that must mean secretary – she gets \$1,795 per month; and a MAC, ministerial assistant secretary, Debbie Taylor at \$2,079 per month. The only that's had a raise is Lyle Krahn.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, is there a Debbie McNabb employed in your office who was involved in doing some research on day care which I believe is a Social Services program? What does Ms. McNabb make, please?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I've already given her salary. She's a ministerial assistant employed in my Labour women's secretariat division. I've already given her salary. I don't recall what it is, but it's a public record in *Hansard*. She's a ministerial assistant paid by Human Resources, Labour and Employment, and was doing that survey as a result of her duties concerning women's issues, and that's why there is an interrelationship between women's issues and day care, so that's why she was doing that.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, have there been other people in the employ of your office, or paid through your office since you have come to office? And I refer specifically to one Brent Rathgeber, who I don't believe you have referred to. Are these the only five people employed in your office, or are there others, or have there been others?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — In Social Services, Brent Rathgeber was with my office as a ministerial assistant 2, at a salary of \$2,357 per month. He's returned to university and is studying law.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, could you advise me why Mr. Rathgeber, who was working as an executive assistant to you since January, until just recently, was working out of your law office in Melville?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Rathgeber was not working out of my law office in Melville. Mr. Rathgeber did constituency work in addition to the work he did in Regina, and worked out of my constituency office when he was in Melville, which wasn't often enough because he was too busy here in Regina.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, do any of these people that you've named have a government car or car allowance, and how much?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — They do not receive car allowances. They use a CVA (central vehicle agency) pool vehicle, if needed, and that's the only time they have access to any kind of a government car. They are paid mileage for government travel, the same rate as all government officials. It's about all I can say about it; it's standard procedure.

Just in case you have any misconceptions about . . . You raised something about a law office in Melville. I do own a half of a law office. If you'll look in the records in the Clerk's office it will show that I'm on a leave of absence without pay from that law office, and so I really don't have much to do with who might be working at that office.

Mr. Hagel: — Is it, Mr. Minister, as a matter of fact, your law office something different from your constituency

office in Melville? Are they located in the same rental space, the same building, perhaps?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, my constituency office has always been in the back of my building that is partly owned by a corporation and the constituency office operates in the back of the building. There's some sharing of equipment and some economies of scale that way, but the two are not connected in any way.

Mr. Hagel: — Well perhaps that would explain the confusion that some people have had, Mr. Minister. We'll leave that to people to decide.

Would you please advise, Mr. Minister, of the out-of-province travel in 1986-87 by yourself, your staff. Would you please provide me with the date, destination, number of persons in the trip, the purpose, and the total cost?

(2015)

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I apologize for the delay, but because I have two portfolios I've tried to sort out exactly how this worked. The information my officials have on the records is that out-of-province travel, January 22, 1987, Ottawa, federal-provincial ministers' meeting: cost, meals and accommodation, \$168.

I've already given my out-of-province travel on the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment. As I recall on that trip I was returning from an Indian constitutional meeting in Halifax. I came through Ottawa and there was no additional air fare for this meeting, as I was combining meetings. So the only expenses we show is \$168 in the last fiscal year for out-of-province travel.

The records don't show us any ministerial assistants being present at that time, and my assistant deputy was with me — he says he doesn't recall any — but I think my ministerial assistant, Len Schell, was also in Halifax and either went through there, and it may have been charged to the other department which would already be in the record when I went through my estimates in the other department. But all that the records of the department show is \$168 for meals and accommodation on that trip in the last calendar year.

This year, so far, I've been in Halifax at one meeting and I don't know the cost of it. I don't think they have that material. But I also combined that with labour meetings. So that's all we show.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, you would truly be an inspiration for the member from Kindersley.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, would you please advise me of your total in-province ministerial air travel in 1986-87, and again the same details as asked before: the staff who accompanied, date, destination, number of persons on trip, purpose, total cost.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the calculation is

done on the basis of the last fiscal year, and I can only give you an answer that combines the staff that the former minister, Gordon Dirks, had, the staff that I have, the travel that Gordon Dirks did, and the travel that I did. And I'll try to get that sorted out for you in just a second.

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I just was interested in some questions, or your responses to some questions, a few questions back, given to the member for Moose Jaw North. And that concerns the question of the arrangement of your constituency office and of your law office. Just so that we understand this, Mr. Minister, your law office and your constituency office are in the same building. Is that correct?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Yes, that's correct; have been ever since 1982.

Mr. Lyons: — Good. And, Mr. Minister, who is it that owns the building in which both your law office and the constituency office are located?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — The title will show that Century Properties Corporation owns the building.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, are you or any of your law partners principals in that corporation which owns the building in which your law office and the constituency office are located?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — The matter, Mr. Chairman, is not related to the estimates here, but I will answer the question. I own 50 per cent of the shares of that corporation; have owned them since 1973. Brian Graff owns 50 per cent of the shares of that corporation; has owned them since — trying to recall — about two or three years or so.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, I'm not trying to imply anything out of the ordinary, but it would be true to say then basically that you're renting your office from yourself. And when Mr. Rathgeber, I believe, was working for you out of that office, of which funds were disbursed through your ministerial portfolio, was there some arrangement vis-à-vis Mr. Rathgeber's salary and your constituency office or was that directly paid out of the moneys that came from your post as a minister of the Crown?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, finally we have a question that somehow relates to Social Services and the expenditures of my department.

Mr. Rathgeber was assigned to take care of constituency problems, to deal with Social Services and any other kind of problems that relate to my portfolio that occur in that Yorkton-Melville region. He spent most of his time working out of the office here in Regina.

From time to time when he was in, he would use space at my constituency office, and I see nothing improper with Mr. Rathgeber doing MA (ministerial assistant) work in my office, as I really don't see why the government should try to find him a separate office in Melville when he is doing the work to assist the MLA and the cabinet minister for that particular area. So I really have nothing to hide,

and I don't really know why we should answer any more questions about this. There's really nothing much to it. It's common knowledge in Melville what he did.

Mr. Lyons: — Okay, just one final question on this, Mr. Minister. It's quite correct then for us to say that you are paying yourself rent in terms of your constituency office. Is that correct?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, there's space used there for a constituency office. There's a rental fee charged for constituency offices. I've gone a lot further in explaining the situation here than I've ever heard any member of the NDP explain how they operate and where they operate from.

Maybe we should really look to see why Lorne Nystrom, MP for Yorkton-Melville, has his office in Melville City Hall, and how much of my taxpayers' money is going towards Lorne Nystrom's office, either federally or in Melville City Hall. And I would be quite prepared to look at moving my office to Melville City Hall, as Lorne Nystrom has, except I just don't consider it appropriate that a federal or provincial politician should operate out of the City Hall in Melville.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, do you have that information that I had asked for now? Is that available? Or we can move on if it's still being pulled together.

Do you have it now, Mr. Minister? I can proceed to other questions and you can provide that later.

An Hon. Member: — No, I can provide it now.

Mr. Hagel: — Okay.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — My in-province travel expenses for meals and accommodation are \$388 — meals, accommodation and private vehicle mileage, that's mileage for staff. Of course this covers the entire period of the Hon. Gordon Dirks being minister and myself, that's \$2,464. Government . . . I'll try to break this down here, this next figure. Government aircraft travel is \$5,539. Some of that, again, is staff that worked for Gordon Dirks, some of that is staff that works for me, and some of it is flights that I was on. And the total ministerial office — that would be myself, my staff, in-province travel expenses, mileage, government aircraft, charges that are charged back through — would be \$16,380, keeping in mind that that would be for the entire year and would also include Gordon Dirks and his assistants at the time.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, would you provide me, from 1986-87, the costs that the department incurred for polling, advertising, aircraft charter or lease, and in each case could you identify for me the date, purpose, firm, and cost.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Which year did you want that information on?

Mr. Hagel: — 1986-87, the previous fiscal year.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Now, Mr. Chairman, the best information I have is that there's been no polling or

surveying out of my department in the year in question.

Contracts: the John Howard Society training package for alternate measures, young offender's program, \$21,000; Systemhouse, development of computerized Saskatchewan assistance plan computer system, \$1,198,458; Stevenson Kellogg Ernst and Whinney, evaluation of SAP (Saskatchewan assistance plan) computer system, \$12,197; and James B. Williams, demographic profile of life on Indian reserves, \$19,731. Those are the consultants employed by the department in the year in question.

Mr. Hagel: — And, Mr. Minister, then there was no advertising costs or aircraft charter or lease costs. Is that what you're saying?

(2030)

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the total spent on printing and publishing at the department was \$342,913, of which printing of forms was \$334,107; broadcast services, TV and radio, zero. The balance of \$8,806 was for advertising development, \$240; advertising placement, \$4,919; advertising publications, \$3,647; for a total of \$8,806.

I'll try to get some idea of what the advertising was about, but it would be informational advertising with respect to Social Services.

Mr. Hagel: — And aircraft charter, was there any there, Mr. Minister?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, on aircraft charters we don't have any information with respect . . . They don't have anything available with respect to ministerial office chartering anything. There will be in the department northern charters for SAP workers and people of that sort flying around the North doing their duty in the Department of Social Services. We don't have that information available. We expect it could be pulled together in about, oh, five days or so.

But that's where the bulk of the charter costs would be. I have no idea at this time what the amounts are.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, will you make me a commitment to provide that information in about a week. Is that possible? Or did I understand you correctly to say that?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, my staff says they could find that information in about a week and we'll make it available to you. I'll ask them to take note of that.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. With respect to the government-wide efficiency productivity study being done by Coopers & Lybrand, Mr. Minister, did this agency incur any costs related to the . . . did the Department of Social Services, I'm sorry, incur any costs related to their study in 1986-87, or thus far in '87-88, and do you anticipate any costs . . . payments to Coopers & Lybrand in 1987-88?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I give the

same answer as I gave with respect to Human Resources, Labour and Employment, that these people were not hired by my department specifically. We have not received a bill for their services. I'm not sure if their services are provided to the government as a whole or specifically to my department. At present we have not received a bill, have no indication of what their fees would be. They simply came in and did their work and reported back and are not specifically part of this department's estimates. So we have received no bill and we're not sure if that will be allocated to each department or if it will be paid on a global basis.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, has your department since you became minister, used the services of Thorne, Stevenson and Kellogg to remove civil servants from their jobs, and if so, what was the cost of the services provided by them?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the firm in question was employed at an approximate sum of \$12,000 — I read it out to you — to review the computer system which is not moving quick enough to suit my tastes, and we've made some management changes there. We're trying to get the Social Services' system entirely on computer so there's a better cross-reference and we're better able to keep track of any duplication or abuse that might be attempted on the Government of Saskatchewan. So that expenditure was on the computer system.

Our department did not lay off any people. We did not have any employment counselling for people who were displaced from their jobs due to down-sizing. On the contrary, we had so many early retirements in our department that we've had to go out and start replacing people on the early retirements. We had a lot people who qualified and 123 people took early retirement, and we've had more back-fill in our department than in some of the others.

You know, your suggestion that our department hired people to do something or other to our employees is not correct. It's an assumption, might even be worse than that, but . . .

An Hon. Member: — You mean it's wrong again.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Yes, and my colleagues point out that it can best be described as an error. We had so many early retirements that we had to actually back-fill.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm pleased to see that you would find it distasteful that they would have been employed for the termination practices, that they employed the Minister of Education, in his estimates, was really quite flattered by their performance. I'm glad to see that there was not any of the red-box treatment given to the Department of Social Services' employees.

Mr. Minister, in 1981-82 estimates the Social Services administration line shows that there were 113 person-years of staffing for a total costs of \$3,872,780. In last year's budget there was a 127 employees and spending of \$9,548,580. That seems to be a bit rich to me, Mr. Minister, even in the context of the spending of your government. And I ask you whether that strikes you as a

bit expensive that the cost has tripled in the past five years for administration? And, Mr. Minister, I would welcome an explanation as to why that has happened.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the added costs there only show up in that category. We have a counterbalancing savings. The bulk of the expenditures the member refers to are expenditures for Sask. Computer Utility Corporation and Systemhouse computer corporation who are assisting us in getting Social Services onto a computer system so you can catch up with the technology of the modern world.

Mr. Hagel: — Are you saying, Mr. Minister — I'm not sure I'm understanding what you're saying clearly — that the approximately \$1,200,000 that you mentioned to me before that was being spent for computerization is included in this \$9,500,000? Is that what you're telling me? And if so, again I would ask if you could please advise me as to how if, as matter of fact, that is the case, it's still more than double the cost of administration with an increase of only 14 positions — 127 as compared to 113. And why the costs for administration appears to be at least more than double in the last five years?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, part of the cost is converting to computers which will be a net saving of balances. That is the way it is set up. And now we include the staff training and development of the staff, which is approximately 2,000 people in this vote, and therefore the vote would be higher than it once was. It's a matter of where you put the cost of staff development.

Mr. Hagel: — Could you just advise me, Mr. Minister, then, how much of that cost, as a matter of fact, does go to staff training and development?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite, I understand, is going back to 1981 as a comparison, and this is the pre-technological era when we did scribing at the Department of Social Services — and this year's budget, the computer costs are \$3.6 million, and the staff development costs are \$277,300. The balance would be towards administration salaries and things of that nature.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. The Minister of Education shouted across the way that he'd enjoy some true or false questions, so let me put some to you.

Mr. Minister, in the last *Public Accounts*, I noticed a payment of \$31,041.96 to an agency listed as Wellman and Andrews, and I would ask, Mr. Minister, if you could tell me if that is the same Regina law firm which includes Roy Wellman, PC candidate in Regina Centre in the last provincial election. True or false, I guess, would be sufficient as an answer.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, as the members opposite will know that it's a tradition of government to hire the best legal counsel available. And I recall that when I was a member of the NDP, I was very well qualified and I used to do some work for the Government of Saskatchewan, and that as soon as I joined the PC party, I was deemed not to be qualified as a lawyer any more and no longer did work for the Government of

Saskatchewan. And we hire the best counsel we can find, and it turns out that, true, Roy Wellman's office does good work; true, Roy Wellman's office does legal work for the Department of Social Services; and true, as long as they do good work, they will continue.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, then I notice from *Public Accounts* as well there is a payment to a firm referred to as Chow, Ochrane, Walper and Associates. Would you tell me, Mr. Minister, if that's the Moose Jaw law firm of the PC candidate in Moose Jaw in 1978, Kerry Chow. Would that be the same firm?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the answer would be si; I'm not sure who the candidate was in '78; I'm not sure if it's the same Kerry Chow. The member lives in Moose Jaw, probably would have a better knowledge of it than I do.

Mr. Hagel: — The answer to the question is, yes, Mr. Minister, unless there was another one that you were possibly referring to.

How about on page 525 of the *Public Accounts*, there is a \$51,665.07 payment listed as going to Hnatyshyn & Company. And I wonder, Mr. Minister, if this is the same Tory law firm in Saskatoon which has close ties to the PC member of parliament for Saskatoon West.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Justice of Canada is an excellent lawyer. I'm sure that anyone else with the name Hnatyshyn would be an excellent lawyer and should be entitled to practise their profession in this province. So I really don't know what the question is.

Mr. Hagel: — The question is whether the firm has ties to the PC member of parliament. I think you've answered it. Obviously it's yes.

Mr. Minister, I found another interesting one, an expenditure of \$38,995.65 going to the firm of Balfour Moss Milliken Laschuk & Kyle. And I ask, Mr. Minister: is this the same law firm that would have as partners the former PC member of parliament, now senator, Jim Balfour, and Mr. Kyle, the prominent PC bagman? Would that be the same firm, Mr. Minister?

(2045)

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — The answer is, it's quite possible that that is the same firm and it's quite possible that there are PC supporters, Liberal supporters, and NDP supporters in that firm. So I really don't know who would be benefiting from this other than possibly that the government's work is being done, and I haven't really checked to see what colour shorts the lawyer that's doing the work has. So I don't know.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, there seems to be a lot of work done, to use your terms, by lawyers in blue shorts, and I think you've made that obvious.

Mr. Minister, in the last instalment of *Public Accounts* on page 524, I see an expenditure of \$26,661.85 to Dome Advertising. Can you tell me, Mr. Minister, what duties

Dome performed for that money.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Excuse me, what year are you referring to?

Mr. Hagel: — The last *Public Accounts*, Mr. Minister.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I believe the member opposite is really referring to '85-86. We don't have records with us that far back.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, I believe that that's not inappropriate to be asking questions in estimates from '85-86. I see the material has just arrived and let me repeat the question. Would you please advise what Dome Advertising did for the department to the expense of \$26,661.85.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, Dome Advertising is a large company and provide advertising services to many people in Saskatchewan and to some government departments. This was two years ago, and I really don't know what specifically the services were for. I would expect they would have been for informational advertising in the department. From time to time we find it necessary to advise the people of changes in programs, improvements in programs, and we feel that the people should receive information in a positive nature, rather than in the politically partisan nature that the opposition spreads out there. And so we try to do a little informational advertising, but this is two years ago. I don't know what it was about.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, we seem to be getting back to a pattern of answering questions that may cause us to be not making a great deal of progress at the end of yesterday and the first part of this evening.

Mr. Minister, I have a number of other questions about specific expenditures in the '85-86 estimates, and I'd be happy to provide them to you in series here now. Will you give me your commitment that you will provide answers to these questions when next estimates come before this House?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, no, I won't. The member should ask them in public accounts. If the NDP wouldn't have wrangled about procedure and what a quorum should be, public accounts would be functioning right now. The member should ask those questions in public accounts and they'll receive their answers.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, then let me just list them so as to be prepared to respond in public accounts if you're not prepared to respond here.

I refer you back again then page 524 of estimates, Dome Advertising, \$26,661.85. I believe that's the same Dome Advertising that did the advertising work for the PC Party in the last provincial election.

Page 523, a payment of \$12,339.67 to Bill Hicke's Sporting Goods Ltd. Could you advise what that was for? To Schaan Healthcare Products Inc., \$30,701.24. What goods or services did that provide, Mr. Minister? To Westfair Foods, \$269,522.27; to Greyhound Lines of

Canada, \$45,495.25; to the Georgia Hotel, \$28,580.43. Okay.

Just a couple of other questions then, Mr. Minister. In the last *Public Accounts*, under the regional operations, the heading: allowances, retiring gratuities and temporary performance of higher duties, there was an expenditure of \$127,632.05, and I would ask, Mr. Minister, if it is your opinion that that is a mite bit high and is a figure that could be reduced. Would you please advise me of your opinion, intentions in that matter?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, if we're dealing with 1985-86, that was two years ago. I was not the minister of this department two years ago. Those are matters properly asked in public accounts, and I can't really bring back a whole history of the Department of Social Services, stack it in the corner here, and go through it all in estimates.

We're dealing with the budget for the forthcoming year, and we've ranged rather widely because we have nothing to hide, but surely we should leave something for public accounts.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, I suppose we'll have to deal with it there. I don't . . . can't for the life of me understand why you'd be hesitant to deal with it in this Assembly.

Mr. Minister, according to your '86-87 annual report, 1 per cent of the total funding for social assistance plan expenditures came from municipal governments in the amounts of \$2,032,013. Mr. Minister, I've had some discussions with some representatives of municipalities who have expressed some concern about the charge to them of 1 per cent of the social assistance plan expenditures, and particularly in light of the cuts that have been made by your government to their funding in other regards. And I would ask you, Mr. Minister, whether you would consider withdrawing the burden of social assistance assessments to urban municipalities and make that recommendation within your caucus.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, nobody likes to pay money but surely asking the municipalities to pay 1 per cent of what . . . something that used to be 100 per cent of the municipalities' responsibility is not asking for too much.

Municipalities benefit considerably from our department. We have now got Saskatchewan employment development programs, either in the work and training model or the work training model. Prince Albert is benefiting from this; Saskatoon is benefiting at the Meewasin Valley; other communities are benefiting — Hudson Bay; and the list goes on and on.

We haven't had any requests from the city of Regina to participate in any of these type of projects, and I will be approaching them to see why the city of Regina is not interested in having social services recipients working on community projects in the city of Regina. But 1 per cent is not an unreasonable sum, and the Government of Canada and the Government of Saskatchewan pay 99 per cent of the welfare costs, and we don't intend at this time,

the budgets being what they are, to change that 1 per cent.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, what was the date of the last monthly report published by the Department of Social Services?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, we've moved about eight months ago, I believe to quarterly reports rather than monthly reports, and I'm advised that the next quarterly report will be available soon; they are released to the public, are found in libraries, and are quite available, but the next one will be released soon.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, would you please advise me then why it was decided to change the practice to no longer produce the monthly reports from the department.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, it costs a lot more money to produce; four reports a year are cheaper than 12, and we felt there was no need to put out all of that paper, that a quarterly report would be adequate. The world is not changing that quickly — although it's changing quickly — that a quarterly report is adequate, and we'll follow that procedure.

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women back in 1980 did a survey which showed that something like one in 10 women was beaten by her spouse or her partner.

In Saskatchewan today, approximately one-half of the women and children who seek shelter at transitions homes are turned away. And in the last two years that figure was approximately 4,134 women and children who were turned away from seeking shelter in transitions homes because there was a shortage of space.

But in spite of those statistics, Mr. Minister, there has been a cut in funding to transition homes. There was a 14.5 per cent cut to the Regina transition home; the La Ronge transition home funding is down or short some 35 per cent over the six month funding of the previous year.

In rural areas such as Swift Current and Weyburn-Estevan, there has been a desperate demand for transition homes demonstrated, and yet the PC government has not provided funding for transition homes in those rural areas. There have been a number of other services with respect to women fleeing violent situations, often life threatening situations — a number of other services that help in cases like that that have been cut.

The Mobile Crisis Unit in Prince Albert was hit with a 28 per cent cut-back. In Regina the Mobile Crisis Services was slashed by 14 per cent, and the Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service was cut by almost 10 per cent. The

Regina women's family workers program was cut by a whopping 38 per cent. Family Service Bureaus have received small decreases – family service bureau which provide support service information, referral and counsel in Regina, Saskatoon and Moose Jaw.

Now, Mr. Minister, I am wondering whether your department will reconsider its decision not to fund, not to set up transition homes in the rural areas that I have mentioned tonight, Swift Current and Weyburn-Estevan. Will you reconsider the decision not to set up transition homes in those areas?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, in this area we should really start, right now to separate the politics, the partisan NDP politics from the reality, and we should really get down to seeing what can be done to serve the people of Saskatchewan.

First of all, our government has made no decision not to build transition houses in Estevan and Swift Current. I consider those a priority. As soon as funding is available, we will proceed in that regard.

With respect to the Regina Transition House, new members of the NDP tried to spread a conception across the province that there was a massive cut to funding in transition houses and it's clearly not the case. Transition houses have the same amount of money they had last year. Yorkton has extra money for two additional beds.

Regina Transition House, when we consulted with these people . . . The NDP say we should consult, so we did. We consulted, and you remember the political discussions that they had in public. But when we consulted with the Regina Transition House as to ways that they could run more efficiently, possibly on a smaller budget – as many, many people in this province are having to do right now – you know, they said they wouldn't; couldn't and they wouldn't.

We then said to the Regina Transition House, in order to balance the expenditures per bed and the costs, would they consider, if they kept their present funding, would they consider providing an additional four beds. Now the member opposite alleges that people are being turned away. So we asked the Regina Transition House to consider four additional beds. Instead of considering the four beds they decided they would rather . . . And I don't blame all of the people there, but the individual we were dealing with, though I believe she is no longer there, the assistant director or somebody to that effect, was more inclined to march on the legislature and fly balloons than to provide four additional beds in Regina.

(2100)

I believe at the time the decisions there were politically motivated rather than motivated for what would be best for the women of Regina. And because they would not consider the additional four beds, Regina does not have the additional four beds.

When the member from Regina Lakeview alleges – and I say alleges – that half the people going to transition houses are being turned away, it seems very inconsistent

that the Regina Transition House would not consider four additional beds.

The situation with respect to transition houses is that I do not accept that one-half of the people that should stay there are being turned away. I do not accept that as a fact. I have a difficulty in dealing with third party agencies in getting a complete picture of how they do actually operate. But I am in the process and will be in the process of examining closely the operations of the transition houses to see why anyone is being turned away, if in fact they are – under the circumstances this might be happening – to see whether people are being turned away, or whether people are being counselled and then going to a family situation or an alternative accommodation. Certainly it seems highly unlikely that transition houses would turn people away.

It seems to me that the more logical thing to do would be to take in people and then come and ask me to see the overcrowding if there is any. But they have not asked me to come and see the overcrowding. Instead, we have allegations from the member from Lakeview that half the people are being turned away. I would like to know if that is the case, why is it the case, and what should be done about it? That's all I hear from the member from Lakeview, is, is pour money on the situation. That's what I hear, but I don't hear any practical solutions. I agree that it would be desirable to have a transition house in Estevan; it would be desirable to have a transition house in Swift Current, and I'm working in that direction.

With respect to crisis units, it's a very difficult situation. Being in government is a responsible position. You have to make difficult and responsible decisions. Being in opposition means that you can have one position one day and another position another day; in opposition you are not accountable for your statements; you're not accountable for your actions. In government you have to be responsible; in government you have to make decisions; you have to make choices – choices that are not always easy. This government increased the health care budget by \$36 million. This government has maintained social services; this government has maintained education, and in order to do that we have to make some difficult choices.

With respect to crisis centres, this is where you phone for counselling. We made the decision that we would not fund crisis centres while the Department of Social Services' offices were open to assist people. We believe that people in crisis should be phoning our social workers at the Department of Social Services who will deal with the problem or refer them to the appropriate agency that could assist. In most cases these are government health agencies, government funding non-governmental organizations, and government funded providers of counselling and contract services.

So we believe that the first place that a person should phone in a crisis situation is the Department of Social Services and the social workers. So therefore it is not necessary to run the crisis centres 24 hours per day. And we have funded them for emergency services when the Department of Social Services would not ordinarily be open.

There has been some complaining about this, but it is a choice that we had to make. There were many, many difficult choices we had to make, Mr. Deputy Chairman, when we put together the budget in this province. And you will recall that some of the choices in these estimates are considerably higher taxes. Some of the choices are reductions in expenditure. Some of the choices are difficult choices, to maintain health care, to maintain medicare, to maintain social services, to maintain education. The lives of the people of Saskatchewan continue to be protected by the Government of Saskatchewan by their own tax money, and the government – people on this side of the House – have to make responsible decisions, and these are some of the decisions we made and why we made those decisions.

So I will not accept wild allegations. I do acknowledge and know from personal experience that wife battering, that child abuse, is too common in Canada, in Saskatchewan, and this government has taken measures to try to prevent those things. This government has a policy of prosecuting everyone who has been alleged to have beaten their spouse. This government has a policy of vigorously prosecuting everyone who has abused children. And we have continued with those kind of programs to prevent child abuse, to prevent abuse of spouses, and I will be implementing other measures in the next few months. I consider this a priority, but I cannot promise to stamp out the problem, but I can promise to try, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Chairman, I'm very pleased to see that the minister is considering funding transition houses in Weyburn and Swift Current, and I hope that that will be forthcoming very soon because there's no question that the demand has been demonstrated in that area.

With respect to his allegations concerning personnel at the Regina transition home, he said that they were more interested in marching against the cuts that we heard about this spring, that were dribbled out to the people of Saskatchewan on a piecemeal basis, day by day. He said that they were more interested in demonstrating. Obviously that was a sore point with him, Mr. Chairman, and I should also point out that the Regina transition home, or individuals that we have spoken to, feel that that's the reason why they've been cut 14.5 per cent. They feel the real reason they've been cut is because they voiced their concerns publicly. And as we have spoken in this legislature on a number of times, that's the politics that this government engages in – politics of fear, Mr. Chairman, whereby people who speak out against the government, because they don't agree with what the government is doing, get their funding cut off.

And let me just refer to a letter, Mr. Chairman, that was taken to the minister, the member from Melville. He would have a copy of this, dated May 1, 1987, and signed by Evanna Simpson, board president, who says, we cannot help but feeling – that's the board president of the Regina transition home, I believe, who says:

We cannot help feeling that we are being punished for being vocal and visible in our opposition to the cuts originally proposed a month

ago. Because you have backed off from your original intent to cut all transition house budgets, it would appear that you have realized the negative effects such a move would have for service delivery. The fact that you have gone ahead with a substantial funding cut to Regina Transition House smacks of unfairness and petty revenge, an act unworthy of a minister of government.

The freedom to publicly criticize those in power without fear of reprisal prevents the misuse of power and is the hallmark of true democracy. At transition house our business is freedom from fear and abuse of power (that's their business at a transition house) so you can hardly expect us to remain silent when services and principles we believe in passionately and have worked hard to establish and uphold are cut down.

Clearly this individual feels that the 14.5 per cent cut at the Regina transition home was an act of vengeance – an act of revenge because they'd spoken out publicly against this government's cuts.

With respect to the beds, cost per bed, there's information here that demonstrates that the Yorkton transition home actually has a higher cost per bed, Mr. Minister. There was no cut to the Yorkton transition home, and the government attempts to justify it on the basis of the fact that the cost per bed is greater.

The point is also made by the Regina transition home that their location in the University of Regina, their location in Regina, the same city as the University of Regina school of social work, the police college, the RCMP training centre, the provincial capital, and many media outlets, calls upon the expertise of their staff and requires them to do things beyond what you would do in a transition home in a rural area, for example. And therefore they feel that they need more staff available to meet those needs as well. That point was made to the minister, but he obviously ignored it.

As to how many women are being turned away, I would suggest that if the minister doesn't believe in our figures, then he should do his own studies and figure out exactly how many women and children are being turned away, because our information tells us something like 50 per cent of the people who show up at transition homes are being turned away.

It's really very ridiculous to say, well take them in, take them in anyway, because oftentimes there's no room for them. Sometimes they are overcrowded as it is anyway. But if there's no room for them, what do they do with them? They may put them in a hotel or turn them away. But the fact of the matter is, this has been happening at a rate that I feel is unacceptable in this province because protecting women who are fleeing violent life-threatening situations has to be a priority of this government.

Now as I understand, some time back, Mr. Minister, the former women's secretariat was to co-ordinate and chair a newly formed intergovernmental committee on family

violence. I would like to know if that report is completed, and if it is, when we can receive a copy of it.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, the member from Regina Lakeview has just indicated, possibly through a slip of the tongue, that she has not given us the clear and full picture with respect to women in need and the services available to them. And I will point out her slip of the tongue.

She knew the truth, Mr. Deputy Chairman, but she wouldn't tell us all of the truth. She would only tell us half of the truth. And first of all, since this government has taken office, services to women in need have increased by 82 per cent in budgetary expenditures. So certainly this government has put that area as a priority, has increased the budget in that area by 82 per cent. Yes, I agree, the problem persists, but the problem is not always the government's fault. The government does as much as it can.

The NDP terminology would be: I was appalled, I was shocked. That's the kind of rhetoric they use. But I found it interesting because I don't get appalled and shocked. I have seen all elements of the world, and I know there are some difficult situations.

I won't use the NDP rhetoric, but I was interested to read that an alderman in Regina, alderman Hamilton — could possibly be that this alderman has connections to the NDP — but I found it interesting that there was a slight increase in crime against women last year and this is not a good thing. Now this would depend on whether more crime was reported, more crime was detected, or there actually was more crime. But the statistics show that there was an increase in crime against women.

Somewhat this alderperson in Regina said, in the paper — in Regina's paper — it was the Government of Saskatchewan's fault that there was an increase in crime against women. Somehow the NDP and their supporters relate every problem in society to the PC Government of Saskatchewan. We somehow are supposed to be responsible for everything that every person does.

(2115)

We try to prevent crimes against women; we try to prevent abuse against children; we try to prevent crimes against men. We try to prevent these things, but surely not all of the sins of society are the fault of this government. But they don't take into account that we have increased the funding for services to women who are victims of violence by 82 per cent since we've taken office. They also do not take into account that you have to draw a line between politics and helping people.

The member opposite would suggest that one-half of the people that come to a transition house are turned away, and I questioned that figure. Then she says: oh yes, but they may go to hotels.

Now let me tell you what other services are available to people in need in this province. The Department of Social Services — that's the department I'm responsible for — very often, very often puts up women in need, who've

had to leave their husbands, in hotels. We very often do this where necessary.

If the member opposite is saying that we should build more transition houses because it's not adequate to temporarily use hotels, then we have some degree of difference of opinion. But we cannot build for a capacity that we don't know. We don't know on any given weekend how many men may drink excessively and abuse their wives. On some weekends it could be more than others. We can't have buildings designed for the worst weekend of the year.

People come to us and they say: I can no longer live with my husband because either he beats me, or he drinks too much, or uses drugs. There are many, many reasons why women have to leave their husbands — legitimate reasons. And in those cases we have never denied a woman access to funds from the Government of Saskatchewan through Social Services. We have never denied a woman rent, food, clothing, the needs of the children; we have never denied that. We do it every day and we continue to do it. And to say that half the people are turned away and have nowhere to go and then admit that, yes, they can go to hotels — not to admit yet that, yes, the government does rent apartments for people in need, that is only telling half the truth.

And the real last question here is: did the taxpayers of Saskatchewan pay for those balloons that were supposed to fly to Melville and that I was supposed to see? Wouldn't it have been simpler if they would have phoned me or sent me a letter. I read in the paper they were sending up balloons so that I would see them; I didn't see any of these balloons in Melville. The question is, did the taxpayers of Saskatchewan pay for those balloons when the money should be spent helping women?

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Chairman, the minister didn't answer my question. And I just have information for the minister, I would ask him not to put words in my mouth. I did not say women didn't have anywhere to go, and you know that, sir. I said that they're being turned away from transition homes. And if you're suggesting to the people of this province and to those women and children who are being turned away from transition homes that hotels are adequate, then that shows your ignorance about the situation, Mr. Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Those women need protection. They need protection from violent situations, and hotels hardly meet that requirement, Mr. Minister. But a man of your standing who is so ignorant on the issue of transition homes would make a statement to that effect.

Your government, sir, your government announced remedies for women fleeing violent situations with a great deal of fanfare a few years ago — with a great deal of fanfare. Now we expect you to come through after all that publicity, we expect you to come through.

Now you didn't answer my question, and my question was that there was a study launched; where is that report? Is it completed, and can we have a copy?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, did you see the reaction of the member from Regina Lakeview when she was caught telling only half of the truth? That really answers the question and tells you everything that you need to know about her attitudes and why she is standing up here asking questions. It's not out of concern, but it's out of political motivation, to further her own political ends for who knows what, maybe even the leadership race. That is really what motivates the member from Lakeview is her personal aspirations, bankrolled by her \$109,000 family income. And then she comes here and tries to sound so caring. Now you've really seen what motivates her. She got caught telling half of the truth, and when the other half came out, you saw the reaction.

The answer to the question, the real question, is that the study is nearing completion and will be available when it is completed, and I expect to take more action in the future and to do everything possible to stamp out the abuse of spouses, particularly women and children.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, I always have to chuckle when you bring my family income into the topic. You seem to do it very, very often. The PC's attempted that during the last election too, but it didn't work. Besides, I understand you, as an individual, earn more than my husband and I combined. The . . . Paying 40 or 50,000 income tax you must.

But, Mr. Minister, you still didn't answer my question as to whether or not we could receive a copy of that report and when the report will be completed. I didn't hear that in your response, and I'll ask you once again, or are you going to still attempt to hedge and run around in circles and not answer questions as you're supposed to do in this House?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, sorry, Mr. Chairman, we've been switching and I'd like to address you by your proper title.

Mr. Chairman, when I receive the report, I will give it consideration and I will decide at the time then whether the public would be served by having the NDP given access to that report. I believe it's an internal document.

Ms. Simard: — Is that report, Mr. Minister . . . The taxpayer, I assume, is paying for the preparation of that report. I would think that the taxpayer would be entitled to see what the results of it are, especially on an issue of wife battering. Now, Mr. Minister, how close is that report to completion?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the report is nearing completion, I'm advised. It's an internal government study. The best way to reveal to the public what is in the internal government's study is to announce implementation of new programs and changes, and we will do those in due course when we are ready to implement them.

Ms. Simard: Mr. Minister, a major public awareness campaign was promised by the PC government. Could you tell me what this campaign involved, and when did it take place?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the questions asked here relate to Human Resources, Labour and Employment. The member from Lakeview and I had a long discussion on that department, and I don't have the officials from that department with me today. Had she asked the question when the officials were here, we could have possibly been able to provide more information.

We have, as a priority, the prevention of abuse of women and children, and I suppose, in the rarest of cases, the abuses of husbands, but we wouldn't want to limit the prevention of abuse. And we will do everything possible to assist people in need; we will do everything possible to prevent the situation from happening. But the government will not take responsibility for all the sins committed in this province, and that's what the opposition would want us to do.

Ms. Simard: — That's ridiculous, Mr. Minister. That's just ridiculous. The PC government promised a major media campaign — awareness campaign. You made that promise. It was a Social Service promise. Obviously you never followed through on your promise or you'd have that information for me today.

Now Mr. Minister, in 1984 the government promised \$800,000 for new programs against family violence. Could you please outline for me which new programs were developed and how the 800,000 was distributed to each of these new programs.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, did I hear correctly? Was the question about 1984 and what was started in 1984?

Ms. Simard: — I said, Mr. Minister, in 1984, \$800,000 for new programs was promised. Now I would like you to advise today what new programs were developed over the last few years to spend the \$800,000 that the PC government promised.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the initiatives are scattered across many government departments. I'll try to give you an overview of what's been done. Justice has increased the prosecution of wife batterers; health has a treatment program for batterers of women and children; Social Services funds a range of services to battered women. And as I indicated earlier, in the last five years funding in that area has increased by 82 per cent. There was a public awareness campaign. I don't doubt that we'll have to proceed with another one and another one after that. And we will have to carry on with more programs and new programs in order to try to prevent this situation from continuing. But the programs I've referred to have cost in excess of \$800,000.

Ms. Simard: — Is it possible, Mr. Minister, for us to get a breakdown as to exactly how much was spent on each of these programs from your department?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, as I indicated, those programs are spread across government departments: Health, Social Services, Justice. And I'm not saying it's impossible, I'm saying it's impractical, and we won't be attempting to calculate all that out and break it down for

them.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, there are a number of people that are of the opinion you haven't spent the \$800,000. Therefore, if you wish to allay their fears, I would suggest that you are forthcoming with that information and that you provide us with the information as exactly how much you have spent.

The minister is aware of the La Ronge situation which I referred to in the House the other day, the fact that because the funding was put in for a 12-month period is 35 per cent less of what it was if you multiplied the six month period by two. The minister is aware of that situation and, as a result, I understand it's creating problems at the La Ronge transition home inasmuch as they cannot staff it on a 24-hour basis as they would wish to.

So I'm asking the minister today whether he would commit himself to increasing funding to the La Ronge shelter to its required operating level so that security may be provided to the women and children fleeing violent situations in that part of Saskatchewan.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, with respect to La Ronge, in addition to the money received from the Government of Saskatchewan, they also receive money from Indian Affairs. So all of their funding wouldn't be shown in the Saskatchewan budget, but you would also have to look at the budget of the Dominion of Canada.

(2130)

Our figures show that they have an increase this year of \$14,000. They were never designed, or did not apply to be a transition house, but a safe shelter. And when you combine all of these factors and the number of beds they have there, we feel that there is adequate funding at La Ronge for the services required at this time.

Ms. Simard: — The \$14,000 increase, I assume, is the one you're referring to that the provincial government gave. But the minister is aware that the \$94,500 that La Ronge was receiving in '86-87 was only for a six-month period. The \$14,000 increase in '87-88 was intended by the government to apply to a 12-month period.

As a result, there is a 35 per cent reduction — or whatever — drop in the cost for the total year. If you take 94,500 times two, it's much higher than 108,900. So the \$14,000 increase was for the additional six months, when the first six months operated at 94,500.

Now you mentioned funding from Indian Affairs. Could you tell me how much, and what it's intended to be used for, and whether it's supposed to be used for the La Ronge shelter?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the safe shelter in La Ronge that we're discussing here just started up last year. The extra money last year was for start-up costs to get it going. The Department of Social Services had a difficult time in getting the safe shelter operating and running at La Ronge. There was considerable disorganization at the board there, and they were not as organized as other

places are. And we had to struggle quite a lot to try to get the board organized well enough to get the shelter going. The reason that the figures may vary from last year to this year is that there is always extra money in a start-up year.

We do not know at this time what the federal amount is. They are negotiating with the federal government. Because of the disorganization of the board last year, they are having some difficulties in their federal negotiations, I understand.

This is the best information I have available. Had they been better organized in La Ronge, things would run smoother. But they are certainly not lacking for money there. Mostly, I would think, they need to improve their management and their organization. I believe that good services can be provided with the money that is being provided. And the federal figures we don't have the details on.

Ms. Simard — Mr. Minister, Social Services has implemented a safe house program in Melfort on a pilot project basis, and I am wondering whether a review of this program has been undertaken? I would like to know what the total budget of the safe house program is?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the review there has been shared with the organization in Melfort. They have asked — and I compliment them for combining the safe shelter program with the crisis line, and they have combined the funding there. The total is \$107,000 per year at the Melfort safe shelter. In a long term stay, people would go on to Prince Albert. In excess . . . usually the people there seek safety there for one to five days. The project has gone quite well, and we are quite pleased with it so far.

There were concerns expressed by the people at the shelter about the security and safety of the people seeking shelter. The study was done and indicated that there were no major problems with security and safety for the people seeking shelter. For the most part, Melfort is a smaller city, quite a peaceful city, and it's not a dangerous place. There are instances where women need to seek assistance and safety, and they are receiving that at the Melfort safe shelter. And we feel that the \$107,000 which has combined their crisis money and their safe shelter money, which I believe before that was 106,000 total, is an adequate sum at this time.

Ms. Simard: — Could the minister give us a breakdown of the expenditures at the safe house program to, for example, payments to host families and transportation costs when transferring women? And also could he give us an indication as to the impact of the program on the host family?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the best information we've got is that the impact of the program has been quite positive for the safe home operators. There has not been a high turnover in safe home operators. We don't have the exact figures on the transportation costs, and my officials believe that they could have them available by tomorrow and they'll try to locate those costs.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, in the final report of the

federal-provincial territorial working group on wife battering, the Department of Social Services stated that it has established six family crisis centres in rural Saskatchewan in order to respond to the needs of battered women in rural areas. Could you please tell me where those six family crisis centres are located, when they were established, and what their operating budgets are?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite is quoting from an internal government document that may contain an error as far as we can ascertain. There are four, plus two others, that provide this type of services in Regina and Saskatoon. It's quite possible that whoever prepared the document included the Regina and Saskatoon ones in the rural classification.

What we have here is the West Central Crisis Centre in Kindersley, annual expenditure of \$36,430; the North East Crisis Intervention Centre, Inc., crisis centre and safe home in Melfort which we've advised previously is \$107,660 — that's a combined centre; the South West Crisis Services Inc., Swift Current, \$36,420; the society for the improvement of good neighbours inc., crisis counselling service, Yorkton, \$36,900; the Saskatoon Family Service Bureau, battered women's support group, \$25,000; the Family Service Bureau of Regina, battered women's support group, 25,000, for a total expenditure of \$267,410. They employ 36 people.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, the Yorkton Crisis Centre recently closed down because of a refusal of funding from this government. Now I understand they took something like 14,000 calls for assistance in the past year, which is a lot of calls, Mr. Minister.

Now I know you said earlier in your remarks that you're trying to encourage people to telephone the Department of Social Services instead when women, for example, are in a crisis situation and are in life-threatening situations. They are instead supposed to phone the Department of Social Services rather than the Yorkton Crisis Centre, for example. Can you please tell me whether or not the Department of Social Services in that area has a line that is open on a 24-hour basis, and what the number is if you've got it, and whether it is in that particular area or where is the line situated?

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the Yorkton Crisis Centre was started with federal government money. It was not, as far as I know, indicated to be permanent money. Quite often the federal government will give out money, and this was done a few years ago and put it out as seed money to start a particular service. This service has never been funded by the Department of Social Services. This year, when their federal funding expired, they came to the Department of Social Services and requested that the Department of Social Services take up the funding for the Yorkton Crisis Centre.

In the Department of Social Services we have to weigh the priorities and the needs. And I live in the Yorkton-Melville area; I'm familiar with the services in that area, and right in the city of Yorkton there are substantial services that now exist, and the Government of Saskatchewan already provides direct services. I wrote the Yorkton Crisis Centre and advised them that we would have to make our

expenditures for direct services.

I also had information from them on the number of phone calls. It could have been 14,000; I don't recall the figure being that high. You would have to consider whether the phone calls were crisis or whether they were information. And I recall going through the statistics provided to me by the Yorkton Crisis Centre and the overwhelming majority of the referrals there were either to government-funded hospitals, the Yorkton Psychiatric Centre, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, to government-funded services through non-governmental organizations such as SIGN (Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours) and the friendship centre.

So that the majority of what the crisis centre was doing was referring people to existing government-funded facilities. In addition, some of the referrals were to priests and pastors and to men and women of the cloth, who have traditionally helped in family crisis. And so, therefore, the priorities of the government, and at the time the request came through, at the time of the budget year, the priorities of this government have to be to provide services where they do not exist.

(2145)

And as indicated earlier, the services are going to be needed and are needed in Estevan, are needed in Swift Current. Yorkton has considerable services of this nature, and I indicated to them earlier today, when the media phoned me, that there were some services that should be continued by the community and funded by the community if the community feels that those services are necessary. And this is a case where the federal government was generous and is now trying to terminate the funding, get out of the funding, and the provincial government cannot pick up every federal program that the federal government, in the days of Pierre Trudeau, funded, and it is now being passed over to the provincial government. We try our best, but we find in the Yorkton area there are considerable services provided.

There is a common trend that you will see with the NDP when we discuss social services. I have yet to ever hear them mention anything about the assistance of religious leaders, the assistance of the church. They do not seem to have a place in their policy for the church, for the counselling of pastors, of priests, of parish workers. They do not seem to have a place in their policy for that kind of traditional help that church people have given to each other for years and years.

So while I do not say the churches should take up all of the burdens of society, I do say that we should not try to replace churches with government. So I would say that there should be a balance between what people can do for each other with what people, through their churches, can do for their brothers and sisters, as required by the Bible, and what the government will provide on a secular basis. And you never find anywhere in the NDP policy that there should be a co-operation between churches and the government in helping people.

We believe very strongly in that kind of a philosophy, and I have explored in many, many ways how there can be

more co-operation between the churches and the government to help people. And that is just something that the NDP should seriously consider because their roots, going back many, many years, were based on devout, religious people, and gradually the NDP has drifted to become a secular, socialist, political party.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Chairman, that's absolutely hilarious. You can always tell when the member from Melville knows that what his government has done is wrong because he goes on this long, *ad hominem* argument about the NDP and how terrible they are. You always know an oratorical excursion and all sorts of rhetoric about the evil NDP. He knows that the Yorkton Crisis Centre with its 14,000 calls was serving a very important function in the society of Yorkton. He knows that.

He knows that they should have continued to fund them, but instead he would have us believe that it's the NDP who are going by the way and he has to get himself involved in this long explanation. So you can always tell when he knows that what his government has done and what decisions he's made is wrong; when he knows in his heart that he's wrong, because he will have to go on with these long, political explanations.

Now, Mr. Chairman, there's another area that I wish to address tonight, and that's the question of child counsellors. As we know, in our transition houses there are many children that go there with their mothers, and many of these children have been beaten themselves and have been part of this violent situation. Many of them are emotionally affected by the violence in the home — very seriously affected. There have been studies that indicate that child counsellors are essential to transition homes, and I believe that the government has even recognized the need for child counsellors.

We also know the fact that children who are beaten often become batterers themselves later on, and that there's this vicious cycle of violence. We have to somehow work at interrupting that cycle. It has been suggested that child counsellors in transition homes would be helpful in that regard.

So what I would like to know from the minister is whether he would reconsider his decision not to fund child counsellor positions at provincial transition houses, and whether he would seriously look at funding child counsellor positions.

Hon Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I will seriously look at more child counselling, but I have to look at the means of delivery. I am more inclined to look at the means of delivery through the Department of Social Services and the professional social workers that we have in the department. We have better control over the quality than if we pay money to a third-party agency.

So therefore what I am considering now is more child counselling, but the means of delivery would be through the Department of Social Services and the social workers that we now have on staff. And that gives us a better quality control on the type of counselling and the degree of counselling, and we feel that that is a better way to expend the taxpayers' money on the protection of

children. Because we already have a lot of expertise and we have responsibility for the protection of children, we have put an extra million dollars into child care and foster care.

The NDP talks about everything negative they can think of. I should really tell you about some positive things. In the foster care area we have tried to increase the rate. I have indicated it is not enough. I believe foster parents should receive additional money; when it can be found it will be there. We are increasing training for foster parents. We have instituted through the Foster Parents Association an insurance plan for foster parents. And on the whole we have increased child protection in many, many ways.

But this whole area gets back to some of the things earlier discussed about — and I indicated to this when we were talking — how the former deputy of Social Services, a man who has been much discussed here, operated the department. One of the things that this province does still not have — and I have just about completed the agreement — is a native child-care agreement where the federal government would pay their share. We would use our jurisdiction, and the bands would take care of custody/child protection amongst their own reservations, amongst their own people.

It is an unfortunate fact that approximately 70 per cent of the children in custody in Saskatchewan are of Indian and Metis origin. So we have to spend more money. We feel that the federal government should be involved; we have just about concluded a child care agreement. This is something that was not considered in the past years by the officials in my department. So we should really talk about the improvements in child care, the improvements in foster care, and those kinds of situations.

We now have 2,078 children in custody that are my responsibility as the Minister of Social Services, being the official parent on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. We would like to reduce that number, but it is a constant problem in balancing the protection of the children and keeping the family together. Sometimes we are criticized at the Department of Social Services for having children in too many foster homes — that they're in one foster home and then in another foster home and that they're, in effect, bounced around.

That is a problem, but the problem arises because you have a situation where we try to send the children back to their family as soon as we think it is safe. And then it turns out that the family conditions deteriorate and we have to apprehend the children again. So you have a constant problem. You are not dealing here with an absolute science, you're dealing with the lives of people, and my 2,000 workers try their best to help these people in every way possible.

So we should look at the positive side of all this and not continue to emphasize the negative, as the NDP constantly do.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:56 p.m.