

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Martin: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you, and to the members of the House and to all present, a delegation from the Jilin province, another of the exchange visits between Jilin province in China and Saskatchewan. The delegation is “education” in make-up, with particular discussions with the University of Regina, related to student exchange and curriculum discussion.

Let me introduce the group, accompanied by Dr. Murray Hutchins, Dean of Administration, and Dr. Bob Bryce, Dean of Education. In the group, Mr. Speaker, are Mr. Chen, the deputy chairman and deputy director of the Education committee; Mr. Chang, president of Jilin Education College; Mr. Zhou, deputy secretary-general of Friendship Association for Foreign Countries; Mr. Xu, president of Jilin Finance and Trade College; and Mr. Ma, director of Foreign Affairs of the Education Committee.

Accompanying them, as well as the two educators from the University of Regina, is Shuban Wang who is the interpreter and who, you will recall, Mr. Speaker, was introduced in this House just last week. He is one of the scholars from China who is attending the University of Regina.

I want to welcome them to our House, to the Legislative Assembly, to Saskatchewan, and thank you very much for that delightful lunch we had today, and wish all the members of the Assembly to bid them welcome to our House.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to, on behalf of the official opposition, add my words of greeting to those of the member for Regina Wascana. I have many happy memories of visiting Jilin. In 1982 I was there as a guest of Youxie and went up to Ch’ang-Ch’un and met many officials on that occasion. I greatly enjoyed my visit to that province, as I have to other provinces of China, and I know that all members of the House will join me in the welcome extended by the member from Wascana.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Increase in Fees and Licences

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Revenue. It has to do with your government’s hidden taxes on the people of Saskatchewan.

Everyone knows about the gas tax and the unfair flat tax and the unfair increases in sales tax, but not everyone realizes that your government has increased hidden taxes

in the form of government fees and licences and other charges by more than 42 per cent since you took office – a 42 per cent increase in hidden taxes since your government took office, 11 per cent this year alone, or an increase of nearly \$17 million. It’s widely known that your government and the federal government of the same party favour these hidden taxes.

Can the minister justify an 11 per cent jump this year in hidden taxes, when you are preaching restraint to everyone else and cutting services to the public?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, the only taxes that are hidden are hidden from the eyesight of the hon. member, because the budget makes it clear where we expected the revenue increases, whether they be from liquor, driver licensing, for example. We indicated quite clearly in the budget that there would be increases in those areas and that we expected more revenue.

Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the hon. member complains. And to use his figure – which I’m sure is inaccurate, based on his questions – of some 40 per cent since 1982, when one compares power rates of 90 per cent, SGI rates of 90 per cent increases under their administration, Mr. Speaker, we maintain, and of course the people of Saskatchewan still will remain and are, of course, the second lowest taxed people in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. If the minister has trouble understanding what I’m talking about, perhaps he should read his own budget documents where these figures are posted.

Minister, these increases in fees and charges and licences are never announced with much public fanfare. That’s been your style. You just sneak them through with as little publicity as possible. None of them were announced in your June budget speech, even though this year’s increase and hidden tax revenue is the equivalent of two basis points in Saskatchewan’s personal income tax.

Again, Mr. Minister, how do you justify huge hikes in government fees and other charges at a time when important and necessary services are being cut and taxpayers are being asked to practise restraint?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I suppose like most Saskatchewan I’m somewhat surprised at the hon. member. When one considers the past practice, Mr. Speaker, a former Finance minister in the New Democratic Party, New Democratic government, waited until the session was over before they announced an income tax increase. I recall where they waited until August, when there was no session, for a sliding gasoline tax, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, they complain about not having a session, and yet when we bring about the increases to the public’s

knowledge, when they're sitting there in the opposition they don't want to talk about potash, they don't want to talk about uranium, and they miss the tax increases, Mr. Speaker, and they miss the revenue increases which happened August 1, July 1 . . . and the hon. member was asleep, just like they're asleep in potash, uranium and the things that are of so much concern to the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Well, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Tourism and Small Business, he's been feeding answers to the minister of revenue anyway, and it has to do with taking money out of the pockets of Saskatchewan's small businesses.

The Consumer Affairs department has increased its fees to businesses in recent days by incredible amounts. The cost of incorporating a new business has jumped from 150 per cent — \$100 to \$250, Mr. Minister. The cost of registering a business name increased from \$25 to \$50 — 100 per cent jump. The annual renewal fees for these registrations have gone up 100 per cent. These are just a few examples, Mr. Minister, and clearly your government doesn't look after small business.

I want to know where you were when these decisions were made, and I want to know how you justify those increases?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well certainly, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, it was only a week or two ago, was asking about what this government has done for small business.

I'll just reiterate some of the things that we've done for small business in this province of Saskatchewan.

I remember distinctly when small business was having trouble with taxes in this province, the same as they were with homes; we took action. In 1982, with interest rates, we took action and we pegged the interest rate for small business. We removed regulatory reform for small business — over 1,400 regulations taken from the books of this province. We put a regulatory reform council in place in which small business makes up the majority of the people on that council.

So sure there's going to be some increases in incorporating a business and things of this nature. But I think if you look at the action of this government in support of small business in this province, you will see a strong stand that is causing small businesses to expand and new ones to start.

I cite, for example, Mr. Speaker, and I invite all members on the opposite side of the House to come to North America's biggest trade show where you can bring franchiser and small-business people together in Saskatoon the 11th to the 14th of this week. Please attend.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. There's more, Mr. Minister. Are you aware that you've increased the licence fees for direct sellers from \$50 to \$250? And are you aware that you also require direct sellers to have their licences for a five-year period as opposed to the one-year period that used to be there?

Mr. Minister, the government is just pocketing bigger licence fees to pay for your mismanagement. And I want to know — and you still haven't said, but I want to know how you justify these kinds of increases on already hard-pressed Saskatchewan small-business people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well again, Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite is trying to mislead or cast innuendo, which I don't think is justifiable. I think if he would look at the length of term of some of these increases and fees, he will see they are over a five-year period of time, which I think is probably reasonable, probably something that small business would appreciate — that you don't have to be renewing each year; that you have that business for some period of time.

I think that's far better and more in line with what the people of Saskatchewan and small business want, rather than plans like when they were in government, the party opposite thought of nationalizing downtown Regina and things of this nature. And I believe what we are doing . . . And once again, I want to invite you . . . And I will look with interest because I will be there to see if any of the front-benchers are in Saskatoon at North American's largest small-business conference where you have franchisers, Mr. Speaker, and investors coming together, the biggest in North America. And I'd like to see you there on Friday.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Minister, simply put, are you telling me that the people of this province and the business community of this province are happy with the increases that you've thrust upon them? Is that what you're telling me?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well I think the biggest thing that the small-business people in this province are happy about is that we're here and you're there, if you really want to know the answer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — That's what I hear anyway, and I think they intend to keep it that way for some time to come, if you really want to know what they're thinking about.

But certainly there are increases. There are increases in licensing fees and so on, but I think spread over five years, as the Department of Consumer Affairs has done, is more in the interests of business than a year by year fee, and people realize that fees go up. It costs money to do these types of things. So I go back to my final . . . my opening remark that if you talk to small business, and again, come on the weekend, ask them yourself, and they'll tell you:

thank God we're here and you're there.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister of Tourism, Small Business and Co-operatives believes truly that the people of Saskatchewan are happy that you're the government and we're the opposition, ask your Premier to call a by-election or, better yet, call a general election and let's find out just who should be where.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — My question to the minister also deals with the government's hidden taxes. Your government has displayed a total lack of commitment to the co-operative movement with its decision earlier this year to virtually dismantle what one was a proud department of co-operation and co-operative development.

Now you've decided to discriminate against co-operatives even in the setting of government fees. This month the Consumer Affairs department increased the fee to incorporate a private business from \$100 to \$250, an increase of over 100, or of 150 per cent. But at the same you increased the fee to register a co-op from \$75 to \$250, or an increase of 233 per cent. Can the minister tell the co-operative movement why he didn't question the size of this fee hike on their behalf?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member talks about the amalgamation of the department of co-ops into Small Business and Tourism. I believe it is a move that has been well received, I met with the leaders of all the major co-op movements in the province soon after the announcement and indicated to them some of the benefits that, I believe, can come by this amalgamation. And I think proof positive is taking place. Previously when there was a department of co-ops, that's where one went entirely if you're looking at this type of structure.

We are using the small-business resource centres, Mr. Speaker, to allow people to come in at store-front and see the various ways you can form a government in Saskatchewan . . . or form a business in Saskatchewan. You can do it by private enterprise, you can do it in partnership, you can do it by forming a co-op. And those are things, I think, that co-ops are certainly appreciative of.

Certainly there has been increases in fees for co-ops as there has been for other types of businesses. I think that is justified, and I understand that these things take place from time to time, and it's hit the co-ops right now. That's the type of increase that has been necessary. And again I would ask you to look at the length of time of licensing for some of these things.

Mr. Trew: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, the minister should well know that the co-operative movement is not happy with the amalgamation of the department of co-operation and co-operative development as a tack-on, a third tack-on to your other ministry. The co-operative movement is simply not happy with that, and they're certainly not happy with your unfair increases.

My question is: why, when you've increased the fee for small businesses by 150 per cent, why do you jump the fee by 233 per cent for co-ops from \$75 to \$250? You did not deal with that question. And I simply want to know why, and if you deny that this is a discouragement to co-ops, how do you justify that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well again, Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite would be better to get his facts straight before he asked the question. I think he's trying to compare apples and oranges here. Registering a co-op is a one-time fee; it's not like a renewable licence that would come due year after year.

Certainly there are costs to administering government. I heard him rise in this House not three minutes ago and stand up and say, why don't you call a general election. This is his way of containing costs.

We have, certainly, costs of administering this government, and there are fee increases as there were fee increases under the NDP government to drivers' licences and licence plates and so on. There are fee increases towards business. There are to private enterprises and there are to co-ops.

Lost Markets to Honey Producers

Mr. Sauder: — My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier and Minister of Agriculture. In light of recent decisions, arbitrary decisions by the federal government restricting the sales of honey both on the domestic market and in the export market from Canada, and in light of how that particularly affects our Saskatchewan producers, I'd like to ask the Minister of Agriculture what he and his department are doing to encourage the federal government to rethink those decisions and to open it up so that Saskatchewan honey producers can once again enjoy the benefit of exporting into eastern Canada and the United States markets?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious situation with respect to honey producers in Saskatchewan, and particularly in the northern part of the province. It is the result of a combination of rules and regulations that apply differently to provinces across Canada, and Saskatchewan is being discriminated against.

We are asking the federal Minister of Agriculture and the cabinet to modify the rules and regulations as it applies to exports and inter-provincial trade of honey. Right now people in Saskatchewan have been denied markets to United States. And it's very serious. In fact, the producers don't know what to do with the excess honey . . .

An Hon. Member: — They're giving it away.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — And they're giving it away. It may be a laughing matter to the members opposite, and they don't think it's serious, but to farmers, Mr. Speaker, who have to deal with this situation, it's extremely serious.

And we are taking their concerns firsthand to the Minister

of Agriculture federally and to the cabinet to ask them to modify the rules and regulations to treat Saskatchewan people the same as they do those in Quebec; and secondly, to standardize the measurement of the various ingredients in honey so that in fact we don't have this discrimination.

Mr. Koskie: — Yes, I'd like to ask the Premier a supplement relative to his question that was fed to him by the member from Nipawin. Mr. Minister, you are aware that this problem has been around in respect to the honey producers for some time.

An Hon. Member: — No.

Mr. Koskie: — Oh yes, it has. It has been known for a considerable length of . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please. I know the hon. member would like to make a few points here that he has on his mind, but it is a supplement that you rose on.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for reminding me, because this is important. The question of the honey . . . the problems of the honey growers in Saskatchewan has been known for some considerable time. And so my supplement to you, Mr. Premier, is: why in fact haven't you addressed it; and why haven't you got a solution, rather than just sent it down to Ottawa for further study? Why haven't you come up with the solution?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly glad that the member from Quill Lakes now realizes that it is a problem. It will apply to the 1986 and '87 honey crop. It won't apply to the year after that because of the modifications that we can do here in Saskatchewan. But this is a federal law.

We have raised it with the federal government for some time, Mr. Speaker, and we've continued to lobby to make sure that they would modify the rules and regulations so not to discriminate against Saskatchewan. If they don't change it, Saskatchewan producers are prepared to modify their producing practices so in fact that we meet this double standard, and we're going to have to do that. But we want them to make the changes before that and have the federal government make it fair and equitable across North America, and indeed certainly between provinces.

So they have heard that lobby early. They've heard it again, and it's been raised now because obviously farmers don't know what to do with the honey. And clearly the members opposite didn't think it was that significant.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Premier, can you give the honey producers of Saskatchewan any deadline as to when you expect the federal government to address and to modify the regulations, as you indicated, which would in fact overcome their problem?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, as I advised the member, we have been informing the federal government and the Minister of Agriculture on a continual basis about the discrimination. And so we have asked them, and asked the Minister of Agriculture federally, to make modifications to the rules, so in fact that we can market interprovincially and export. Now the federal government is going to have to make that announcement and the hon. member will hear it the same time I will.

Privatized Children's Dental Plan

Ms. Atkinson: — My question is to the Acting Minister of Health, and it deals with the government's decision to destroy the school-based children's dental plan and replace it with an inferior privatized version.

Mr. Acting Minister, your government has claimed that the privatized children's dental plan will make dental services more readily available to people in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, when you killed the school-based dental plan on June 30, you closed 578 clinics in schools throughout this province, and those clinics were in 338 communities. Today you have dentists available to Saskatchewan children in a total of 75 communities. How do you define that as increased access to dental care for people in rural Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, I understand that there have been a number of dentists who have been looking at purchasing some of the equipment from the . . . that was previously in the school dental plan, and that they're going to be establishing satellite clinics throughout the province. I think we'll see more of those developing over time.

I understand from the Minister of Health that the cards have been sent out to all the parents in the province regarding the changes in the dental plan. I know I've received mine, for my son.

I expect we will see a growth in the number of dental offices and satellite offices manned by dentists and also by some of the people that were in the dental plan throughout the province. I think we have to, in fairness, give time to see this develop because, you know, the equipment was only sold last week.

Ms. Atkinson: — Supplementary. Mr. Minister, this is the list of dentists that was handed out to parents throughout this province who have children enrolled in the dental program. This is the list. Of this list, 27 of these dentists are practising in satellite offices which often aren't open five days a week. It's also interesting to note that of these 75 communities listed here, one is in Provost, Alberta.

I'd simply like you to answer the question. How do you justify the closure of a school-based children's dental plan that was located in 338 communities when we now only have dentists in 75 communities? How does that increase accessibility to children in rural Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well I can only answer, Mr. Speaker, again saying that the equipment was only put out for tender on September 2. I believe, we will see, there will be more dentists accessing this equipment, setting up satellite stations and offices, and also there may be, as I understand, more flexible hours that are taking place. Some of these offices are certainly open on Saturdays. I understand there's going to be some open at night.

So I think for the member opposite to stand and try and cast a black shadow that there will not be access to dental services for the children of this province, at this point in time, is simply not correct. I think it's inappropriate. I would advise, sir, to allow things to develop as I think they will.

Ms. Atkinson: — Supplementary. Can you explain to me why one of the communities listed in your little list of dentists available to parents, why one of the dentist's offices is in Provost, Alberta, and why Saskatchewan taxpayers are paying for a dentist in Provost, Alberta?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know the exact case of Provost, Alberta, but I can probably guess that there may be people coming to Langenburg, Saskatchewan, and so on for dental services from Manitoba.

Ms. Atkinson: — A new question. On August 17 in this legislature your government made the following promise with respect to the dental records of Saskatchewan children enrolled in the old school-based program, and this is what the minister said:

There's no question that the records of individual children will be made available to parents.

There's no question in my mind — and I'll say so here on behalf of this government — parents should have, and will have, the records of their children.

Can you explain to me, Mr. Minister, why the Department of Health is denying parents access to their children's records. They won't give them to parents.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I have no indication that the allegation made by the member opposite is correct at all. It could be entirely false. I will take that under notice, contact the Minister of Health, and get back to the Assembly with the appropriate answer as soon as I can.

Ms. Atkinson: — Supplementary.

Mr. Speaker: — Final supplementary.

Ms. Atkinson: —: Mr. Acting Minister of Health, when you killed the school-based children's dental plan last June,

you put more than 400 people out of work. At that time you claimed that many dental plan workers would be hired by private dentists. Can the minister tell us today how many of those fired 411 workers have been hired by private dentists?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Again, Mr. Speaker, I'll take note of that.

Call for Inquiry into Collapse of Principal Trust

Mr. Goodale: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Consumer Affairs and has to do with the Principal Trust matter. The minister will probably be aware that today a lawyer in Regina has made certain comments in the media indicating that the Department of Consumer Affairs had some information, as much as two years ago, that should have set off some warning alarms about the Principal Trust affair that might have, if heeded, headed off the problem that we are now facing with that company and associated companies in Saskatchewan across western Canada.

And I wonder if the minister now, in light of the allegations that have been made, would reconsider her position in refusing to call a public inquiry into this matter and indeed call a public inquiry in this matter so that this allegation and all of the facts surrounding this affair, including the conduct of the government, can be examined in full?

Hon Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I heard the report by the defeated Liberal candidate, and I think that should . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. I'm having difficulty hearing the Minister of Finance, and I ask for your co-operation.

Hon Mr. Lane: — The defeated Liberal candidate is acting as counsel, as I understand, for two individuals I believe charged with fraud on the farm source management. Some may be familiar with that. Many farmers were taken during those activities. A search by the Securities Commission would indicate that the individual referred to by the Liberal candidate was, in fact, licensed at the time, and properly licensed, that in fact the allegations stem from the fact that Principal Trust, as any trust or bank company could be, happened to be the depository for the funds.

Now that of itself . . . for a lawyer to make an allegation that that of itself indicates that there was something wrong, I frankly think is spurious. And I suppose I'm reminded, Mr. Speaker, of the old legal maxim that the weaker the case the more you want to get to the press rather quickly. And I suggest that the lawyer involved was not only totally inaccurate, totally wrong, but frankly doing a disservice to his profession with those statements.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Could I have order, please.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Appointees to Saskatchewan Gaming Commission

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to make an announcement which will be of interest to all members of the Assembly and to the general public in Saskatchewan. I am pleased to announce today that Bill MacRae of Regina Beach has been appointed chairman of the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission. The other members have also been named today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. MacRae, a former RCMP superintendent, is most recently chairman of the rent appeal commission and aide-de-camp to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor. Mr. MacRae is also a member of the National Parole Board, a sessional lecturer at the University of Regina, and is currently executive director of the Saskatchewan Golf Association. Mr. MacRae holds an honorary doctorate of law degree from the University of Regina.

Hon. members will recall that the establishment of a gaming commission was a primary recommendation of the independent inquiry into commercial bingo hall operations in Saskatchewan, which this government initiated. The commission will assume responsibility for the licensing and administration of bingos, raffles, break-opens, and casinos in the province. As well, Mr. Speaker, it is charged with making recommendations to the government respecting a comprehensive gaming policy and any necessary legislative changes, to us.

The appointment of Mr. MacRae and the other members of the commission represents a common sense, widely supported action by the government, and is proof of our commitment to ensuring fairness in the market-place. Members will agree that gaming must be rigorously controlled to ensure that charitable organizations receive the profits which are due them, and that the gaming activities are themselves independently supervised.

Mr. MacRae and the other excellent appointees to the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission, reflect our commitment to public consultation, meaningful input for all citizens, and our continuing support for the worthy and charitable community activity in the province.

The other appointees, Mr. Speaker, are Bunnie Hanwell of Regina, who will act as vice-chairman; Henry Hanson of Prince Albert; Frank Smith of Swift Current; Gerald Nelson of Yorkton; Sophie Harder of North Battleford; Don Morgan and Keith Swan, all of Saskatoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Smart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's about time that the Gaming Commission was announced because it's been in the works and promised for some time, and I'm pleased to see that it's finally materializing because there's been a lot of problems with the bingos as they've been operating in Saskatchewan in particular, and there's been a long-time need for someone to be overseeing the recommendations from the bingo inquiry, particularly since the Department of Commerce and Commercial Affairs seems to be having trouble getting that under control. So I look forward to seeing the results of the Gaming Commission.

I notice with interest the appointment of Mr. MacRae, a

former RCMP superintendent; presumably that will give him some qualifications for the job. I don't know about being a member of the golf association and how much that has to do with it. But we certainly look forward to the work of the commission.

I see, with interest, that you're talking about the need for commitment to ensure fairness in the market-place, and I'm really interested that you see this as proof of your commitment. And yet when we've had the many, many questions about the Principal Group, and the failure and the collapse of the First Investors Corporation and the Associated Investors of Canada, that you've not even been willing to answer the questions about that. And that certainly reflects almost the deregulation of the market-place and very little concern about fairness in the market-place or to the investors in Principal Trust.

I also note that you see these excellent appointees as a reflection of commitment to public consultation. The way in which your government defines public consultation has given me a great concern. As a representative, a person to speak on behalf of consumers, I really believe in public consultation. I hope that that will be an open public consultation and not the kind of consultation as it's been defined by some of your colleagues who consider consultation to be phoning up somebody and just telling them what you've decided to do.

We look forward to the work of this commission; as I say, it's long overdue. And I know that there are many, many concerns out there in the province of Saskatchewan about the activity going on with bingos and Nevada tickets and the other gambling enterprises that are going forward.

I certainly will have more to say about that when it comes time to estimates, and I just want to recognize today the setting up of the Gaming Commission — long overdue, and we welcome it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I rise to table a document signed by 97 Saskatchewan citizens. This document calls upon the Saskatchewan Power Corporation to continue to allow SPC customers to pay their monthly SPC bills at Saskatchewan drug stores and other small business outlets.

These people, Mr. Speaker, are the customers of just one — one of the hundreds of small businesses across the province hurt by SPC's decision to eliminate collection agents. The business is Harris Drugs of Regina. Although this document was not prepared with formal presentation in the legislature in mind, I felt that the views of these Saskatchewan residents should be brought to the attention of the government and should not be ignored by the government, so I've decided to table it this afternoon. I urge the government to reconsider its anti-small business decision to eliminate . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. It's not the practice of the House to have speeches about petitions. You can state

what the petition is about. Keep it relatively short because it can go on for many, many minutes.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank you, and I would now like to table this document.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

CONDOLENCES

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the sudden passing this past weekend of a person who was never a member of this Assembly, but a person who none the less played an active and vital role in Saskatchewan's public life.

I refer of course to Mr. John Embury, who was a former president of the Saskatchewan Liberal Association. Mr. Embury was one of those who toiled faithfully behind the scenes for the political causes in which he believed with great passion and dedication. He was representative of those who, while not candidates for public office themselves, make an enormous contribution to the political process, and without them that process simply could not function.

John Embury served his community and his province well through political involvement and otherwise, Mr. Speaker. I know all hon. members of this House would want to acknowledge Mr. Embury's record of distinguished service, and we would all, Mr. Speaker, want to extend to his wife, Margo, and to the Embury family, our sincere condolences in their bereavement.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I would like to, on behalf of the government side, just join with the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg in offering the condolences of this caucus to the Embury family.

As has been said, he did not serve in this House, but his father and his brother both served in this House, and all of those who knew John Embury, I think, would attest to the fine character of the fellow. Those of us that were close friends of his, I know will all agree that he will sadly missed.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my words to those of the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg and the member for Souris-Cannington.

The Embury family has been a very prominent family in the politics of this province for many, many years. As it was indicated, the father, Col. Embury, was the father of both Tim Embury, who served in this House, and John Embury, who was so active in the political field, including being the president of the Liberal Party.

The Embury family, and I speak now particularly of John, devoted a great amount of their time to the political process in this province; giving of their very considerable talents and of their time. I would want to join with the members of this House in expressing our condolences to Margo and other members of the family at the untimely death of John Embury.

INTRODUCTION OF PAGE

Mr. Speaker: — Also before orders of the day, I wish to inform the Assembly that Margaret Baerwaldt will be a page for the remaining portion of this session. Margaret has been working as a guide in our legislative building through the summer, and we welcome her now as a page in our Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTION UNDER RULE 16

Cuts to the Saskatchewan Education System

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Rule 16 to make a few remarks regarding the education of our children in our province, a topic very dear to me. At the end of my remarks, I will be moving a motion. It will be seconded by the member from Regina North East. The motion will read:

That this Assembly acknowledges that the children of Saskatchewan are the most valuable resource for the future of our province and commends the educators of Saskatchewan for their commitment and dedication to excellence in education. And further, that this Assembly condemns the Government of Saskatchewan for having betrayed the educational system of Saskatchewan by unwarranted cuts in funding, staff, and programs.

The central point of this resolution, Mr. Speaker, is that the province's richest resource is its children. In the emerging world economy, information and knowledge, not resources, are the most valuable commodities. In future, our province's economic security will depend less on natural resources and far more on the wealth inherent in our educated citizenry. To deny our children the leading edge in education, to limit their choices and potential, is to short-change the very future of our province.

Governments must think of education as a worthy long-term investment. Enlightened competent governments do view education in this manner. Competent governments shield education from the cyclical fluctuations of the economy. A competent government recognizes that some agencies in society must be protected; that they cannot be asked to shoulder the burden during tough economic times. Education is one area in which cut-backs are made only with great cost and long-term ramifications.

To risk the education of our children by cutting educational programs in the name of government restraint is to squander the province's investment in its future. The present PC government obviously does not recognize the valuable resources for the future of our province which our children represent.

Educational opportunity for our children is no longer the

central priority it once was in Saskatchewan. Recent unilateral actions by the government opposite have signalled a major change of direction for kindergarten to grade 12 education. These actions, undertaken without prior consultation, have violated the long-standing tradition of co-operation, of collaboration, of respect and trust between educators and the provincial government.

This unfair, incompetent government is acting in terror of the \$3.4 billion deficit, a deficit of its own making. It has neither the foresight nor the leadership necessary to recognize that education must be insulated from restraint. It is not only the abrupt manner in which these cut-backs to the educational system have been instituted which is disturbing. This government has been particularly mindless of the dangerous timing of its cut-backs to education.

(1445)

Rapid changes in technology have meant that our educational system must be prepared to keep up with the times. In Saskatchewan, until now, our educational system has largely met this challenge. Over the past few years, the province has undertaken a number of educational projects such as the educational development fund and core curriculum changes. A new emphasis in the core curriculum on areas such as communications, critical and creative thinking, and computer literacy are evidence of how our educators have been attempting to meet the challenge of the future.

And now the momentum and the potential of these initiatives could be lost because of reduced financing. It is precisely at this time when the new curriculum is nearly under way, at a time when important advances must be made in our educational system, that this government has imposed an extremely detrimental program of restraint. Our school boards are having to trim costs. Our school boards are having to raise property taxes at the same time as implementing this vital new curriculum. In other words, at precisely the time when leadership is needed, our provincial government is shirking its responsibility for education.

The province's share of education costs is ever decreasing. School boards have been unfairly forced to pick up the burden. Every year the province's share of the cost of providing education gets smaller and smaller. The people of this province have to wonder how much of a priority is being placed on education by this provincial government.

In the decision to cut provincial operating grants by 1 per cent, this has meant a hardship to school systems across the province. The net effect on all school boards has been some combination of program cuts and/or staff reductions. The situation is particularly difficult for rural school divisions faced with dropping enrolments and decreasing foundation grants. The provincial funding cuts hits them the hardest. Without support for education in the rural areas, the overall decline of rural communities accelerates. In our education system we now find a creeping mediocrity born of a minister and a party and government out of date, out of touch with the reality of the demands of Saskatchewan, out of touch with the special

crucial needs of rural areas.

I want to talk briefly about the educational development fund, Mr. Speaker. Stretching the educational development fund over 10 years, rather than the promised five, has shelved many new initiatives and educational programs. Shelved have been programs related to computer technology. Shelved have been upgrading of school libraries. Shelved have been work-study programs and other special needs programming. The stretching of the educational development fund, Mr. Speaker, will have its political toll; it represents a broken promise and it stretches the government's credibility.

The provincial government cut-backs – that is, the operating grants to school boards and educational development fund changes – along with the rising costs of goods and services, means serious changes to the quality of education. Government cut-backs, resulting from incompetence in management, will result in higher pupil-teacher ratios. The cut-backs will result in fewer program options for children. The cut-backs will result in innovative and timely program losses, such as counselling and life skills coaching. The cut-backs will result in fewer new upgraded facilities.

I want to talk briefly, Mr. Speaker, about the school dental plan. Another long standing tradition in Saskatchewan's schools has also been destroyed by this government, and I'm referring to the school dental plan. This dental plan distinguished our educational system. It did more than provide convenient dental care; it taught our children how to keep their teeth in good condition. Saskatchewan no longer has a public educational system with preventative dental care, thanks, thanks to this short-sighted, incompetent government.

Before I close, Mr. Speaker, I want to return to the lost collaboration and trust – the collaboration and trust which used to exist between our educators and the provincial government. Educators in our province have been demoralized by the arbitrary, thoughtless measures of restraint practised by this government. They have been frightened by the severe effects these measures have had on the quality of education.

As though educators were not discouraged enough by this government's crass and callous cut-backs, this government also abolished 20 key positions in the Department of Education. Many of these positions are vital, vital to the successful implementation of the new curriculum. These educators, who were cut, possess the corporate memory and the substantial expertise in kindergarten to grade 12. Administrators cannot be, and should not be, asked to take their places. Their absence will be noted in our school system more with each passing year, Mr. Speaker.

Next year, Mr. Speaker, when our school boards have no reserve funding to rely on, when many of our most qualified and dedicated educators have left Saskatchewan for a more progressive educational system, a substantial price will be paid. Unfortunately it is our children who will pay that price, Mr. Speaker.

In Saskatchewan our educators have had a tradition of providing excellence in education to our children, Mr. Speaker. We want to continue, and our educators want to continue providing that excellence to our children, and to provide it we need the leadership. We need a commitment to education and we need a commitment by the government and we see that it is not here, and I am afraid, Mr. Speaker, that it is our children who will end up suffering as a result of it.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I want to make mention of two other examples of cut-backs. There are eight regional superintendencies in Saskatchewan. Two of those are now without superintendents; one to be cut altogether, one where a superintendent has not been replaced.

The process of feeding information back to the government and to the government is not taking place in those areas now – in the Yorkton superintendency and in the Melfort superintendency. Who is to blame? Certainly not the people of Saskatchewan; they're paying their taxes. It's this government who has not done the job of keeping those superintendencies in place.

So accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I will move, seconded by the member from Regina North East:

That this Assembly acknowledges that the children of Saskatchewan are the most valuable resource for the future of our province and commends the educators of Saskatchewan for their commitment and dedication to excellence in education. And further, that this Assembly condemns the Government of Saskatchewan for having betrayed the educational system of Saskatchewan by unwarranted cuts in funding, staff, and programs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to make a few remarks on this very important resolution. As members are well aware, there are many parents and educators throughout the province who are growing in numbers in their concern for what is happening to our education system.

I think that this resolution, Mr. Speaker, makes a good point that everyone in this House, I'm sure, could not possibly disagree with when it says: "... the children of Saskatchewan are the most valuable resource for the future of our province ... " and our nation.

Surely, when we consider the priorities of the things that happen in this place, and when governments consider the priorities of the expenditures of the resources available to them, that is one point that should never be lost sight of ... and that is the importance of those young people, our children, not only from the point of view of their well-being today and into the future but also from the point of view of the importance that they are and their future is to the future of this province and this country.

Mr. Speaker, the prosperity and the standard of living of any nation has a direct relationship to the educational level of its people. There are those, I regret to say, who are

so concerned about today, and only today, and about their own personal well-being, whatever their position in life might be, that they forget that the future needs also to be of a very high priority.

And I also regret to say that it's that kind of attitude, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Speaker, which has led to the creation of a financial situation in Saskatchewan such that now the government feels that they have to sacrifice that future and the well-being of our children in its budgetary process.

It's that lack of foresight which has brought about a province from a surplus of \$140 million in 1982 to an accumulated deficit today of in excess of \$3 billion. That kind of an attitude, Mr. Speaker, an attitude which said that for expediency purposes and for the rewarding of wealthy friends, \$300 million a year should be given up, which this government has done, to the oil industry in holidays given to royalties so that they don't have to pay them; a rent which the people of Saskatchewan have a right to get and are not getting – that \$300 million a year which now the government is asking the children of Saskatchewan to pay, with the cut-backs that we have seen in education.

It's that kind of misguided priorities, Mr. Speaker, which has led to the kind of foolish expenditure of revenue, of taxpayers' dollars, such that we have given away, or the government has given away, a pulp mill in Prince Albert which was worth in excess of \$328 million to a foreign corporation and got not one cent for it. So that the children of Saskatchewan in our schools now are told programs and opportunities will be cut back because the government says there are no revenues.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, both as a parent and an educator and also a legislator, that the government has chosen to punish our children because of its own mismanagement and its own incompetence. And I want to say that to neglect the education of our young people is a travesty of the highest order. To do so is to rob from the futures of our children. To neglect education is to ignore the important needs of our society's future. And the very future, as I have said, Mr. Speaker, the very future of our province and our nation are dependent on the well-educated population.

Now recently I have heard the Premier say that he was calling for a broad review of the education system. In light of all the concern that people are having with the cut-backs that have taken place, the Premier has felt obligated to respond by saying there needs to be a broad review of our education system. And when you take into context of reality what he is saying, I think there is cause to worry, especially when you hear the Premier also say that our education system should focus more on preparing our children for jobs.

The whole exercise of budget cuts and the destruction of the Department of Education in the K to 12 area shows a complete lack of understanding of education by the new hierarchy in the department, by the Minister of Education and by this government. This total response, Mr. Speaker, simply to the corporate needs for employees, has led to the neglect of the most important part of education, and

that is preparing our children and our students for life.

(1500)

That too, Mr. Speaker, is a crucial and important component of our educational system. And to hear the Premier suggest that we should back away from that in some way, I think should cause us all to become very concerned and very worried.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the call for another review, while massive cuts to programs are being made, can only be described as irresponsible. There was just a public study which took some six or seven years to do which has just been completed. Why do we need another review? There was massive public participation; there was educator participation; there was trustee participation, and it resulted in the proposals of the core curriculum.

Now, as we heard in the media reported today, there is concern by educators in this province that this core curriculum is dead, that it will not ever see the light of day. And I think there is reason for that concern, Mr. Speaker.

What the government has done is it's cut operating grants to school boards by 1 per cent, and if you factor into it inflation, it's really a cut-back of in excess of 4 per cent. It is reducing funding for capital projects such that we now have in the city of Regina a new Catholic elementary school in the north-west part of the city, opened this fall, and it has already more students that it can handle. But the Department of Education and this government has cut back the funding for capital projects.

Not only that, but it has transferred a bigger shift of the cost of education capital to the local property taxpayer. Because whereas the school division's share used to be up to two and one-half mills, it is now up to 20 per cent of the cost of the project – a direct and deliberate transfer of the taxation from the level of the province, where it can be more broadly based and be more fair, to the property taxpayer.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, the government has eliminated all the positions in the department involved with the implementation and the development of the core curriculum, and one can only conclude from that that all of that six or seven years of study and development has been for naught. And the only result of all of that seems to be an indication by the Premier and by the Minister of Education that there is yet going to be another review.

Mr. Speaker, educators are concerned – not only parents but educators are concerned. Our teachers and our educators have been dedicated beyond the call of duty. They have seen their class ratios grow. There are class-rooms of grade 1 students in division one that have 30 students in them. That is no longer an educational situation; that is an assembly line process. We have situations, Mr. Speaker, where special education classes for children with special needs have been cancelled and done away with because of the lack of funding because of the cut-backs that have been brought about by this government.

Mr. Speaker, that is no way to establish the priorities about the needs of our children and the needs of our students. As I said earlier, those kinds of priorities which neglect the education of our children can only be described as irresponsible, and are a travesty.

Our teachers are going beyond the call of duty. In spite of cut-backs in their salaries – because there have been no increases and inflation is eating into those salaries – in spite of increased student enrolment ratios, in spite of two grades and three grades in some classes, they are still contributing with extra-curricular duties. They are still taking part in professional development.

And they, I think, have a right to ask this government: where are your priorities? When are you going to decide that our children are just as important as the multinational oil companies to whom you give \$300 million a year while you cut back in the education of those who are most important to us, and that is our young people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Over the last while I've had numerous opportunities to debate in this House matters on the budget, on the throne speech, diversification, potash, and so on. But today in particular it gives me a warm feeling to be able to get up here and speak on a topic that I think I know a little bit about, namely on education. I could take the particular tack, I suppose, that the previous two speakers took, but after hearing on their negativism, their cynicism, and so on, I think it is probably better to take a little bit of a high road approach and discuss education on the level that I would have expected those members to discuss.

And with that particular thought in mind, and having listened carefully to the motion as it was read, I would like to at this time give notice that I'm making an amendment to that motion, and I will read it at this time:

That the motion under Rule 16 be amended by deleting all words after the word "Assembly" in the fourth line and by substituting the words:

commends the Government of Saskatchewan for its commitment to our education system as shown by the record funding it has provided after years of neglect by the former government.

Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware of by now, I have been an educator for many years. My education as a teacher . . . my years as a teacher, as an educator in this province, began back in the '50s. I started teaching in 1959 in the small town of Hepburn where I had a grade seven and eight class. And in during the ensuing years I had the opportunity to teach grades one to twelve. I had the opportunity to teach those little tykes how to read, follow them through the educational system, see them enter the work-a-day world, become married, and I even had the opportunity to teach some of their kids. And when that happened, I knew it was time to get out and try something different.

But during that time, Mr. Speaker, I saw the development of the educational system in the province of

Saskatchewan. I was part of it and I always was proud because I think over the years Saskatchewan has been a leader in education. I saw many trends. I saw many reversals of trends. I saw the open environment kind of a situation which we copied from the United States, as we did many other things. But we just barely got into copying them, and then the States realized they were wrong, and they would go another track and then we would follow. But we were innovative through many of those years.

And I think that one of things that I have found and, as the member from North East also said, Regina North East, the educators are to be commended. Because education . . . being an educator in any province under any circumstances can be and generally is a very stimulating experience. But along with the stimulation is also the fact that it is a high-stress kind of an occupation, there is no doubt about it. And the burn-out factor and so on, I don't know if I was a victim of the burn-out factor, but it is there because of the stress. It is rewarding but very stressful, certainly.

And what I would just like to say is that the educators deserve a lot of praise because they are the ones that are not only teaching arithmetic, the ABC's, but we teach the life skills, and I think that is extremely important for educators to do that. I recall just one of my last years of teaching. I gave an exam, for example, in grade 10 science. One of the fellows got an 80 per cent on it and I got hold of him in the hall and I reamed him out. I said: Darrel, what's the matter with you? — an 80 per cent; I can see that you're not putting your best foot forward. Conrad, on the other hand, in the class, I noticed had a 60 per cent and I commended him for it because this was an effort. He had put his nose to the grindstone, he had worked hard, he had achieved, and he came up with 60 per cent. And so in order to make Darrel understand, a little talk was in order because I think it is much more important for educators than just teaching the ABC's, to teach life skills — to teach these people to think for themselves, to give them the tools so that they will be able to face all kinds of situations in the life that comes . . . that they are facing.

Children, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are indeed our future, and it is our duty as parents and educators to help them to grow and to learn. When one talks of developing a natural resource, one usually worries about how quickly and how efficiently it can be done. But our children require more than piles of books and reams of information. Children are not to be processed; children must be encouraged; children must be nurtured to learn. And here is where the education and the dedication of our educators comes into play because a good educator can make an invaluable impression on a child both in terms of knowledge, but also in teaching the social values. A good educator will try to leave a child with something that lasts for the rest of their lives; the ability to learn, to accept change, to adapt to new challenges.

Today we are faced with a number of vital decisions on how best to improve and to preserve our educational system. We must look into the future and plan so that our children will be equipped with the skills and knowledge that will be needed in the years to come. For the challenges of the future, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will be very

different than those of today.

I am sure that all of us have heard of the information age that we are moving into. We've heard our minister speaking of that quite a bit during estimates. New technologies and new ways of creating economic wealth are becoming ever more closely linked together. Knowledge and information are the commodities of the future, and what is evident here is that the basic raw material, human intelligence, can be found everywhere. And our challenge is to develop that.

Our government has recognized the need to face these future challenges. We know that our education system must be geared to provide our children with the best possible, the most forward-looking education we can afford, and already we have begun to implement the changes necessary to do so. We have introduced a new core curriculum policy for kindergarten to Grade 12, from K to 12, to help maintain our emphasis on life skills, not just the three Rs, not just for preparing for jobs. This was done in co-operation between government and those closest to the day-to-day process of education, the parents and the educators. Together we have charted a course for basic education well into the next century.

As well, we have moved to make our adult education system more accessible, more efficient. By concentrating our resources on the needs of tomorrow, we will be better prepared to take advantage of the opportunities of the new information age.

Now we're being criticized for what we're doing in this government, but there is much, much optimism if we are prepared to look into the future with open eyes. By changing the entire education system from K through to university, we are able to provide the children Saskatchewan with an education that will suit their needs and challenges of tomorrow.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my wife and I have four children. They range right from elementary through to two in secondary and one at the university level. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, therefore, because of this range I'm interested in education as a whole. And I suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we love our kids, and the last thing that I'm going to do as a legislator and as a parent is going to do anything to jeopardize my children and the future that they can have in Saskatchewan. Never will I be party to a situation where I would think that their welfare and their education and their potential in life is going to be thwarted with anything that we would do as a government.

I suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that is not what is going to happen with this government, and that is why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have come up with the amendment to the motion as it stands. And that is why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, also I wholly support the Minister of Education and his vision for the future of education in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — The member never moved his amendment.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thought I had read it at the beginning of my speech and moved it at that time, but if . . . I will so now move the amendment as previously read.

(1515)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I welcome the opportunity to participate in the debate this afternoon that acknowledges the fact that children of Saskatchewan are the most valuable resource for the future of Saskatchewan. And I really find it amusing when I listen to members opposite. Two have both been in the class-room not that long ago, and I'm really amazed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how out of touch they are when I hear some of the statements that they've made, and talking about cut-backs and this sort of thing. I really find that hard to believe.

I want to take the opportunity to commend the educators in Saskatchewan for the commitment and dedication that they have to our students. There can be no doubt about it that the success of our educational programs is very much dependent on the teacher in the class-room. There's no doubt about it, as well, that the teachers must have the equipment and the necessary materials to provide and . . . or do an adequate job, and I feel that our teachers and our educational programs in this province are second to none.

After spending a good number of years in class-rooms and working in an administrative capacity around a good part of the province, I feel that I have a very good understanding of what's happening out there, and I can well say that I feel that our educational system today is far and beyond what it has ever been in the past. I think that our children have greater opportunities than they've ever had, there's no doubt about it, with the increased number of resources that they have in their schools, the training of the teachers, that we do have, indeed, a top-notch educational system in this province.

And also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there can be no doubt about the commitment of this government to education in this province. We've heard members opposite talk about some of the changes that have been made — and changes are necessary from time to time; I think they should all agree with that. There's no doubt about the fact that as we move on into the 21st century that we can no longer be teaching similar types of programs in our class-rooms that we did 30 years ago or 20 years ago or even 10 years ago.

And I think it's unfortunate that teachers, particularly members on the opposite side of the House, would feel that change isn't necessary. I think that change has to be recognized more in education probably than in any other field. We have to be up with change, and I know that the members opposite don't like to see change, but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is necessary.

They talk, for example, about some of the changes that have been made, and they like to talk an awful lot about the fact that there has been a decrease as far as the grants

this year. Well a 1 per cent decrease in the operating budget for schools, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has not created the hardships that they would try and have people believe.

I've talked to a good many educators, directors, and others within the educational system in the last number of months, and I think that for the most part that they recognize the fact that this government . . . at this particular time the province is in tougher economic times, and there have had to be changes as far as some of our grants are concerned. But I don't see all of the great fear and the great problems out there in the province that these people opposite would have people believe. I don't think that you'd find that the teachers, for example, are feeling demoralized and frightened about changes that are taking place; not the teachers that I've talked to.

We hear them talking about cut-backs, and changes in programs like counselling and work-study programs. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had programs in counselling and in work-study years before that party came in, I suppose, and certainly before our party came in in 1982. A lot of these programs have gone ahead because of the special initiative of the people that exist out there in our schools.

We must say, of course, that as far as the educational development fund is concerned, that that is probably one of the most positive steps that's ever been taken in education in many, many years to come. I spent over 30 years, 30 years in the class-rooms and in the educational systems of this province, and as long back as I can remember that's probably the most positive thing that happened in our educational system.

Now they talk about the fact that it was cut back, but I'm sure that educators understand full well that when we are in tougher economic times that it makes a whole lot of sense to simply slow it down — the moneys are still going to be there — but it makes a lot of sense to simply slow it down over a longer period of time. But the programs that are being implemented are still going to be possible. The member from Prince Albert made mention of the fact that education must be prepared to keep up with the times. Well that's exactly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why we're making some of the changes that we are today.

He talks about computer education. And there's no doubt about it that the educational development fund had a major impact on the provision of computer education programs in this province. I know that some of those programs were started prior to the educational development fund being introduced, but a lot of them were further enhanced by its introduction. And there were many other good programs, too, that were brought in as a result of it, and of course they are going to carry on.

Now I hear one of the members opposite indicate something to do with cut-backs in salaries. Well I don't know of one teacher in this province that's earning less today that they were last year or the year before, so I don't know what they're talking about when they're talking about cut-backs in salaries.

They also talk about enrolment changes. The member

from Regina North East indicated that we have class-rooms in grade 1 where there are more than 30 students. Well I can remember 20 years ago when they were in power, or 15 years ago, that we had enrolments of 10 students in a class-room in some of our city schools. I can assure them that out in the rural areas of Saskatchewan that the enrolments are much smaller than that. Pupil/teacher ratios, as my colleague the member from Rosthern has indicated, are smaller today than they ever have been. So there are a lot of positive things happening out there, but the members opposite, of course, don't like to talk about the positive things because they're so adept at being negative.

Our member from Prince Albert talks about educators leaving Saskatchewan. Well I really find that difficult and hard to believe. For one thing, I'm sure that we still have one of the top educational programs of any province in Canada.

He talks about cut-backs as far as the regional offices are concerned. I know that the office in Yorkton was cut back. And he makes mention of one in Melfort not being filled — it's my understanding that there is a regional director in Melfort serving that part of the province, a good part of the province where I also served for four years working with the government. We can also talk, I'm sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about many other changes that have taken place, and positive steps that have been taken by this government.

We can talk about changes at the university with regard to our technical institutes. They don't like to make mention of the fact that we have extra spaces in our technical schools today than we had before when they were in power. We know that changes are being made in the community colleges and they, of course, are also going to be for the betterment of the Saskatchewan people.

Another thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that today students going on to university or technical schools have much greater access to student loans than they ever have before, and at lower rates. So I think that's something else that we can be very, very proud of.

One of the members opposite also was talking about the increases in property tax rates. Well, let's point out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and get one thing straight — that the increases in property taxes were much greater when that party was in power than they ever have been since the PC government came in in 1982. So some of the statements that they make over there are just not true.

Hardships to school boards — I don't think that, for the most part, that school boards are finding things as difficult as they would have people believe on that side of the House. There's no doubt about it that there have been changes as far as the local assessment is concerned and, in some cases, school boards may have access to more funds this year than they did in the past, even though they have had that 1 per cent cut-back as far as the provincial grant is concerned.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in so far as the educational system in this province, I don't have any doubt that things are going ahead and that we are moving towards the 21st

century, and that the students that are in our schools today are going to be well prepared for it. And they're going to be well prepared because of some of the changes that our minister has brought forward, and is bringing forward.

We're committed to education. We're spending in the neighbourhood of three-quarters of a billion dollars in education now, and there are many more great things that are going to be done in the next few years ahead. I think one thing we have to keep in mind, we can't do it all at once. Even though funds are limited, education is still a very high priority for this government. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the next few years, we will continue to support education and recognize the fact that our children are indeed the most important resource that we have.

With that, I would indicate in closing that I will be supporting the amendment, and certainly am opposed to the motion that's put forward by the members opposite. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — I am rising, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in regards to the motion, and I will be supporting the motion as presented by our member, and opposing the amendment.

In regards to the whole issue of education, we hear a lot of rhetoric coming across from the members across. In regards to the importance of education and the value of our children, there is great talk about new problems existing with school boards. There is talk about change. But it's very important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you have to examine it in the light of the change that the PCs have brought into this education system in our province.

I will say at the outset that the cut-backs in education are basically there to pay for the huge deficit that exists in this province. It is precisely the fact that after over five years of PC rule we are over \$3.4 billion in debt. The question arises in regards to . . . the question of which has more value, the large corporations, or the children of this province? The fact becomes very clear that the big corporations are far more important than the children as far as the PCs are concerned in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — There is greater concern — and one member wonders in regards to what I am talking about. While we are cutting back in education and firing key staff from this province, we are looking at increases to Weyerhaeuser — \$8 million to build the roads in the bush. But that would build three schools in three communities in northern Saskatchewan. Which is more important — the education of the children; the road to access for greater freedom to access jobs in the future? Which is more important — that, or the roads which the big corporations can themselves afford? The schools are, of course, and the children are, of course, more important. The whole scheme by the PCs is one of providing big dollars and big give-aways, and in conjunction they slowly, slowly tear down the foundation of an education

system that has been built by our teachers and the community people in Saskatchewan history.

I would like to look at education in the aspect of the process of education – again that was mentioned by one of the members from across. There's a lot of rhetoric about the process. What is important in any process is to look at people. I already mentioned the importance of our most valued resource in the future, our children. But we also look at the importance of the existing staff in the support systems to the teachers. The existing staff were very important to the whole process of the past seven years of curriculum revival in this province.

(1530)

From the initial 1981 period where there was task force reports in social studies and the beginnings of the initial stage of *Directions*, and on to the period where *Directions* and then the core curriculum was developed, there was tremendous input by people. And the key people that received this information were the ones that were cut away by this PC government. There was absolutely no continuum in any educational process.

In any aspect of change you need continuum. You don't start building a house and create your three corners with your foundation, and all of a sudden stop and try and build another one, because in the long run, huge cracks and crevices will come in. And that's the basis of your policy. There is no continuum in your process.

The key people in your department who were very involved, not only in the education of a comprehensive nature, but also in specialized fields such as Indian/Metis curriculum, were cut away by your slashes this spring. I find, therefore, that all of your talk about process has absolutely no basis; that in fact the key group of people that were the precise mechanisms for change no longer are here to provide a continuum in the most important phase of implementation.

The question, therefore, comes in on content, and the very important aspect of curriculum and content. The educational development funds will be, and have been, cut by 50 per cent. Many of the projects, whether it was in the area of computers, whether it was in the area of social multiculturalism, whether it was in many other scientific educational field, these have had to be put on the back burner because of your cuts.

Because you have put a lot of money in the back pockets of big business, you had to cut the content of education in this province. In the North, for example, while you will still give 100 per cent subsidy on booze, you will cut back on education. Children become less than even your 100 per cent support for selling booze in northern Saskatchewan.

So when you look at the summation, of course the PC government is seeing the very basic of looking at the foundations of our educational system and starting to chop away at it like they're doing in all sectors of our system. They are saying that private, large-scale multinationals are more important than our children. That is the message that you are giving us. You are saying

these big corporations who have millions and billions in the banks, who continually take money from our pocket on a daily basis, are the ones you're going to build roads for, you're going to provide money for in economic development.

When it comes into investing, though, on our children, you miss the mark completely. You slowly chop away at the very basis and foundation of our future, which is our children. And when I see this happening, as a parent I have to stand up here in the legislature – and especially when I see the little people running away to school, to this very day it gives me a strong sense to fight for the children of this province.

As far as we're concerned on this side of the House, we know very clearly that children come first when it comes down to education, and not the big corporations like the PCs have done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Speaker, I cannot say that it's a pleasure to join this debate because, as the motion before us is of two minds, I have a divided opinion of the motion.

I would like to say that this motion is typical of the petty partisan attitude of the NDP in all of their debates, in all of their activities, in this House and out. They try to drag a fine group of people into their partisan sniping by tying them to a sheerly political resolution, and they rub their hands in glee at the thought that they can drag teachers into the mud with them.

Mr. Speaker, I hate to disappoint their appetites, but disappoint them I must. The people involved in education in Saskatchewan, people in every position from teachers, caretakers, to administrators, these people have shown their dedication to our province and their high standards of excellence and dedication, and I do commend them. I commend those people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I know the people of Saskatchewan share the same view.

But let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP motion stinks of hypocrisy. They are so concerned about education. If they were so concerned about education, if they were as committed to education as they now loudly acclaim, where were they from 1971 to 1982?

We all know they sat on the government benches and they had the responsibility to develop and enhance our education system. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that the responsibility rested with them. Unfortunately we also know, Mr. Speaker, that they did not accept that responsibility, that they were, in a very real sense, derelict in their duty to the children and the general population.

We know, Mr. Speaker, they did not address the critical need for curriculum reform. We know that they did not provide an environment for the dollars necessary to see technical education excel. We know that they provided funding to the universities that amounted to real cuts year after year when they had abundant resources, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know that the number of training spaces under the NDP was seriously inadequate. We know that they were unable to deal with teachers, with custodial

staff, and with administration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know their record, and the people of Saskatchewan know their record. Yet they have the bold audacity to stand in this House and make sanctimonious statements about how much they care and how sorry they are that they let education deteriorate to the point that they did.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that they care. I do not believe them when they say they are sorry, and I do not believe them when they say it won't happen again. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe them when they say how much they care because, Mr. Speaker, it's always the same old story. When they have the power they say the rural schools can rot – no money for renovations and no money for special programs, and certainly no money to bring higher education to rural communities. That is what they said when they had power.

And I see them laughing on the other side, Mr. Speaker, but I'll give them some facts a little later. They know that and they're ashamed of themselves. Now that they are in opposition they promise unlimited funding to everyone – unlimited funding to everyone. And when they were in opposition they say: we didn't really mean it; we didn't really mean it when we were in power.

And it's the same in almost every category of government policy. When senior citizens had nowhere to go, the NDP in power said, we have no money for nursing homes; it's up to the elderly to work it out for themselves. Now they are in opposition and they say, we didn't really mean that. Now they are in opposition they say, we will give unlimited funding for nursing homes too. Shame on them.

The NDP in power told the university they had to cut back. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, the protests happened under the NDP, as well as the occasional fray that we get into on this side of the House. You will recall the famous teach-ins at the University of Regina; the public condemnations of the government by student union leaders; urgent demands for funding to at least keep up with inflation.

And if the NDP need to have their memories jogged, I can arrange to have some of the copies of *The Carillon*, the student newspaper, tabled in this House at a later date because those student newspapers from the time of the NDP are full of condemnations of the NDP. Even the left-leaning professors are quoted in these papers, and they are quoted condemning – condemning – the NDP for the complete . . . of education in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You can chirp and chuckle if you like, but I can bring those to you and show it to you.

We have the right to call the NDP on their petty games and their hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker. It was a dark day for education when this province was under the NDP. When this government took office in 1982, it was faced with a situation that was very near a crisis in education. The physical plant system had been allowed to deteriorate in some cases beyond repair. Those are facts. One only had to look at the College of Agriculture building at the University of Saskatchewan for the proof of the NDP

pudding. Every time there was an election, they promised to rebuild that important facility; and every time they gained power they said, not now. Not now, Mr. Speaker, the NDP response to the education in general; that was their response; wait awhile, yes.

Then there was the man who had some background in education, a man who has a real grasp of what is needed in education; he was elected Premier of this province. We got a new college of education . . . a new College of Agriculture, I should have said, Mr. Speaker. We got several other new buildings – several, several, yes, at the university, a variety of subject and a variety of subject areas. And here in Regina we built a new archives building that allowed an expansion of the university library; that come out of our government. We put new money into the University of Regina to allow it to obtain a special collection for the library, and more money to allow the library to go into a full, computerized system. These were actions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not rhetoric.

That same kind of action was taken in rural Saskatchewan. And if you look at the books, Mr. Speaker, you will see, in my own riding in Wilkie, just a tremendous commitment of maintaining the physical quality of buildings for our students to use.

In the town of Unity over 200,000 has been invested in St. Peter's elementary school for capital projects; almost \$2 million was provided for the Denzil Comprehensive High School; \$2.5 million was given to the Macklin school; 1.5 million to the high school in Luseland; 500,000 to James Charteris school in Kerrobert; and the list goes on, to every school in my constituency, Mr. Speaker. That's what we did – that's what we did. That is commitment, and that is action. That is the proof of whether you think highly of our educators . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . that's right.

And the NDP stand up in this House and they whine and they promise they won't abandon rural schools again if the people will just give them another chance – we will not do it again. Under the NDP, Mr. Speaker, there was no education development fund. The member gets up on the other side of the House and he talks about the education development fund; they didn't even have it; you never even had it. We put it in, Mr. Speaker – you betcha. Yes, sir.

They had a Heritage Fund which was to buy potash mines; yes, potash mines. And they saw they need to buy potash mines, Mr. Speaker, but they did not see any need to provide funds to develop education. Well that changed under this government; that changed.

I would just like to make a note of a remark made by the member for Regina Wascana during the potash debate. He said, \$1.5 billion the NDP squandered on the potash take-over – that's \$1.5 billion, ha, you betcha. If we had that money – if we had that money today, we could do much more for the education of Saskatchewan, you betcha – 1.5 billion. And I agree with that.

And I would like to hear the views of the NDP members who will speak on this debate. Do you think 1.5 billion is better spent paying off debts to New York banks so the

government can take over a resource that we owned by constitution, or would that money have been more useful building our educational system? You tell me that. You tell me what you should have been with that 1.5 billion. Well they won't answer, Mr. Speaker, because they're ashamed of themselves – and well they should be, well they should be. I can see, Mr. Speaker, that my time is getting short, so I will just quickly wrap it up.

First, the government is to be commended bringing forward a new curriculum that will take Saskatchewan into the year 2000 with confidence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. I must tell the member his time is elapsed.

(1545)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

At the outset of my remarks I wish to indicate that I'm going to be speaking in favour of the motion and against the amendment.

I had planned today to commend the educators of this province who have, under what I believe to be some ever-worsening conditions, been able to educate our children and develop a future for them through that education. But after the remarks by the member from Wilkie, and by the member from Rosthern, and by the member from Saskatoon Mayfair, I felt that perhaps I should start my remarks and address them as to: what if?

What if this PC government hadn't governed in this province for five years; what kind of an educational system might we be looking at? What if we didn't have a \$3.4 billion deficit that they've amassed; what kind of an educational system might we be looking at? What if they hadn't given \$20 million to their friend Peter Pocklington from Alberta; what kind of educational system might we have? What if George Hill and Paul Schoenhals didn't have their noses in the Tory trough, their hands in the peoples' pockets – the people of this province – what kind of an educational system might we be able to enjoy? What if this government hadn't had their hands on the Crown corporations that used to put money into general revenues so that we could deliver the educational system throughout this province? What if all of those things hadn't happened?

And the member from Wilkie chirps, and he knows full well that all of those have been problems. And he can yap and he can natter all he wants, but the facts are clear. And I'm going to read into the record for that member, Mr. Speaker, a letter, or a couple of letters from one particular school unit, the R.M. of Prince Albert ... the rural school division number 56, and I want him to understand what these people are saying about him and his government and what they feel has been happening to education in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the first letter that I want to read in, and I think I'll not read the whole letter, but just parts of it to save a little time. And I said, what if? What if they hadn't

imposed the seven cents gas tax on the municipal ... on the school boards that run thousands of miles throughout this province?

The secretary treasurer of the school unit number 56 indicates that it's going to cost his board, some \$45,000 to get those school children delivered — \$45,000 equates to about a mill in that particular area – 45,000 more than they had to take out of their revenue last year. Unannounced, without consultation, after they'd had their budget made, they've got to find some \$45,000.

Let me put, Mr. Speaker, the \$45,000 in terms so that even the member from Wilkie might be able to understand — \$45,000, and I see he's moving back. It's maybe getting a little warm for him up there, but \$45,000, Mr. Speaker, would give that school board the opportunity to hire another teacher and a half. And what if that hadn't been imposed upon that school board? That's what I ask. What if? Would there be that extra teacher and a half in the school division? I would suggest so, Mr. Speaker.

And I tell you, as every mother in this province goes into the schoolroom, and every father goes into the schoolroom and sees an ever increasing student/teacher ratio, I'm telling you that they're asking, "what if?" as well. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm a little touchy on the subject, and I want to share with you why. We have a special little girl in our family who has a learning disability. And I know what it costs young children who have learning disabilities when you see ever increasing student/teacher ratios. She learns better when she's got the help of a teacher, and the smaller the ration and the more time that can be given to her, the easier it is for her to absorb whatever it is put before her.

And so I say, Mr. Speaker, what if this PC government hadn't, without consultation, taken \$45,000 away from the children in the Prince Albert School Division? What if? I'd like to ask some other questions, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to know if the renovations that were promised to Riverside school in Prince Albert would have gone ahead. And I'd like to know, Mr. Minister, if this government, because of their mismanagement, hadn't scrapped the dental plan because of their mismanagement, would those kids still be getting proper dental care? Of course they would.

And I'm not suggesting here, Mr. Speaker, that they're not going to get proper dental care through the dentist's office; I just say it's going to become increasingly expensive to the government, and it's inaccessible, especially to the rural people. These members opposite have indicated, and the member from Saskatoon Mayfair tells us, that the people in the teaching profession he talks to aren't upset because of the 1 per cent decrease. Well I want to tell you he's wrong.

And it's more than that. It's not only that decrease. It's what's happening in rural Saskatchewan and the decreasing enrolment and the level of funding that the rural school boards have to work with is becoming smaller and smaller, but yet they're imposed with a new gas tax by this government. The decrease in revenue sharing is another burden on them, and they lose programs like the dental care

And the Minister of Health would be aware of this letter that I have in my hands. It's sent by the Director of Education from the same school board that I alluded to when we were talking about the increase in the gas tax. And he outlines six points as to what's happened to the dental plan and why he felt it was so important that that service be maintained. But, Mr. Speaker, it fell on deaf ears. They went ahead, this government did, and scrapped the dental plan, causing hardship on rural families who now have to drive dozens and dozens of miles in order to get dental care for their children; lost a service that they had come to expect and that their children had come to enjoy through a good rapport with the dental assistants. The letter indicates that the writer, the Director of Education, indicated that the children were becoming comfortable with dental care in the way it was introduced to them, and that they didn't see it as a negative thing any longer. And I say, Mr. Speaker, what if this government hadn't mismanaged to the point that they scrap the dental plan? What if?

The member from Rosthern was talking about members from this side speaking with negativism, cynicism. I say, Mr. Speaker, the member from Rosthern was sticking his head in the sand because we're talking about real services that have been cut back to real people – real services, real tangible services that were there and that could be there and, I say to you, Mr. Speaker, will be there when we're in government after the next election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — He alluded to the fact that in the Melfort area they've hired another superintendent, and I say that's all fine. But, Mr. Speaker, I ask you, what about the regional office in Yorkton that was scrapped? And again, without consultation. The board wrote, stated their concerns, but still they failed to reinstate that regional office. And what commitment is there to that area? It's added cost to the rural school boards; it's less close information that's available to those people, and all because this government has mismanaged to the point where they can't afford to give the funds to keep it running.

Mr. Speaker, cut-backs in dental care, the drug prescription plan, and education – and I want to wind up, Mr. Speaker, by saying that, yes, I commend the school boards. And yes, I agree with my colleague, the member from Prince Albert, in commending the educators of this province who are dealing with what seems to be a heartless and an uncaring government. And as well, Mr. Speaker, I want to close by saying that I commend the students who are in facilities that should be renovated, that should be repaired, that won't be seeing that.

Mr. Speaker, I indicate to you that I will be supporting the motion, and I will be voting against the amendment. The motion that was put forth by my colleague was crystal clear and I think, right to the point and very correct. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like

to add a few brief comments with regards to the motion on education, speaking in favour of our motion and against the government's amendment. I'd just like to make a couple of quick points.

What are the teachers saying? I have talked to many teachers around this province since the beginning of this school year, and the general theme of that is: boy, what a difference from last June to this September. And I'll say, like, what do you mean what a difference? And they go through all the cut-backs, all the changes in the education system that this government and these people say are great, and yet the educators are saying, no, they're not great. So I would ask, who's the government talking to? Who are they affecting when they're cutting back the programs in education?

And I can go on about some of the things that have been mentioned – the cutting the EDF (educational development fund) in half by extending the life, by doubling the life of it; talking about the incompetence and mismanagement of this Tory government. So they're using money like money from superannuation, taking interest off superannuation illegally, using it to defray expenses incurred by an incompetent government, and putting the children of this province in a bad position.

You can talk about the core curriculum as another example – core curriculum whereby they're going to develop character in each and every student in each and every class. Core curriculum, where is it today? They've chopped the people who were basically involved in it, leaving it in limbo, leaving many, many hours of work by many people gone, and putting no one in charge – therefore saying that they don't like core curriculum; they don't believe in building character into the children of our province.

This is what the teachers are saying. And I'll add, that's just not the teachers; the parents are saying it too. That's my second point, Mr. Speaker. The parents are saying it, because just look at the polls. If education is being handled so greatly by this government opposite, why are people saying no to all the activities, the mismanaged activities, that's going on from the other side of this House? The people of this province are saying no. The Tories are telling each other yes.

And why? Because it's the same old story we've seen in this province time and time again. Before an election the world is in your hands, and after an election people's hands are out begging for something, while the Tories are in the trough, lining the pockets of their people.

This is what's happening in education, Mr. Speaker. They want the parents, they want the students, they want the educators of this province to be submitted to some kind of a vision that they're trying to propagate. And what is that vision? It's a vision of fewer teachers, of overloaded class-rooms, in urban areas especially. And I'll tell you what the real vision is – they're putting this province and the people of this province in a situation whereby the fewer numbers . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, in talking with the Opposition Whip, I think we have an understanding worked out that we can move direction to motions for returns (debatable), and I therefore ask for leave to move directly to motions for returns (debatable).

Leave granted.

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Debatable)

Return No. 1

Mr. Tchorzewski moved, seconded by Mr. Thompson, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 1 showing:

Regarding the employment of one Don Pringle by the Executive Council: (1) the date his employment took effect; (2) his exact duties and responsibilities; (3) whether he is employed by means of a personal services contract; (4) if not, the authority used for his employment; (5) his rate of pay, including the value of all fringe benefits.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to make a few remarks and then I will move at the conclusion of my remarks, that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 1 showing.

And as you have indicated, Mr. Speaker, I want to preface my motion by stating first of all that this is a very straightforward motion. It seeks information which is not unusual, or information that is not such that the public does not have a right to know. And I think, Mr. Speaker, to ask about the employment of an individual of the Executive Council, in this case it happens to be one Don Pringle, but if there are other motions that asks these same questions about other individuals, and it will ask about the date of his employment and when it took effect, his exact duties and responsibilities.

(1600)

When the public pays for the salaries of individuals in these kinds of positions, surely it is only fair and right that the public should know what the duties of those individuals are.

Thirdly, it will ask whether he is employed by means of a personal services contract; and fourthly, if not, the authority used for his employment, and his rate of pay, including the value of fringe benefits.

Mr. Speaker, when I move the motion, before I move the motion I would urge the government to provide the information at an early date because there is nothing complicated about the request here. It should not take a great deal of time.

I also would remind the House that this motion has been on the order paper since December of 1986, and only today we are dealing with it in private members' day under Motions for Returns.

In light of all of that, Mr. Speaker, that the fact that it is a straightforward motion, and because of the fact that it has been on the order paper since December, albeit the Assembly has not ordered it until now, I think that it is not unfair to ask of the government that it be given early disposition so that this Assembly can get the information which it must have in order to be able to carry out its work effectively and properly.

I also want to add, Mr. Speaker, that the record of withholding information in the last five years is rather a deplorable one from the point of view of this government. And I say that, I don't mean to be too unkind, but I say that because the record is very clear.

I recall when I was elected in the by-election in 1985, in November, that I discovered when I entered this House that there had been an order from motions of return and it had been an order for information about the travels of the Premier which, I think, was ordered some time in 1984. The answer did not come until some time in 1986 — almost two years. I really think that's unacceptable. There is no conceivable reason, no conceivable reason why it should take almost two years to be able to provide the answers to a question that is routine and straightforward as one such as this one.

And so I would really urge the members opposite, and whichever minister — I guess it's the House Leader of the government side of the House — to deal with this, as well as other motions which are going to be dealt with today, in an expeditious way so that there is not this kind of unnecessary and undue delay as there has been in the past.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, that along with my urging that the motion be and the information be provided as quickly as possible, is the fact that we have had a case with the *Public Accounts* which was tabled some 15 months after it was the end of the fiscal year in 1986, so that the *Public Accounts* for the year 1985-86 were not made available to this Assembly until July of 1987. Now we have a Public Accounts Committee which is functioning and, I might add, after only two meetings I have a great deal of confidence in what that committee is going to do and what it's going to accomplish. But the problem that the committee faces is that this information is so old, because the government chose to sit on the *Public Accounts* and not provide them to the opposition in this Legislative Assembly in the time frame that it should have provided them.

And so, Mr. Speaker, that is maybe one can say history, and therefore it provides an opportunity for the government to turn over a new leaf and change some of those ways which I think they are finding in their contacts with the public are ways in which the public is not accepting. And so why should they? Why should they accept the ignoring by their government how their taxpayers' money is being spent?

I mean those people out there who work every day and raise their families and pay their mortgages, are finding it harder and harder every day to make a living. There are many cases out there where the take-home pay of many of those families is less today than it was in 1982, because

of increased utility costs, because of inflation, and because of increased taxes.

Now when you consider that the fact that the take-home pay is less than it was five years ago and that the costs have gone up very dramatically, I think one has to consider that the taxpayer is doing more, the working people are doing more, the farmers are doing more than their fair share in paying for the bills that this government incurs, sometimes on their behalf, but unfortunately only too often on behalf of some others who are far less deserving because of the patronage kind of appointments that we have seen taking place in the last several years.

Now this motion that I am going to move, Mr. Speaker, requests the information which I have outlined to you about one Mr. Don Pringle. It so happens that this Mr. Pringle was once an executive director of the Progressive Conservative Party. And I'm not suggesting that's bad. I mean that's a choice that he would make or anybody else would make. But I think with the record of patronage that is so prevalent and so paramount with this government, it makes it so much more important that this information be provided so that the taxpayer of Saskatchewan, who is harder and harder pressed every day since this government was elected, can know what his tax dollar is going to, what his tax dollar is being spent on.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I therefore move, seconded by my colleague the member from Cumberland, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 1 showing . . . Athabasca, I'm sorry, the member from Athabasca, and I apologize to the member. He sits beside me every day; I shouldn't forget that . . . but that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 1 showing:

Regarding the employment of one Don Pringle by the Executive Council: (1) the date his employment took effect; (2) his exact duties and responsibilities; (3) whether he is employed by means of a personal services contract; (4) if not, the authority used for his employment; (5) his rate of pay, including the value of all fringe benefits.

I so move.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I listened to all of those very, very compelling arguments and while I didn't agree with all of them, in fact, I think it's fair to say that I fell asleep part way through it and I didn't hear all of them. I did hear one argument that was compelling enough to cause me to encourage all members to vote for this particular resolution.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 2

Mr. Kowalsky moved, seconded by Mr. Solomon, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 2 showing:

Regarding one S.P. (Sidney) Dutchak: (1) whether he is employed by the Government of Saskatchewan or any of its boards, Crown corporations, commissions or agencies; (2) if so, his exact duties and responsibilities; (3) his total

remuneration; (4) the procedure used to employ him; (5) the date his employment took effect.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I rise, Mr. Speaker, to make several remarks before I move this order. The order will be asking for a return to show that:

Regarding one S.P. (Sidney) Dutchak: (1) whether he is employed by the Government of Saskatchewan or any of its boards, or Crowns or corporations, or commissions or agencies . . .

The Sidney Dutchak we're referring to here is one that was a former member of the . . . a defeated member of the former administration, still under the same Premier, soon to be defeated.

The motion will also ask what his exact duties were and are related to . . . that is if he was employed under some Crown corporation or is presently employed under a Crown corporation, his total remuneration, the procedure used to employ Mr. Dutchak, and the date his employment took effect.

It is the job, Mr. Speaker, of the opposition in this legislature to scrutinize all government expenditures and, particularly, whether the government is hiring the best-qualified people to this job or jobs provided. And a particular case that is known already, and that's the case of Mr. Dutchak who was hired to head up the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, he was also minister in charge of that. I'm not certain whether there may be other corporations that he was hired to. We feel that it's important that the public of Saskatchewan, through their elected representatives, have the opportunity to get this information and of course, Mr. Speaker, we know that it's the role of the government to provide this information. Therefore I move, seconded by my colleague from Regina North West, that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 2 showing:

Regarding one S.P. (Sidney) Dutchak: (1) whether he is employed by the Government of Saskatchewan or any of its boards, Crown corporations, commissions or agencies; (2) if so, his exact duties and responsibilities; (3) his total remuneration; (4) the procedure used to employ him; (5) the date his employment took effect.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: Mr. Speaker, the short answer to this question is: that there would be no return the way that it is worded except to say that no, Mr. Sidney Dutchak is not employed by any Crown agency or government department.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, it has long been the practice of this legislature to make the disclosures of CEO's and senior management of Crown corporations in the Crown Corporations Committee. And that's been the long standing practice of this House, and so I think that it's not improper for that practice to continue.

And I would therefore invite the member to, while he's in Crown Corporations Committee, to raise this very question and I'm sure that that committee will see fit to deal with it at that time, and as has been the long-standing

practice, Mr. Speaker, as has been the long-standing practice of providing the information of the management group as an aggregate sum. And I, therefore, Mr. Speaker, urge all members to vote against this particular order.

Mr. Koskie: — I just want to speak briefly on it, and I don't want to get into a long debate, Mr. Speaker. The facts do not really bear out what the Deputy Premier, the House Leader, has said because when we get into Crown Corporations, the practice has been that they'll give us sort of the global figure . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right, and what we're asking here is for a very specific pay-out to a patronage position.

And I think it's incumbent upon us on this side to get that specific type of information. We have filed this here in December, in my recollections, and had expected that the government, with something so straightforward as this, would immediately give us a reply to it. Time has elapsed considerably, and as the House Leader indicates, there would be no return for it because they are saying as of the date of the return is passed, that the member, the individual in question, is no longer in the employ.

What I would like to do, Mr. Speaker — in view of the fact that the government were so derelict in bringing in the response to a question which was on the books for months ago, in December — is to amend the particular motion: Regarding one S.P. (Sidney) Dutchak: (1) whether he is "or has been" employed by the Government of Saskatchewan, and correspondingly asking for that particular information.

But I just want to reiterate, Mr. Speaker, we will not get the specifics from Crown corporations because . . . for a couple reasons: that if he was not employed during the year under review, then they will only answer questions under the year; and secondly, they will only give global figures and they won't go into the specific pay-outs and details of individuals on their executive branch.

And so I would move that amendment, Mr. Speaker, in order to bring it up to date because of the dereliction of providing us an answer by the . . .

(1615)

Mr. Speaker: — The question before the Assembly then is an amendment to the main motion, moved by the member for Quill Lakes, and seconded by the member for Moose Jaw North, which reads as follows:

Adding after the word "is", "or has been" in the first line.

(1618)

Amendment negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 18

Blakeney	Kowalsky
Prebble	Atkinson
Koskie	Hagel

Tchorzewski
Thompson
Rolfes
Upshall
Simard
Solomon

Calvert
Lautermilch
Trew
Smart
Van Mulligen
Koenker

Nays — 27

Devine
Muller
Duncan
Andrew
Berntson
Lane
Taylor
Smith
Swan
Schmidt
Hodgins
Gerich
Hardy
Klein

Meiklejohn
Martin
Toth
Sauder
Johnson
McLaren
Swenson
Baker
Gleim
Neudorf
Kopelchuk
Saxinger
Britton

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I want to just add a few comments. I think everyone would agree that the House and the public are entitled to know whether Mr. Dutchak was employed and at what work and at what pay.

The member for Souris-Cannington assures us that something will be provided in Crown corporations. He would be the first to admit that if Mr. Dutchak worked for the Department of Justice, we wouldn't get it in Crown corporations. If he worked for any number of other agencies, we wouldn't get it there. And he is asking us to rely upon the frail memory of the member for Souris-Cannington as to which agencies of the government Mr. Dutchak may have worked for.

I frankly don't believe that the member for Souris-Cannington is fully aware of who works where, and I'm not at all convinced that he should ask us to rely upon the frailties of his memory. There could be no possible objection to giving this information — none whatever — unless there's something to hide. No one can think of any justifiable reason for not indicating where Mr. Dutchak was employed and at what level of remuneration — none whatever. And if you vote against it, it means only one thing — that you want to hide, you want to hide what you are paying Mr. Dutchak and where you are employing him. There is no other rational reason.

There have been many instances of this sort of thing in the past. If members want us to dig them out, we can. But the member for Souris-Cannington will know that. He will know that there have been many similar motions passed in past legislatures. The only reason why he would ask anyone to vote against it is that he wants to hide the information.

And quite frankly, I'm not surprised that they want to hide the information about Sid Dutchak. I'm not surprised. But I am disappointed that they would withhold that

information from the public, because the public is entitled to know, and everybody over there knows the public is entitled to know. And if they know that, they should vote for the motion and not against it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion negatived.

Return No. 3

Ms. Simard moved, seconded by Mr. Tchorzewski, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 3 showing:

Regarding the appointment of George D. Hill as president and chief executive officer of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation: (1) the date his appointment took effect; (2) the terms and conditions of his employment, including salary, fringe benefits and perquisites; (3) the name of the executive placement firm which reviewed applications for this position, and the amount their services cost the Saskatchewan Power Corporation; (4) the names and qualifications of the other applicants for this position.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 3 showing . . . and I won't read the motion at this time, Mr. Speaker, but in summary it's regarding the appointment of George Hill, the salary and benefits that Mr. Hill is receiving from the government, and the name of the executive placement firm which reviewed the applications for the job, and the names and qualifications of the other applications . . . the other applicants, rather.

Mr. Speaker, in a time of restraint, when the government has fired some 411 dental workers, when there's been some 3,000 civil servants who have been retired or fired or laid off by this government in the last few months, it is only reasonable that the public have information as to how much this government is paying the past president of the PC Party to be president of Saskatchewan Power Corporation. It's only reasonable. The public's entitled to the information, and it would only be just for the government to come forward with this information.

I know that the member from Souris-Cannington may say that this information can be acquired through the Crown Corporations Committee. But I'm also very sure that when we get to the Crown Corporations Committee, there'll be some reason, some excuse, why that information can't be provided. You just mark my words, Mr. Speaker. You just wait and see; there'll be some reason why the information respecting Mr. Hill's salaries and benefits will not be forthcoming in Crown Corporations Committee.

(1630)

And there's no good reason — no good reason whatsoever — why the public should not have this information when they're being asked to pay higher taxes, unprecedented rates of taxes in this province; when they're being asked to tighten their belts and

engage in the government's restraint to pay the government's \$3.4 billion deficit; when they're being asked to pay this government's deficit, Mr. Speaker, they are entitled to know how much George Hill, the patronage president of SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation) is earning for that particular job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — We just saw a situation, Mr. Speaker, where small business and drug stores in this province are losing business, losing business because of a policy implemented by this government — by the PC government. And I am advised by the PC government they plan to save some \$200,000. As a result of this policy of removing small businesses and drug stores as collection agents for SPC bills, they plan to save some \$200,000, Mr. Speaker. That's what they say. We don't even know if that's sure. That could be an exaggerated amount.

They're going to cost small business in this province hundreds of thousands of dollars to save 2,000, and yet our information, what we have been advised, is that Mr. Hill, when you look at his salary and benefits, is probably earning about \$200,000 a year.

The public is entitled to this information, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that the government will be forthcoming and vote in favour of the motion, because if they don't, Mr. Speaker, if they don't, it's only because they're ashamed of what Mr. Hill's being paid. They know he's a political appointment, and they don't want to have the information out in public. If they vote against it, it's only for that reason, because they want to hide his salary and benefits, Mr. Speaker. That could be the only reason for voting against it.

And on that, I want to move then that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:

Regarding the appointment of George D. Hill as president and chief executive officer of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation: (1) the date his appointment took effect; (2) the terms and conditions of his employment, including salary, fringe benefits and perquisites; (3) the name of the executive placement firm which reviewed applications for this position, and the amount their services cost the Saskatchewan Power Corporation; (4) the names and qualifications of the other applicants for this position.

And this is seconded, Mr. Speaker, by the member from Regina North East.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, the arguments advanced by the member are not new to this legislature. I advanced the very same arguments when I was on that side of the House. And without going into a great deal of detail as to the arguments that I heard back when I was sitting on that side of the House, I will simply say the long-standing practice, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to CEO (Chief Executive Officer) salaries at Crown corporations

has been that that information is sought at the Crown Corporations Committees. And I would therefore, Mr. Speaker, in keeping with that long-standing practice, urge all members of the House to vote no to this order.

Mr. Koskie: — This is the erroneous proposition that the member put forward on the previous motion. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, and to the people of Saskatchewan, that as sure as I'm standing here today debating . . . requesting this information, that when we go into Crown corporations and ask for these details in respect to the Chief Executive Officer, Mr. George Hill, that that information will not be provided to the people of this province.

And so I ask, since the member from . . . the Deputy Premier has indicated so clearly that it's available, I'd like to wonder if the Deputy Premier would entertain a question and give us his assurance that when we go into Crown corporations that the question, as laid out here, will indeed be answered, because you are in charge of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation.

So if you're saying we can get this information, Mr. Deputy Premier, then can you give us the commitment that when we go into Crown corporations and SPC comes up for review, that we can ask this specific question in this form, and that we'll get the specific answer. Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I would be happy, Mr. Speaker, if leave of the Chamber is granted, to answer the question, as I have in question period on several occasions to the hon. member from Lakeview. The question can be asked in Crown corporations in this way, or any other way, or seven ways from sundown; as it relates, Mr. Speaker, to CEO salaries, the long-standing practice has been to give the aggregate sum of the management team. That's been a long-standing practice. It was the practice when they were sitting over here. I expect it was prior to that, and it continues today, Mr. Speaker, and we would not want to breach that long-standing practice.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, all that the members on the opposition have said has not proven to be true by the member to whom we have just given leave, the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, that the only purpose and intention of the government in voting against this motion and the one prior to it involving Mr. Sidney Dutchak, former member of that cabinet, is because they are determined to bring about a cover-up on their patronage appointments and the kind of atrocious salary and perks and benefits that they pay them at the expense of the Saskatchewan taxpayer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, there can be no other conceivable reason why the government would defeat these two motions and others similar to them that may come up on this day. There clearly is something, Mr. Speaker, that the government is hiding. There clearly is something that the government is hiding.

I refer back to the motion we dealt with prior to this one

involving Mr. Dutchak. The argument that the minister made, even his argument about "this has to be asked in the Crown Corporations Committee" was wrong, because the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation shows up in this Assembly in the form of estimates, and so there can be no other reason for what the member opposite has directed his caucus to do except to cover up this information because there is something wrong with the appointment and the payment to one Mr. Dutchak, as there is with one Mr. Hill, the president of the power corporation, which the government is trying to hide.

I think that this is a dark day in this Assembly and for the people of Saskatchewan who are not able to get an honest answer from this government about how it spends tax dollars on salaries of \$200,000 on more on former presidents of the Conservative Party who are in positions for which they are not qualified for, but are there only because it's some way for the Premier to pay his friends at taxpayers' expense.

I know that the House Leader, the member from Souris-Cannington, will probably lead the back-benchers to support the government in opposition to this motion. Well so be it. I just want those back-benchers to know, who are yet maybe somewhat inexperienced, that your constituents will know how you voted on this, and they will judge you accordingly when the time comes in the next election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1639)

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 17

Blakeney	Atkinson
Prebble	Hagel
Koskie	Calvert
Tchorzewski	Lautermilch
Thompson	Trew
Rolfes	Smart
Upshall	Van Mulligen
Simard	Koenker
Solomon	

Nays — 27

Devine	Hodgins
Muller	Gerich
Duncan	Hardy
Andrew	Klein
Berntson	Meiklejohn
Lane	Martin
Taylor	Toth
Smith	Sauder
Swan	Johnson
Schmidt	

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Would hon. members please refrain from speaking as the vote is taking place.

McLaren
Swenson
Baker
Gleim

Neudorf
Kopelchuk
Saxinger
Britton

Return No. 4

Mr. Calvert moved, seconded by Mr. Lautermilch, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 4 showing:

Regarding the \$4 million drug and alcohol abuse program announced by the Premier on September 3, 1986: (1) the amount of the \$4 million approved for the program in fiscal year 1986-87 that has been spent; (2) the members of the cabinet committee responsible for implementing the program; (3) the date the Youth Drug Treatment Centre at former CFB Whitespruce opened, and the number of people it has served; (4) the date the toll-free information and advice line for young people and parents opened and the number of people it has served; (5) the new resource materials for schools that have been developed and the number of schools that they have been distributed to; (6) the number of new grants that have been approved for alcohol and drug counselling and treatment groups under the special program.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, after a few remarks, I will move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return No. 4. I'll read the motion at the conclusion of my few remarks and I sincerely hope, Mr. Speaker, that the government opposite will not defeat the request for the information contained in this motion as it just has with others.

The motion that I bring has to do with information regarding the drug and alcohol program that was announced by the Premier on September 3, 1986. That's one year and five days ago on this very day — one year ago and five days the Premier announced this program, and in essence what this motion does is to ask for information regarding the status of that program. Just where are we in that program?

And I might say, Mr. Speaker, that this is one of the few announcements made by this government since it took office in 1982, one of the few announcements that I and others in Saskatchewan welcome. We indeed welcomed the \$4 million the government announced for drug and alcohol abuse. We welcomed the inclusion of youth counsellors in education. We particularly welcomed the announcement of a youth treatment centre here in the province.

(1645)

We on this side of the House, and many in Saskatchewan, would have wished for more to be included in this program, particularly more to deal with the causes of alcohol and drug abuse among young people. Many of us would have liked to have seen this government address the matter of the advertisement of alcohol on television and radio. But essentially it's a program that many of us

welcome.

What my questions hope to do, and they've been on this order paper since December, is to see where we are in terms of this program. In the Speech from the Throne, the Premier described the problem as a rising tide in our province, and indeed there are statistics that'll bear that out.

In a recent survey conducted by SADAC (Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission) in the year 1986, we see, indeed, that the statistics bear it out. We see from this survey that teenagers 12 to 18 years of age: 66 per cent of them now use alcohol, 25 per cent of teens now drink at least weekly, and by the time you get to the age of 18, 60 per cent of 18 year olds in Saskatchewan are now drinking at least once weekly.

That survey, conducted by SADAC, indicates that 31 per cent of teens are now using tobacco; 12 per cent of 12 year olds are now smoking; by the time the kids are 18 the percentage is increased to 42 per cent. Fourteen per cent of Saskatchewan teenagers have used cannabis.

So Mr. Speaker, clearly we do have a problem, and clearly this is an important program, and particularly the youth treatment centre at Whitespruce because we know that young people in Saskatchewan have had to leave the province.

And so I would hope that the government would give some priority in providing the answers for these questions because the issue is of concern and it is a priority for Saskatchewan people, and, I would hope, for all members of this House.

And so I will move, seconded by the member from P.A.-Duck Lake, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 4 showing:

Regarding the \$4 million drug and alcohol abuse program announced by the Premier on September 3, 1986: (1) the amount of the \$4 million approved for the program in fiscal year 1986-87 that has been spent; (2) the members of the cabinet committee responsible for implementing the program; (3) the date the Youth Drug Treatment Centre at former CFB Whitespruce opened, and the number of people it has served; (4) the date the toll-free information and advice line for young people and parents opened, and the number of people it has served; (5) the new resource materials for schools that have been developed and the number of schools that they have been distributed to; (6) the number of new grants that have been approved for alcohol and drug counselling and treatment groups under the special program.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1649)

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 41

Muller	Hodgins
Duncan	Gerich
Andrew	Hardy
Berntson	Klein
Lane	Meiklejohn
Taylor	Martin
Smith	Toth
Swan	Sauder
Schmidt	Johnson

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. I'd like to once more ask the co-operation of the members in not speaking, either when they're sitting or standing as the vote is being taken.

McLaren	Upshall
Petersen	Solomon
Swenson	Kowalsky
Baker	Atkinson
Gleim	Hagel
Neudorf	Calvert
Kopelchuk	Lautermilch
Saxinger	Trew
Britton	Smart
Blakeney	Van Mulligen
Koskie	Koenker
Rolfes	

Nays

— 0

Return No. 5

Mr. Hagel moved, seconded by Mr. Calvert, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 5 showing:

Regarding the announcement in the March 26, 1986, budget address that 540 additional senior citizens' housing units would be built in 1986: (1) the number of these 540 units that have actually been constructed; (2) the location where they were built; (3) the amount that has been spent by the Government of Saskatchewan on the construction of these 540 additional units.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my intent to move an order of the Assembly to issue for a return showing some information regarding a government announcement in the March, 1986 budget address having to do with 540 additional senior citizens' housing units to be built in 1986.

Before moving that motion for return, Mr. Speaker, there are a few comments I'd like to make. I'd like to comment on the interesting phenomenon that we've seen going on in this Assembly this afternoon in dealing with what I would have assumed were fairly straightforward questions and requests for information by members on this side of the House. So far we've dealt with four motions, Mr. Speaker, and we've had standing votes on three of them.

I find it kind of interesting — the members opposite laugh — and I find it kind of interesting, Mr. Speaker, that 27

members on that side of the House, including the Premier and the Deputy Premier, stood to deny the providing of information regarding the employment of Mr. Dutchak, a former PC cabinet minister. I find it, Mr. Speaker, very interesting, as we deal with the seriousness of these motions coming before us this afternoon, that that same phenomenon occurred when requesting information for the employment of the former PC party president, George Hill.

And now just a moment ago, when my colleague from Moose Jaw South moved a motion requesting information regarding the alcohol and drug abuse program announced by that government, there were enough members opposite who said no to providing that information that you, Mr. Speaker, ruled that the "no's" had it. And yet when it came to standing in this House, they didn't have the nerve to stand and be counted . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I would like to ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to motions for return no. 5 and not to go back and deal with motions we've already passed and dealt with.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, the point I make is that I hope as we deal with this motion no. 5, we do not find this same trend repeated again. I would hope that somewhere along the line the members of the government will see fit to provide the public with information that they have a right to hear.

So I look, Mr. Speaker, I look here, and I will be moving a motion that the members have before them, requesting some information having to do with a budget commitment made in 1986, a straightforward question again asking for information. I would hope that it will be dealt with sincerely and that that information be made available to the public.

Mr. Speaker, it has to do with a 1986 budget commitment to build 540 senior citizen housing units, and that was at a time, Mr. Speaker, that many would refer to as the pre-election budget of the PC government. And we'll all remember those days, Mr. Speaker. Those were the days before we had that unmanageable deficit. Those were the days when the Premier trotted around the province and said we just have a little deficit; it's really not out of hand. That was before the Minister of Finance stepped into this Assembly and said, whoops, we missed it by 700 million; we're in dire straits folks, and we're going to have to tighten our belts.

And I remind Mr. Speaker that this was a commitment made to seniors in Saskatchewan at a time before this government became infamous for its unkept promises and its misleading statements. Seniors, Mr. Speaker, have been hit particularly hard by the cuts and the announcements of the government the last several months; it is a group of society that has been hit harder than most. And I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that as we ask for this information about senior citizen housing units, that there is a relationship in Saskatchewan between the access to hospital beds and nursing home beds; there's a relationship between the access to nursing home beds and the access to home care; and there is a relationship between the access to home care for seniors and the

access to senior citizen housing units.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government which has become characterized by short-sightedness. And I believe that seniors have a right to expect security from their provincial government; they have a right to expect that commitments made in a 1986 budget address will be kept, and will be kept in 1986.

And I therefore move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the member for Moose Jaw South, an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 5 showing:

Regarding the announcement in the March 26, 1986, budget address that 540 additional senior citizens' housing units would be built in 1986: (1) the number of these 540 units that have actually been constructed; (2) the location where they were built; (3) the amount that has been spent by the Government of Saskatchewan on the construction of these 540 additional units.

Mr. Speaker, I, and many seniors, as well as responsible citizens of Saskatchewan, would welcome that information to be forthcoming, and I would hope that the government members would pay tribute to the reasonableness of Saskatchewan people and allow this information to be presented readily.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, just a couple of brief comments, and far be it for me to say anything about a motion that we've already dealt with like item no. 4 that deals with the Whitespruce and the drug and alcohol abuse initiatives that have been taken by this government. I would just say that we invite comparison.

The initiatives taken by this government, as opposed to the previous administration, and likewise, Mr. Speaker, we invite comparison here in the 540 additional senior citizens' housing units that we built in 1986. We invite comparison. We would invite all people, when this return is filed, Mr. Speaker, to compare the kinds of things that we've been doing in the area, in the area of senior citizens' housing, to the moratorium that that administration had . . . (inaudible) . . . Mr. Speaker. And so I will urge, Mr. Speaker, I'll urge all members to vote in favour of this resolution.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.