

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the legislature, a number of people in your gallery, sir. These people have come from virtually all over the province, and these individuals I introduce to you today, Mr. Speaker, have been part of a very large team that has helped our government and our department restructure the post-secondary education system for the 21st century. And it would not have been, without the help of this team in planning and co-ordinating and building towards a couple of pieces of legislation that we'll later address today.

In anticipation of second reading of those Bills, Mr. Speaker, they have joined us here today in the gallery, and although these individuals deserve to be named individually, since there are a fair number of them, I will give you some indication of who has joined us here today, Mr. Speaker.

We have the chief executive officer of the new institute, and the assistant to vice-president of marketing extension. As well we have institute principals and assistant principals, presidents of campus faculty associations, the president of the faculty council of Saskatchewan, the president of the campus student councils, Mr. Speaker, the president of student executive councils of technical institutes of Saskatchewan, the president of the STI alumni, the chairman of Kelsey Foundation; our community colleges as well, widely represented with the college board chairman, and as well their principals, or acting principals as may be the case, executive directors of the Saskatchewan Community Colleges Trustees Association, The Gabriel Dumont Institute is represented here, Mr. Speaker.

And as well, the man who has been chairing our interim governing council, Dr. Fred Gathercole, joins us. People here from the Advanced Training and Technology Centre, the Meadow Lake Vocational school is represented here today, people who have worked on transition teams, Mr. Speaker, and as well, officials from my department who have worked long and hard along with these many other individuals to help.

And I would ask all of these members to rise and be acknowledged by the legislature, and I'll ask all members of the legislature to join with me in welcoming them here today, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of members on this side of the House, I want to join with the Minister of Education in welcoming professional educators from around the province to our legislature.

They've served our technical institute system and our community college system in this province very well, and I welcome their presence here today as do all members in the Assembly, I'm sure. I hope that they will enjoy the debate that is to follow on these Bills, and I want to warmly welcome them to the Assembly and say that we, on this side of the House, look forward to working with you in the coming years in building the post-secondary education system in this province and making it better than ever.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you, in your gallery, two distinguished gentlemen from New Zealand: Mr. Colin Brydon, regional manager and chairperson of operations committee; and Mr. William Ryan, policy development manager of the New Zealand Accident Compensation Corporation. That would be similar to our Workers' Compensation Board in Saskatchewan. They're in Canada to discuss policy and operational procedures pertaining to claimant estimate, as well as plan the co-ordination of rehabilitation programs. They will be stopping in Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, and Winnipeg and meeting with various other agencies.

We are very pleased that they could come to Saskatchewan where we have a long-established program. I'd like them to rise, and I'd like members of the Assembly to welcome them to Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — I just want to add our words of welcome to that of my friend opposite. I hope you find your visit to Canada and Saskatchewan useful.

I'll just add the comment that unless your workers' compensation scheme runs as badly as ours, this will undoubtedly be an education in what not to do rather than what to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Johnson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you to the Assembly, two young people from Brownwood, Texas, in the U.S.A. That's somewhere down near Dallas, and I'm not sure how far or how close that is. They're seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. I would ask them if they would stand up and be recognized.

Their names are Misty Hockett and John Burelson. And along with them is somebody I shouldn't have to introduce, is Marilyn Rice, and I'd ask her to stand, and her daughter Vicki. The young folk are here in Regina today, looking to start a new business venture maybe in Saskatchewan, and I'm sure we all wish them well in their endeavour.

And I would ask all members to greet them and welcome them to the legislature and to Canada. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Social Assistance Transportation Allowance Cuts

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question this afternoon to the Minister of Social Services. Today in Saskatchewan a number of cuts take place for people who in this province require social assistance. It's a continuation of this government's policy to punish the victims of its failed employment policies.

And I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, about a specific cut, and that is the transportation allowance which up until today provided people on assistance a monthly bus pass; an amount approximately equivalent to a monthly bus pass. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, this: if you want Saskatchewan people on social assistance to work their way off the welfare rolls, how do you expect them to do that without a proper means of transportation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to transportation allowance, this was not part of the basic social services package but was considered to be a special need. It was a special need that was provided predominantly in the urban areas and seldom in the rural areas, so that people in rural Saskatchewan were somehow travelling to where they had to go; people in the urban areas had a special need of transportation.

What we are doing is standardizing this so that there will be transportation for those people who need transportation to have their children go to school where there is no school bus, or in urban areas where the distance is greater than normal, that there will be transportation for all of those special needs. But there will be not a special need transportation for people who are of normal health and capable of looking for work. And that is part of an overall reform package, and this is one element of it.

In addition, the rates will be increasing on January 1 to \$17 per adult, \$13 per child, and that will assist in transportation. But there is not a specific amount set aside for each category of what a person needs. There is a basic allowance and it's paid, and people decide what they spend it on.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, if transportation is a special need, it's a special need for everyone on social assistance, whether they live in urban or rural centres.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — And I say, Mr. Minister, that your policies of your government have been cruel and insensitive. They have been that, but they have also been ineffective at reducing the number of people on social assistance.

Do you deny that the number of people receiving social assistance has increased by 14,000 since your government took office? Do you deny that the cost for social assistance in Saskatchewan today is double what it was when your government took office, and that you are not only hurting the poor but you are failing to reduce the dependency on welfare?

And I ask you, Mr. Minister: when are you and your Premier going to realize that the most effective welfare reform package would be one of full reform to employment so that you provide employment opportunities for people on assistance to get off assistance and start working again?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — I can tell the member opposite that his party's position is a guaranteed income. My personal position, and I think every right-thinking person in Saskatchewan — probably most of them being a small "c" conservative or a small "l" liberal — believe that a more sound policy would be a guaranteed job. And we are trying to work in that direction, and in particular in Social Services, with the employment development program, such as the Meewasin Valley and Par Industries and many other small projects that we've used as pilot projects.

We are working in that direction, to having everybody have a job rather than everyone have a guaranteed income. And the difference is that a job means you get paid to do something; a guaranteed income means that you get paid whether you do anything or not. That's the difference between the NDP philosophy and our philosophy.

And we believe that everyone should have a job and are working in that direction. The number of cases on social Services is down considerably this year over last year. I do agree that we are paying much more money in Social Services than you ever did. I do agree that we are paying more per case, and I would expect that you would be satisfied with that, because one minute you say it's too low, and the next minute you say you're spending too much. Make up your mind.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — I think, before we go to the next question, I would like to draw members' attention to questions and answers. Now we saw a long question. But before that, unfortunately, we saw a supplementary that had at least three questions, and perhaps four; it was one or the other. Now I'd just like to bring that to the attention of the members, and then if both try to avoid what they're doing, we'll have a good question period.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the minister from a member of a caucus that supports a full employment policy as welfare reform.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, it deals with another example of what seems to be your attempts to go out of your way to

punish the victims of your failed employment policy.

Mr. Minister, will you confirm that during the month of September in the city of Saskatoon more than 200 people on social assistance sent their change of address to the Department of Social Services, and will you confirm that the person responsible for entering those changes into the computer was on holidays and that they had no permission to hire someone to replace that person, and as a result people on social assistance had to wait seven to 10 days — seven to 10 days — to get their cheques, which is an eternity for someone who's living in poverty?

And I ask you, Mr. Minister, is that an example of yours and your Premier's sensitivity to the need of the poor, and when are you going to start punishing the victims of your failed employment policies?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Speaker, in past years there's been a tradition that you could accept a statement made by members opposite at face value, and then you could deal with them. But that has not been the case this session and therefore I will have to look into the allegations to see what is fact and what is fiction, and I can then report back.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — New question, Mr. Speaker. New question. Mr. Minister, it is fact, and I ask you to address it because poor people are paying the price of your insensitivity and incompetence.

Mr. Minister, will you as well, today, admit that, effective today, new income exemption rules are going into place which in effect mean that everyone on social assistance who is able to find work receives less money, is able to keep less money than they were yesterday? And I ask you, Mr. Minister, how could you support these new income exemption regulations which in effect put up road-blocks to Saskatchewan's poor who are trying to work their way off the welfare rolls of Saskatchewan? How can you support that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Speaker, in January when the next increase goes into effect, Saskatchewan's welfare rates will be the second highest and possibly the highest in Canada — very close to the highest.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — A new question to the Minister of Social Services, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you know that there are many people on social services who through programs like the Saskatchewan skills development program are taking an education while they're on social assistance. You've cut off their travel allowances too, and how do you expect them, Mr. Minister, to be able to get to school when you won't even pay the costs of a transit pass to cover their transportation? How do you expect those people to get an education when what you're really doing is making it harder and harder every month for them to

pursue an education and better themselves?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we are pleased that the NDP have finally realized that our government implemented the Saskatchewan skills development program.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — That 2,500 people are now taking training. That we, in addition to the training, where necessary we pay for baby-sitting and other such costs out of the Department of Social Services, and in addition we just increased the training allowance by \$10. Now what is the member talking about?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Closure of Ciba-Geigy Chemical Plant

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the minister of unemployment as well, and it is a new question.

Mr. Minister, we have just seen how your government's policies throw up obstacles in front of people who make an attempt to get back into the work-force, and this is further compounded by your failed economic policies which are forcing more and more people out of the work-force and onto social assistance.

I ask you this question, Mr. Minister: are you aware of the closure today of the Ciba-Geigy chemical plant in Regina, and are you aware . . . Well the members may laugh, Mr. Speaker, about the closure of a plant, which puts people on unemployment, but I don't think it's funny.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — And, Mr. Minister, are you also aware that this is going to put, in addition to all those who are unemployed, 12 more full-time employees on the unemployment rolls and 10 seasonal employees?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — For the member from Regina North East, the pronunciation is Ciba-Geigy, and I could perhaps send it over to you if that would help you.

This particular company, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Speaker, the members ask a question; they don't seem to want to be quiet to listen to the answer.

Mr. Speaker, this particular company, this . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — This particular company in conjunction with another company in Ontario by the name of May & Baker — May & Baker will be closing down an Ontario facility. This facility will be closed

down in Regina through an arrangement. The Regina operation will do the formulating of all the chemicals for both companies and vice versa in Ontario. There will still be the same . . . Mr. Speaker, there will still be the same amount of chemicals being formulated out of the one office — same amount of chemicals being formulated. It's a rationalization of the industry and of the business.

For the members opposite who have nobody that is familiar at all with business, the reality is when the market and the value of the price goes down and the farmers aren't buying as much, you must look for business ways to rationalize that. That's exactly what they're doing. That is common in the business world, something the members opposite know exactly nothing about.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Supplementary to the minister, who I'm sure can spell the word airplane, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, would you explain to this House how this closure of this chemical plant begins to make good on your Premier's election promises to expand the production of agricultural chemicals in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the production, regardless of this move, is still going to be the same. The production is going to be the same in Saskatchewan. The member is misinformed on this as he has been misinformed on a variety of issues. The production is going to be the same. We are working to attract other industries into this province to deal with that.

Besides that, this particular company will be in fact doing more research in the province of Saskatchewan. There are three plants in Saskatchewan, two in Alberta, one in Manitoba. We have three, and in the future there will be more in the province of Saskatchewan, and more production.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, I personally spoke to the president of this company in Toronto yesterday, and are you now . . . I have my information from him. Are you denying in this House that there are going to be 12 . . . not going to be 12 people who are going to lose their jobs, permanent people and 10 seasonal people? Are you denying that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member indicated in his earlier statement that there would be less production in the province of Saskatchewan. That's exactly what he said. I indicated to you that that was in fact wrong, okay.

With regard to the employment, I indicated that the two companies were rationalizing. They are probably laying

off people, and that is going to be to save money as they have to.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had a question from the member . . .

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

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I have another question, a new question to the minister. Mr. Minister, the closure of this plant, I say to you, is just one more symptom of how badly you have failed in your campaign promise to build our economy. Are you aware that during the first eight months of this year 245 Saskatchewan small businesses have declared bankruptcy, and that is 12 per cent higher than for the same time last year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — If the hon. member had of been in the House during estimates he also would have known that the number of new jobs . . . new businesses started in Saskatchewan is up some 2,000 over last year compared to about 1,200.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — There are about 12 more businesses going bankrupt. For every business that goes bankrupt, there's 100 or 200 more starting. That is part of the free-market economy, Mr. Speaker. That is part of the free-market economy. The member opposite does not understand that.

Besides that we have a new facility in P.A. to build a new paper plant. We have a new facility in Regina to build a heavy oil upgrader.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — We have Marubeni-Hitachi building a new plant in Saskatoon. We have Hunter's building in North Battleford. I can go on and on and on. That is building, that is not buying, and that's what separates your side of the House from this side of the House — we build; you buy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Movement of Grain at St. Lawrence Seaway Port

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, as you're undoubtedly aware — probably the opposition aren't . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Please. Order. Order. The member has a right to ask the question and has also the right to be heard.

Order, please. Order. Order. I ask for the co-operation of the members to allow the member to ask his question. Order.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, we're . . . or Mr. Premier, we're aware that there are currently 80 maintenance engineers who are tying up the movement of grain through the St. Lawrence Seaway because of their strike action.

At a time when Saskatchewan farm families are already facing severe duress because of current economic conditions, and when any stoppage of the movement of grain will halt farmers from hauling to the elevators for badly needed cash flow, what action have you taken, Mr. Premier, to urge the Prime Minister and the Minister of Transportation to end the strike; and, Mr. Premier, what response have you received?

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order. I think the Premier also has the right to answer the question, even though some hon. members may not like to hear it. But that's one of the elementary rules of the House.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I believe it's fair that at least one side of the House is interested in agriculture and has the courage to ask a question that is extremely important to the farmers of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I will say to the hon. member from Moosomin that I have sent a telex to the Minister of Labour for Canada, encouraging him to resolve the dispute as quickly as possible.

I will also advise the member that I will be discussing the issue with the Prime Minister and members of cabinet tomorrow, and will be encouraging them to take whatever action is absolutely necessary to make sure that grain movement continues in this province because farmers in Saskatchewan and farmers across western Canada particularly cannot live under any sort of sustained strike. And we must take whatever measures are necessary to make sure grain continues to move in this country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I'll direct my question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, you may or may not know that in the Lakehead right now there is space for approximately three weeks of deliveries, three weeks of deliveries from the prairie provinces from farmers. My question to you is, Mr. Premier, why do you get up on this floor, set up by a member opposite, to divide the people of this province from agriculture to urban? Why is that your theme?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate if the hon. member would listen very carefully. The concerns about agriculture in this province are not isolated to rural people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — People in Regina, in Assiniboia, in North Battleford, in Yorkton, in Prince Albert and, indeed, Humboldt, people — senior citizens, people living and doing business — are concerned about farmers' income because when the farmer has money they spend it in town. There's a tax base to build roads and schools and hospitals.

When there's strikes, do you know what happens? You can't market your grain. You can't get the income. You can't raise the revenue, and towns and villages and senior citizens and school children, and people of all walks of life, urban and rural, are hurt. Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should realize that this legislature should stand full bore, man to man, woman to woman, the entire House, in backing Saskatchewan agriculture and marketing grain, and not to play political issues, saying it's rural versus urban. When are you going to figure that out?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — You travel, you travel across this province telling farmers that it's an urban province — you travel, and you'll see how far you get. People in this province want to see a comprehensive agriculture policy across the country, and not just confined to somebody like you that just thinks it's an urban problem.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Unemployment in Saskatchewan

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Indeed a sorry sight. My question is to the minister of unemployment. And it's a new question.

Mr. Minister, today there are 36,000 people unemployed in Saskatchewan. Today there are 36,000 people unemployment in this province. Are you aware, sir, that over the last 12 months Saskatchewan is the only province in Canada to have suffered a decline in employment, in jobs — we've lost 2,000.

In light of that poor performance and why you try to divide worker from farmer perhaps, sir, you and your government should pay attention to providing jobs for all the people of this province. I ask you, sir: are you going to introduce a winter works program in this province this winter so that the unemployed, whether they're not working in rural Saskatchewan or not working urban Saskatchewan, can have an opportunity so that we don't have to send them off to Ontario and Calgary as in the Ciba-Geigy example?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, this government doesn't have a minister of unemployment. But we feel that someone should respond to the nonsense that we just heard, and that really what the people should consider is: how does a grain strike at Thunder Bay create jobs in Regina? What does that do for Saskatchewan? Is it positive or is it negative? Is it positive or negative in Rosemont constituency? And I submit that Saskatchewan, all 1 million of us, are in this province together. Our economies are interrelated, our jobs are interrelated, and if we can't sell wheat, even at 2.52 a bushel, we are all going to be a lot poorer, and the members of the opposition should keep that in mind.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — A new question, a new question. Mr. Speaker, thank you, again to the same minister. Mr. Minister, Saskatchewan is losing jobs and last year it lost jobs at the rate of 6,000 people, which for the third year in a row made it one of the worst record of out-migration.

And the Ciba-Geigy example is a perfect example of what's happening in this province. We're losing jobs, people are leaving, and perhaps, perhaps, perhaps, since we've got an interrelated economy, the Premier should have asked Mr. Peterson of Ontario to annex this province so that the people here can have jobs, and the people here can have opportunities.

Mr. Minister, do you not believe, do you not believe, sir, that it's your responsibility and the government's responsibility to initiate economic activity so that the people of this province have jobs instead of shipping them off to Ontario or shipping them off to Calgary. Don't you believe that's your responsibility?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the second or third lowest rate — we're kind of tied at that — in unemployment. That means we have the second or third highest employment rate in Canada. And that is . . . has got a lot to do with the projects that are even visible to the members from Regina if they open their eyes, like the upgrader, over 1,400 people working there right now; probably most of them paying union dues to members opposite; with people working on a \$54 million Wascana Hospital, those people are employed.

There are many projects in this province. The convention centre — I know it is free enterprise and you don't like to think about it, but it is there. Those are jobs. I saw the concrete being poured yesterday. And that should be kept in mind. And we don't have to spend days and days in this legislature listening to the nonsense from the opposition about spending more money.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

POINT OF PRIVILEGE

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I rise on a point of privilege. We have given notice to you on this point. And I rise as a result of questions that were asked yesterday to the Premier in question period. These questions are recorded in *Hansard* on page 2979 of yesterday's *Hansard*.

And the point I raise is regarding the statements made by the member of Moose Jaw North in the House where he referred to a situation as to statements attributed to myself on Monday, and I quote. The member from Moose Jaw North said:

. . . on Monday the Minister of Social Services informed this House that the legal aid deterrent fees were introduced without prior consultation or approval from the Government of Canada.

And I've quoted the page from *Hansard*. That question, Mr. Speaker, was asked to the Premier in my absence, and

the member raised the point in my absence at the time. Out of the 88 sitting days, I've been present for at least 81. When I was not present, the member from Moose Jaw North raised a question to the Premier and made an allegation of something that I said. And I've read it for you and it is in the record.

This is not a dispute between members, Mr. Speaker, as *Hansard* clearly records on September 28, 1987, at page 2881, where I gave only one answer on that day. And the answer is:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not so sure that was a question at all. However, I'm pleased to see the federal government is monitoring legal aid, and I would hope that if they think more money should be spent, that the federal government will agree to pay more money.

In the meantime we are providing a fair and adequate service to the poor and to those people who can't afford to pay the full . . . (legal fare). And some people are paying a little towards their legal aid, and that seems fair. And we will have to see how it goes.

That, Mr. Speaker, is not a dispute between members, but a clear misrepresentation, an intentional misleading statement made to the Premier of Saskatchewan yesterday in my absence when I was not here to even defend it.

And that has been going on constantly, that the members opposite will raise questions as matters of fact, Mr. Speaker. They have been getting away with it because it has been a dispute between members.

Today, Mr. Speaker, you have the evidence clearly before you on the record, in *Hansard*. The member opposite should be dealt with accordingly, apologize at the very least, or be dealt with in other ways, because you cannot operate in a Legislative Assembly — that is the reason for the rule — you cannot operate if, whenever a member raises a point, the members in the House have to question whether it is accurate or not. And when members opposite intentionally mislead the House, the House cannot function. The Premier cannot answer questions when he has to question the question itself, nor can anyone else.

And for that reason I raise the point of privilege. I ask you to consider the record, which is quite clear, rule on it, and deal with it accordingly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, speaking to the point of order raised by the member from Melville . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Point of privilege? Sorry, Mr. Speaker. He makes claim that I intentionally mislead this House. And I wonder just where that claim should be directed, Mr. Speaker.

And let me, as a matter of fact, respond to that by using the same evidence as the minister. Mr. Speaker, in reference to his point of order, let me quote from *Hansard*, page

2881 of September 28, when I asked my question, and I said:

And I ask, Mr. Minister, if you can confirm that, in spite of the fact that legal aid is a cost-shared program funded almost equally by the federal government and by the Government of Saskatchewan, that as a matter of fact you failed to consult with the federal government before introducing your unfair legal aid fees.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me quote verbatim, again, the minister's response and see if he denies that as a matter of fact that was a statement of fact. What does the minister say? He says:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not so sure that was a question at all. However, I'm pleased to see the federal government is monitoring legal aid, and I would hope that if they think more money should be spent, that the federal government will agree to pay more money.

Did he deny that he failed to consult? Mr. Speaker, he then goes on to another sentence and he says:

In the meantime we are providing a fair and adequate service to the poor and to those people who can't afford to pay the full fare for legal aid. And some people are paying a little towards their legal aid, and that seems fair. And we will have to see how it goes.

Mr. Speaker, it was a very clear and specific question. The minister chose not to respond to the question, and one can only conclude, by the fact that he failed to deny the accuracy of the supposition that I put forward, that it is anything other than accurate. And, Mr. Speaker, I submit the same evidence that the minister put forward here in response to his supposed claim for point of order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — I would like to begin my remarks by once more pointing out to hon. members that hon. members cannot accuse other hon. members of intentionally misleading the House, even if it is put in a context of a question. Unfortunately we heard that now, and unfortunately we heard that yesterday afternoon during debate from one other member.

So I'm drawing this to the attention of those members. They know who I'm speaking about, and I'm once more asking the co-operation of hon. members to refrain from those kinds of accusatory and provocative language in this House.

As to the hon. member's point of privilege, I have studied the matter referred to, and I have reviewed it, having received notice from the hon. member, and I find that it does not constitute a *prima facie* case of privilege.

Beauchesne's, citation 19(1) states:

A dispute arising between two Members, as to allegations of fact, does not fulfill the conditions of

parliamentary privilege.

This, in my opinion, is a dispute concerning two members regarding facts, and therefore I do not rule that is a *prima facie* case of privilege.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Yesterday in question period the member from P.A.-Duck Lake, in posing a question, indicated that: can you tell us if Mr. Cohen is, in fact, related to the Premier's deputy minister, one Norman Riddell?

Mr. Speaker, this particular individual is no relation to Mr. Norman Riddell . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Let me talk to the point of order.

Mr. Speaker, I'm raising a point of order. The individual is no relation to the deputy minister. The member opposite raised this intending to mislead this House, and I think that is . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. I do not find that that is a point of order. The hon. member . . . I know he wants to reply to it; however, he too made an accusation there that I know he perhaps shouldn't have. I would just like to once more draw hon. members' attention to the fact that accusing people, in whatever form, of intentionally misleading the House is not acceptable. I just bring that to your attention.

POINT OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege. You just concluded, moments ago, ruling that the member from Melville's point of privilege raised was, as a matter of fact, unfounded. And you will recognize, Mr. Speaker, that in making his case he accused me of misleading this House.

And I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you would ask . . . that you would require the member from Melville to withdraw this unfounded and unparliamentary accusation, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — I have drawn the attention of hon. members to the rule that exists in this House that those type of provocative and accusatory statements should not be made. Unfortunately, we've heard that today; unfortunately we heard that yesterday in debate, and I don't think it would serve any purpose to have all those people now stand up and apologize and withdraw.

However, I think that hon. members should take this very, very seriously, that this type of situation cannot continue. And hon. members should discipline themselves that they don't do it.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, on the comments made by the minister opposite, I wish only to say, were he to have answered any one of the questions that I asked yesterday in question period, he wouldn't have had to storm out of the House this afternoon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1445)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill NO. 46 — An Act respecting the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, today is a historic day for Saskatchewan. It's a historic day for Saskatchewan, it's a historic day for Saskatchewan education, and it's a historic day for the people of this province, adult and child alike.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about why we are making the changes that we are making in post-secondary education. I want to talk about how we determine what those changes should be. And finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about what indeed those changes are.

To gain a full appreciation as to why this Bill, and to why the companion piece of legislation, an Act respecting Regional Colleges, to understand and to fully appreciate why they are before the legislature today, Mr. Speaker, I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and indeed all members of the legislature to take off their legislative hats for a moment, to take off those hats and put on your hats as parents, the parents of our precious children, children who, too soon, become young adults taking their place in the world.

Mr. Speaker, when I take off my hat as Minister of Education and look around, the first question that I ask myself is: what kind of world will my children live in, and how can I help them find their place in the world. And what do I see? I see a country rich in resources and opportunity, but a country struggling with a volatile and unpredictable global environment, a global environment characterized by changes in the value of our products on the world market, whether it be our wheat, our potash, our uranium, or our softwood lumber; a global environment where our old economic and business certainties are threatened — our once certain wheat markets, our once certain wheat customers are now our competitors, Mr. Speaker; an environment where individuals and institutions are struggling to cope with the demands of this new economy, yet an environment, too, where new professions and new businesses and new opportunities and new jobs are literally being born overnight.

So how do I, or we, answer my daughter's question, or my son's questions: dad, what should I study; what should I be when I grow up? A tough question, Mr. Speaker, a tough question to answer, and one that becomes more challenging each day because when I look around me I see another set of concerns on top of the challenge of earning a living.

The world my children will live in faces the puzzle of keeping a balance on one hand between growth and

industry, and on the other hand the dangers and risks which so often come with that kind of prosperity. For example, Mr. Speaker, my son and daughter see the paradox on one hand of the advantages of cheap nuclear power versus the tragedy of Chernobyl. They see the paradox on one hand of a wheat surplus in much of the western world versus the starvation in Africa. Indeed, a puzzle and a paradox for our children, Mr. Speaker.

So the next question that comes to mind goes beyond the usual set of concerns that we all feel as parents — will my child be able to adapt to the world that's coming? — to a deeper question. And that question is: what kind of world do we want for our children? What can we expect for our children?

Well we read and hear from those who forecast the future about a number of realities that we're facing. For example, we know from demographic surveys that there are some changes in the make-up of our population. Over the next few years that population age group of 0 to 18 is expected to stay, for the most part, stable or rise slightly; the 18 to 24 age group, for the most part, is going to remain about the same size; but there's going to be a dramatic increase in the 24 to 65 age grouping, Mr. Speaker. The "baby boomers" are moving through the system; they're getting older — the greying of North America, it's sometimes been referred to. The point that's significant here, Mr. Speaker, is there is not another wave of baby boomers that are going to come into the system. There is not another wave of "yuppies."

And that's got some tremendous implications for our industry, Mr. Speaker, if it's to remain competitive. Because for the employers today, what I would say to them is: what you see in terms of the work-force, for the most part, is what you're going to have, and you better look after it.

Other societal changes abound, Mr. Speaker: both parents working; single parents; more women in all professions and in all occupations; natives seeking more training opportunities; more opportunities for the disabled; child abuse on the rise, Mr. Speaker; the spectre and the tragedy of AIDS; a society where everyone is busy, busy, busy, Mr. Speaker — some have called this time-poverty. These are some of the societal and population trends that we must acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, in the world of the future and that our children will live in.

The other thing that seems fairly certain, Mr. Speaker, is that the world is changing, and it's changing more rapidly than ever before. Futurists and economists have put several labels on this, Mr. Speaker. Some call it the information age, some call it the technological age, some call it the service economy, some call it the post-industrial era, some simply label it the new economy. Take your choice, Mr. Speaker, of the labels, but what it all means is that they all agree that the world is changing, and it's going to change more rapidly than ever before, Mr. Speaker.

And in Saskatchewan we see this change as we move from no longer depending on extracting, refining, and processing raw materials to having to depend on

technological research and the processing of information for our well-being, a relative shift, Mr. Speaker, from a resource-based economy to this knowledge-based economy.

Well let's look at an example of this because when one talks in those kinds of terms, moving from the resource-based economy to the knowledge-based economy, it's very easy for us to be written off as yet another one of those futurists with yet another one of those labels or another one of those theories.

So how do we relate this to our children and to the adult population of this province this very day, Mr. Speaker? How do we relate the change that's coming upon us? Well I would use this example, Mr. Speaker, and I suppose it's because of my farm roots, but indeed farm roots are pretty prevalent across this province; almost all of us to this very day still know an aunt or an uncle or a grandfather or a grandmother on the farm.

Well back in my grandfather's day, Mr. Speaker, his economic and social well-being — his well-being depended on whether he had a good team of horses and men with strong backs, Mr. Speaker. The well-being of his farm, whether his farm succeeded or not, depended on that team of horses for the most part.

In my father's generation, Mr. Speaker, his economic well-being did not depend on whether he had good horses or not, it depended on whether he had wherewithal to purchase a new tractor — the classic would be, I suppose, the Massey 44. His well-being depended on not whether he could have more horses in the stable but whether he could have all the horsepower — in just one example of the mechanization that took place, Mr. Speaker.

So we move from the agrarian age, if you like, to what some have called the Iron Age. And that determined . . . his economic well-being depended on that tractor, if you like.

Now if my son chooses to farm, Mr. Speaker, his success will not depend on whether he's got good horses or a good tractor; his success will depend on knowledge. His success will depend on his ability to apply new technology and the ingenuity to develop the seed or the cell of the future — a seed, Mr. Speaker, that these biotechnologists might design, that for our province would be drought resistant and flood resistant and high yielding and resistant to wheat midge, and the list goes on and on and on.

His success or his well-being might depend on those genetic engineers who can replicate the super cow in his herd virtually overnight with embryo transfers and embryo splitting, Mr. Speaker. It is this kind of science and this kind of knowledge and this kind of technology, Mr. Speaker, that will determine whether his farm would fail or succeed.

So what I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, is that the key to our success as individuals, to our children's success, to our province's success, and indeed to our nation's success will depend not merely on natural resources, not on

cheap labour, not on nimble fingers but on brainpower, education, intelligence, the application of knowledge, Mr. Speaker. And I use that farm example to try and give an example as to what this change means in a very real way. It's a major fundamental structural change.

And what do we know about intelligence, the new commodity, Mr. Speaker. Intelligence has universal global distribution. It's found everywhere, unlike raw materials, unlike oil, unlike copper, unlike potash, unlike iron ore. Intelligence is found across this world, Mr. Speaker. So that dashes some pretty classic notions that we have this very day about this economy that we are today trying to struggle with. It dashes some pretty classic theories about: you'll be a success in the world, you and your people, if you've got rich copper mines or rich iron mines or rich potash mines. How much copper is there in a computer chip, Mr. Speaker. Not very much, I would suggest. Now being number one will depend on who is the best educated, the smartest, the one with the most up-to-date, relevant knowledge, Mr. Speaker.

The key question then becomes this, Mr. Speaker, given this change, and given this rapidity of this change, and given that knowledge is the key to having our young people deal with the change, in fact fashion the change, Mr. Speaker. The key question then becomes one of: how do we deal with the implication of change, the implications of the knowledge-based economy?

Well a half a century ago, Mr. Speaker, the designers of our education system were looking for ways to prepare their children in advance for the world that they would find. Now, Mr. Speaker, it is our turn. And we must be honest with ourselves, Mr. Speaker; we must be brutally honest. We must be prepared to ask the tough questions, tough questions like, Mr. Speaker, do we have the right education system for our children in the world of tomorrow? Quite simply, Mr. Speaker, do we have the right educational system?

Do we have the resolve to make changes, Mr. Speaker? And I'm not talking about piecemeal changes, because the economy is not undergoing piecemeal change. It's undergoing some fundamental structural change, as I tried to illustrate, Mr. Speaker. So do we have the resolve to make change, and what changes will we make, Mr. Speaker? These are the kinds of tough questions that we have to be prepared to face up to. We need to be willing to take up this challenge; we need to find a way to create more and better choices about the world we and our children will live in, Mr. Speaker.

If we accept that, then the question becomes, how; how do we do this; how do we raise these questions; how do we generate these choices?

Mr. Speaker, I would submit to you that that is what this legislation is all about. How did we get . . . If that, Mr. Speaker, lays the groundwork for why we must make changes, then the question became, as I said earlier, how did we get to the point where we . . . the changes we are proposing here today?

Well I can tell you this, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't single-handedly. And earlier today I introduced some

several individuals in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, who have done some fair amount of thinking about this, not just over the last few months, but indeed in some cases probably over a year or two or three, who saw these changes and the implications of that change coming long before I did. We've had a lot of help, and there's been a lot of work, Mr. Speaker, go into this.

And, Mr. Speaker, I could tell you as well that educational reform, if that's what we're talking about in the broadest sense of the word, is happening the world over. If we look at Saskatchewan, not only have we had to address the post-secondary education system, but as well the K to 12 system some three or four or five years ago — worked out a new blueprint called *Directions*, in so far as do we have the right system for our young children.

The University of Saskatchewan, recognizing that the world was going through some fundamental structural changes as well, embarked on a project some several months ago — an excellent project, I might add — entitled *Issues and Options*, where they have asked some of the same questions and looked at some of the same choices.

The community college system, Mr. Speaker, and to their credit, have gone through a self-analysis and published a paper that helped frame our thinking, called *A Better Tomorrow*.

And when I was in Helsinki at the European ministers of education meeting, Mr. Speaker, I heard from all over the European countries, and as well the rest of the western world, how they too were examining what they did and wondering what they should do.

(1500)

And as well, Mr. Speaker, our Premier raised the whole question of a national educational strategy at the last meeting when the premier met just a month or so ago. And as a result of that, Mr. Speaker, the minister of education, meeting just this week in Vancouver, are embarking on defining a new national education agenda, and I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that that's long overdue.

And as well, Mr. Speaker, in this province, the city of Saskatoon at the end of this month, there will be a post-secondary education forum examining — people across Canada, a national forum — examining, in my mind, the reality of the question of: what are the implications of the new economy? What are the challenges and the opportunities? How do we make it accessible? And of course, the question of funding, as well, Mr. Speaker.

Well given that we have universities, and the community college, and the K to 12 system, and what I heard at the premiers' meeting, in the sense across this country and across, indeed, the western world, Mr. Speaker, it seemed to make sense to stand back, given that we had a number of jurisdictions reviewing this, and look not just at individual parts, not just at the community college, not just at the universities, not just at the technical institutes, but to stand back and look at the entire post-secondary

education system and see how it should, indeed, fit together.

Well as part of that process, we, in this past winter, Mr. Speaker, along with my Legislative Secretary, the MLA for Regina Wascana, went and held meetings in about 20 communities across this province, Mr. Speaker, met with 500 groups, individuals, and associations to get their views on whether there should be change, and if so, what, to look at some of these tough questions, Mr. Speaker.

Well what did we hear, Mr. Speaker? What were the basic themes? What were the points that were raised time and time again by these individuals, albeit in different locations each time? The question of accessibility came forward time and time again. More people in more places in this province want more courses, Mr. Speaker. That's the easiest way of putting it — more people want access to more courses in more places in this province, Mr. Speaker, and access by all groups, Mr. Speaker.

They wanted a high standard of education and a relevant education. They wanted it sensitive to the market, to the market-place, and excellence should be the byword. They recognized, Mr. Speaker, that critical thinking and initiative would have . . . would help us shape change, not merely cope with change, Mr. Speaker.

They recognized that this system must meet the educational needs of older workers, that 25 to 65 category that's going to be the growing category, Mr. Speaker, of natives, of the disabled, of women.

And we must have a flexible system. Flexibility in terms of method, place, and delivery, Mr. Speaker. Flexibility in terms of when courses are offered, Mr. Speaker, as well. And they said this system must give full value for the dollar, top-rate management, and full accountability. These were the messages that came loud and clear at these 20 meetings across the province, Mr. Speaker.

Well, what was the result of all of this, Mr. Speaker? How did we get, as I said earlier, to this piece of legislation today? Well, the step that preceded it after these various examinations by various groups and meetings, we put together a blueprint which I have tabled in this House in estimates a couple of months ago, entitled *Preparing for the Year 2000*. It deal with the adult education side of our educational system.

And today, Mr. Speaker, what this legislation does is take that blueprint and start the building. And it's a very exciting building project, Mr. Speaker, and a very exciting future for all of us. And other parts of this blueprint are in various stages of construction, Mr. Speaker, and I would suggest to you some of those initiatives, including the initiative relative to illiteracy that is now a national initiative, you'll be hearing more about in the days to come as well, Mr. Speaker.

And as well, other parts of that blueprint include things like our commitment to distance education, to use these satellites that fly around the world, and the fibre optic technology, and whatever other kinds of new technology, to take educational programming out of the Reginas and the Saskatoons and the Prince Alberts and the Moose Jaws

of the world, and putting it into every corner of this province, Mr. Speaker — the Nipawins, the Stanley Missions, the Beauvals, the Swift Currents, the Weyburns, the Estevans, the Humboldts, and the Melforts of this province, Mr. Speaker — more programming in more places throughout this entire province, Mr. Speaker.

And that distance education hold potential . . . very much an exciting area for us, Mr. Speaker. It's always intrigued me, Mr. Speaker, that we could line these satellites up around the world and have 90 per cent of the population probably have access to last night's Blue Jays' game, but we can't seem to get those satellites lined up to deliver educational programming, Mr. Speaker. Well we're going to attack that area, Mr. Speaker, because it's too important not to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — When construction is complete, Mr. Speaker, we will have built a continuum of education to service our people, almost literally from cradle to grave; the kindergarten to grade 12 participating with the new institute, the regional colleges and the universities, to create a seamless education system to serve our basic educational needs, and continue to serve us through our lives as we frequently access the services to upgrade our skills. Or as Marshall McLuhan said, I think seven or eight years ago, Mr. Speaker, the job of the future will consist largely of learning a living. And with this seamless educational system, Mr. Speaker, it will be much easier to make that a reality here in Saskatchewan.

Well specifically, Mr. Speaker, now having outlined why we are proposing the changes, how we got to the choices that we did examine, I would now like to go into the details of the specific details of this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Firstly, the Bill provides for the amalgamation of the four technical institutes in Regina, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert, the urban community colleges in those same cities, the Advanced Training and Technology Centre in Saskatoon, and the Meadow Lake Vocational Centre, into one new institute, Mr. Speaker. The new institute will be called the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology.

And since April, four teams under the tutelage of Dr. Fred Gathercole have been working hard to ensure that that amalgamation process would be completed prior to students returning to classes this fall. I am pleased to announce that all the amalgamation teams who, by the way, consisted of college boards, principals of the colleges, and senior management of the institute at each location, have had their final meetings and have completed their task. And, Mr. Speaker, I say thanks to them all; it's been a job well done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Secondly, this Bill, Mr. Speaker, rationalizes the delivery of skill training in the institutes by removing the duplication of courses between institutes, and eliminating or reducing the number of courses whose graduates had low or no employment prospects. We've talked in this House before about, are

you doing anybody a favour by putting into a course where three or four out of 10 graduates cannot find full-time employment, Mr. Speaker. There's no sense turning out buggy whip manufacturers when the world wants CAD-CAM experts.

What has resulted is the creation of centres of excellence at each campus that will now nurture the expertise available in each of these areas. The institutes had in the past tried to be all things to all people — a laudable objective certainly, Mr. Speaker, but impossible to achieve, given the finite resources of manpower and budgets and materials.

Today each campus will work towards developing its specialties. STI in Moose Jaw will specialize in construction technologies, advanced manufacturing technologies, industrial construction trades, and business administration.

Each campus has unique features as well. STI leads the province in development of co-operative education programs. Co-op education provides students with an opportunity to alternate on-campus study with an on-the-job component.

Kelsey in Saskatoon will specialize in mechanical technologies, mechanical trades, advanced electronics, health sciences, and community services, Mr. Speaker. Kelsey and the Advanced Technology Training Centre, located as they are in the middle of Saskatchewan's own, what some would call, Silicon Valley, will also concentrate on the delivery of training in high technology.

Wascana will now focus on agriculture, health sciences, secretarial, and general industrial. And Wascana has been a leader in computer-based education in Saskatchewan. This individualized approach allows students greater flexibility in scheduling when they enter a course, and allows them to proceed at a rate, at their own rate, to graduation.

The Northern Institute of Technology, the newest of our institutes, has six major program centres of excellence, Mr. Speaker: renewable resources, transportation, business and secretarial, industrial trades, hospitality, and cosmetology. And when the Northern Institute of Technology opened in September of '86 it represented state of the art training in competency-based education in North America. This type of programming allows the greatest flexibility for students to access skill training suited to their needs, and allows for the delivery of all or any part of the program as needed.

Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, as a well-know fact to all of us, has only one million people. And in deciding to amalgamate all the institutes, we have created the core of a comprehensive, skill-training education system. Institute campuses have a dual responsibility. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear on this because in my sense, in so far as the people who might report on this and/or others who might have comment on it, there's been some suggestion that somehow this move to create a single campus somehow represents centralization.

And that's why I say, Mr. Speaker, I want you and other members here to take particular note when I say that institute campuses have a dual responsibility. They have the responsibility to provide the best possible on-site, core skill-training possible, Mr. Speaker.

And secondly, and equally important — and I underline the word equally, Mr. Speaker, because there should be no doubt in anyone's mind when we're talking about accessing, more people accessing more programs throughout the entire province, that the second mandate here, of providing extension services to the entire province in their area of specialization, is fundamental to that whole word, that term of accessibility, Mr. Speaker.

There has been some debate about somehow now that this single institute ... somehow we have to get beyond, Mr. Speaker, merely looking at this concept as in the past at Prince Albert, or Saskatoon, or Regina, Moose Jaw; their territory was somehow was the 22 miles or the 27 miles around the city, or the 33 miles or the 32 miles. That is a notion of the past economy. That is a notion that does not recognize the companion Bill, The Regional Colleges Act, Mr. Speaker.

We have an institute with four campuses and four centres of excellence, and they will do on-site core programming, but equally, Mr. Speaker, we expect them to feed that programming across this province, through the pipeline known as the regional college network. And let me be clear on that. Their community does not become the 10 or 12 or 13 miles around their city — their community, Mr. Speaker, becomes the entire province of this country. And yes, we'll use satellites, and yes, we'll use fibre optics, and yes, we'll use tutors and teachers across the province, Mr. Speaker.

And so when I hear some talk about this somehow represents centralization, I say to myself, Mr. Speaker, they simply do not understand what these two pieces of legislation mean. They simply do not understand what distance education can do in this province. And I want to be very clear on that, Mr. Speaker.

To this equation, Mr. Speaker, as I said, we add the regional college system, and these are companion pieces of legislation, for in Saskatchewan one cannot exist without the others. The colleges are now mandated to deliver an expanded array of technical institute programming. As well the colleges will be augmenting their relationship with the universities to deliver more first and second year university programs as well, Mr. Speaker, to the rural areas of this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we go through these initiatives and every one of them means increased accessibility; that is the bottom line here, Mr. Speaker. And while I'm on the topic of accessibility, Mr. Speaker, accessibility to all regions and all groups, let me add that we are on the brink of a major breakthrough in working with the native community to form a partnership in education. A native studies division will be created as an integral part of the new institute to ensure that natives are given fair and equitable access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the institute, Mr. Speaker.

It would be useful perhaps, Mr. Speaker, as well, for me to outline The Institute Act in some technical detail so it is on the record. And I'll move through this as reasonably expeditiously as I can, Mr. Speaker, I know some of this was debated during estimates, but I think it should be on the record because of the historical nature of today.

To outline The Institute Act in a more technical sense, the Act, Mr. Speaker, is designed to accomplish three things: create a province-wide comprehensive skill training institution; provide it with a mandate broad enough to service the needs of the province in the next century; and (c) ensure that its operational procedures allow it the maximum flexibility to provide access to the largest number of people in the province.

And I would elaborate on these points, Mr. Speaker. First, the new institute is the amalgamation of the four technical institutes, four urban community colleges, as I said before, ATTC (Advanced Technology Training Centre), and the Meadow Lake Vocational Centre.

The amalgamation combines the best quality of each system, namely, skill training, state of the art institution, flexibility and responsiveness to the rapidly changing needs of business — a critical mass large enough to provide highly specialized training and upgrading on and off campus, expertise in adult basic education and its distinctive needs, advanced technology training and career counselling, and a variety of training delivery methods such as co-operative and competency-based education that can be tailored to the needs of the student.

The institute, coupled with the regional colleges and the Northlands Career College, will provide a unified and co-ordinated delivery of vocational and technical education to all parts of the province, Mr. Speaker. The mandate of the institute provides it with the widest powers to enable it to serve the changing needs of the community.

The Act clearly spells out what the business of the new institute is. The institute will provide academic, scientific, trade, technical, and vocational courses and programs of study; university programs in Moose Jaw and Prince Albert through agreement with the universities; continuing education courses and programs identified as needed by the community; credit programs in rural Saskatchewan delivered by way of contract to the regional community college; career counselling services; programs and courses; and an important area, Mr. Speaker, adult basic education and academic upgrading.

It will form a partnership, and this is as well important because we've heard this time and time again, Mr. Speaker, about being relevant and sensitive to the market-place. It will form a partnership with business, industry and labour to ensure that the training it provides not only satisfies its clients but leads with the state of the art instruction and equipment.

(1515)

To ensure that the institute remains in tune to the changing needs of the community and the labour market

there's a requirement that its mandate undergo a thorough review every five years, Mr. Speaker.

We expect the establishment of SIAST, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, to provide the province with the means of combining resources of the technical institutes and colleges to address the significant new program initiatives and directions which lie ahead.

And I would like to mention just three of these, Mr. Speaker. Because once again we have had some fair debate in this House over the past several months, to crying, lamenting — and not necessarily all wrongly — some changes in some of our programming, some decreases in some areas. As I said before, it seems to me that there's a little gain for anyone to take the particular course of study. At the end of the day, three or four out of 10 find employment in that area.

So we hear much about that side, Mr. Speaker. But it seems to me it would be particularly irresponsible of us if we did not think about the other side. What are the training opportunities of the future; where are the jobs of the future; and do we have the programming in place to deliver those opportunities for our young people?

So it is imperative that all programs remain current, particularly in areas like engineering, agriculture, health, business, management, and the trades. Equally it is critical that they make more extensive use of tools like computers, to provide adults with greater access to computer-assisted and computer-managed learning opportunities.

Fibre optics possess the possibility for interactive, two-way exchanges between instructors and students at a distance. Satellite transmissions will provide individuals with greater access to learning across the province but particularly, in the North, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The application of advanced technology, such as computers and robotics to the manufacturing process has already begun to take place. Programs will need to prepare graduates with skills related to the use of these technologies in the manufacturing process, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

New program initiatives will need to be developed that reflect the changing needs of workers in the market-place. It will be essential to develop programs in tourism, hospitality, and recreation aimed at providing the industry not only with entry-level graduates but also with managers, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Program initiatives to the resource sector including new industrial materials, biotechnologies, geological and environmental sciences will be critical if the province is to maintain a competitive edge on world markets, Mr. Speaker.

I would suggest to you that all of those areas, whether it be biotechnology, or the geological or environmental sciences, Mr. Speaker, or the tourism industry, those, Mr. Speaker, in a diversifying economy are the jobs of the future. And we must not forsake our children in terms of having the training opportunities available for them.

As it relates to the question of governance, and certainly one that has had some fair amount of attention paid to it at the institute level for now some, probably a year or two or maybe even more, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the kinds of things, I suppose, if I as minister had merely heard the issue of governance being raised merely at the individual institutes . . . And one could have said that they have a vested interest, and perhaps there's a broader story.

But the reality is when I went across this province, Mr. Speaker, and met with people, it didn't matter what the town, the issue of governance came up. And so it was quite plain, Mr. Speaker, that something had to be changed there. The kinds of adjectives I heard and the kinds of terms I heard describing it, and not necessarily always fairly, but certainly the adjectives and terms were there — words like inflexible, too slow, stifles initiative, unresponsive, always have to check with Regina; terms describing all that is wrong with the present system, Mr. Speaker, where the technical institutes are part of the Department of Education, formerly the department of advanced education.

So there was no question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, changes had to be made, and a number of changes have been put into place as you well know. The institute will be moved out from direct control of government to an appointed board of directors. These directors will represent business, industry, labour, education, the arts and community groups throughout this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In effect, I hope to name a board that is a microcosm of the province to guide its progress. The board will be responsible for the development of an annual budget, overseeing the general operations of the institute and fostering an environment that will support program renewal and encourage new initiatives.

The institute will use modern management techniques to ensure that its new mandate is delivered. That means setting measurable annual goals and objectives, Mr. Deputy Speaker, undertaking strategic long-term planning that will enable it to anticipate certain trends and prepare the institute to address them, developing a strategy to maintain the relevance of its programs, standardizing courses and ensuring credit transfers. It will establish regular meetings with regional colleges and the universities so we have that seamless continuum, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and give technical advisory boards an expanded provincial mandate.

What will all of this mean, Mr. Speaker, in a very real and tangible way? One can talk about the various mandates and goals and objectives and what the board shall do and not do and the detail of the legislation. But for those out there in Saskatchewan this very day, to get a sense of the perspective of what this new Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology really means, a perspective that's sometimes useful in the mind's eye, Mr. Speaker, is this. That this new institute will become the second largest post-secondary institution in the province, second only behind the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's what we're talking about today. It will have an estimated \$125 million in building and facility assets and an annual operating budget of approximately \$60 million.

The legislation ensures that the institute as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, run on a break-even basis. No deficits are allowed. The government will continue to provide a core operating grant so that there should be no mistake about our government's commitment to post-secondary education. Nevertheless, there is an expectation that further revenues will be produced from outside sources, including corporate fund raising and greater utilizing of alumnae contacts, Mr. Speaker.

I think that's a particularly relevant point and one I know that the business community is increasingly sensitive to because they too are reading the signals of the world that's changing, Mr. Speaker. They too realize that their success as a company is linked to the success of their individuals in terms of them having skilled and knowledgeable minds. That is the new commodity of the future, Mr. Speaker. The business community will have to be not merely some kind of patron, which has been the classic kind of adjective that has been ascribed to business in the past, they now must become proactive partners, Mr. Speaker. Many have done much already, but we even look to more from that area, Mr. Speaker.

To ensure the full flexibility of the institute, it will be allowed to set aside funds for over year end for especially earmarked program initiatives.

It is expected that a certain percentage of the core grant and the profits of the institute be set aside — this is a particularly exciting area, Mr. Speaker — will be set aside, some funds for applied research and development, and for the purchase of new technological equipment, and for staff development, Mr. Speaker.

And that's particularly important to the employees, Mr. Speaker, at this new institute. And now I want to say a few remarks specifically relevant to the employees themselves — what of them?

Yes, Mr. Speaker, some several months ago there was lay-offs in our institute system. We've had some early retirements, Mr. Speaker. We've lost some experienced people as well. And yes, Mr. Speaker, there's been some uncertainty. But I want to tell you and all the employees of our institutes that that is all behind us. We now have an exciting, brand-new structure here that will be literally, Mr. Speaker, the best in the western world. And it will be the best because much as we can have fancy buildings, Mr. Speaker, and computer-assisted and competency-based educational systems, at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, it's the people who are in that building that will make the difference.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the employees of the new institute constitute the institute's most valuable resource, and it will only be through their hard work and dedication that the goals of the new institute will be achieved.

I want to start off by saying, Mr. Speaker, because the questions come like this. Will employees of the urban colleges and technical institutes and the Advanced Technology Training Centre become employees of the new institute? And the answer is, Mr. Speaker, that urban college institute and ATTC employees, including those currently on leaves of absence, seasonal lay-off, or

re-employment lists, will become employees of the new institute.

There will be no staff lay-offs resulting from the amalgamation, Mr. Speaker. And I know some couple of weeks ago I was out meeting with the institute faculties and staff, and there was some rumours going around about the day this legislation is passed that there will somehow be another wave of lay-offs. And let me be clear on that. There is job security, Mr. Speaker.

Well then the question becomes: will, through this legislation, in-scope employees continue to be represented by their union? Mr. Deputy Speaker, the employees who transfer to the new institute from the college and institutes will not continue to be represented by their current union. However, Mr. Speaker, and this is an important "however," this does not mean that they cannot choose to unionize after they transfer to SIAST if they so wish. The employees of the new institute have the legal right to choose how and by whom they want to be represented in their dealings with the institute as the employer, Mr. Speaker.

So let me be very clear on that — employees have always had, and will continue to have in this province, the freedom to choose. Mr. Speaker, it's not up to me to tell who should represent them. It's up to them to determine who they want to represent them and how they want to be represented.

Then there are questions about well, somehow, and the rumours were going around, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of somehow when I become part of this new institute, my wages will be cut 20 per cent. That was one other of the rumours that was going around, Mr. Speaker. Well nothing could become further from truth. There is pay security, Mr. Speaker.

The larger issue there is: will the collective bargaining agreement still apply? And the answer is no. However, before anybody jumps to an erroneous or inaccurate conclusions once again, Mr. Speaker, I will say that the majority of the terms and conditions which employees currently have, whether it be the pay, will be continued upon their employment in the new institute. I think of things like vacation leave, and I mentioned a couple of other ones already about pay levels, Mr. Speaker, and there are others.

Now that doesn't mean to say there aren't things that won't have to be negotiated because there will be. Currently with the amalgamation there's eight or nine different bargaining units, some have 32-hour work weeks, some have 36, some get paid twice a month, some are paid once a month. So yes, there are things to negotiate. But we must keep in mind that the jobs are security, and the size of that pay cheque is secure as well, Mr. Speaker. And I think that would only be right and decent for the employees of this fine new institute, Mr. Speaker, because they are the ones who are going to make this the finest institute there is in North America, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, parents, legislators, and ladies and gentlemen, this Bill represents the culmination of a lot of hard work by a lot of people, some of whom I hope to be joining later yet today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for a reception. It represents the work of a lot of people, and I would have to, as well, acknowledge the work by a lot of people in my department, officials as well, members of this caucus, and people right across this country . . . province.

I have today attempted to lay out why — and that why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is equally relevant for this Bill as it is for the companion, Bill, the Act respecting Regional Colleges — lay out why we are proposing these changes. I then went through, Mr. Speaker, how we arrived at those changes, what the choices were, and, in fact, outlined today what one of those major decisions was.

And so now it is up to all members of this legislature to decide in their own minds, and I have no doubt where this caucus is coming from, but I ask all members to wholeheartedly support this Bill, and I particularly say this to the opposition. They have a choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the choice here is one really of either we cling to the past, to the notions of the old economy; cling to the notion that somehow the Massey 44 will do the job, Mr. Speaker; be a change resister, if you like, in their case; or they can join with us, and I say this in a very sincere way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they can join with us in building a bright future for our children and young adults — a future in my mind, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that has challenge, yes, but plenty of opportunity, and a future of greater accessibility and a future, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of excitement.

Simply put, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and this is why, when I started today, I asked all members to put aside their legislative hats for a moment and don their hats as parents, which many are — simply put, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is at stake here is our children's well being. Up until this point in our society, Mr. Deputy Speaker, each succeeding generation has always enjoyed a better standard of living than the one that came before them. My father enjoyed a better standard of living than his father did. I've enjoyed a better standard of living than my father did.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we do not respond in our education system, as hard as the questions may be and as hard as the choices may be in terms of making change, we are in danger for the first time perhaps in the history of this country and indeed of the western world., Mr. Speaker, of having a generation whose standard of living will not increase as ours has, and as has our fathers did before us. That is really what the issue here is, Mr. Speaker, the well-being, the continued well-being of our children and this adult population, indeed the well-being of the province and the well-being of our entire country, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So the choice should be clear, Mr. Speaker, cling to the past, be a change-resister, or come with us and build the future.

(1530)

I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, if we do not grapple

with the future, that we might be relegating our children to the Massey 44's and stone boats, or worse yet back to the dump rakes and the horses. It would be like relegating them back to a time when we produced buggy whip manufacturers when the world wants biotechnologists.

To not respond would be to let our children — it will be to let our country down and our province down. We cannot let our children, our province, or our country down, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I say we meet this challenge by supporting Bill 46, An Act respecting the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, and I do so move, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to be able to take part in this debate today.

I want to say to the minister that we on this side of the House support the notion that the education system in this province has to expand and adjust to meet, as you call it, the information age. And I suppose, Mr. Minister, that that's about where the agreement stops because we on this side of the House think that, in the past few months, instead of preparing the technical institute and community college education system for the year 2000, as you like to talk, has taken us back to the year 1967.

Mr. Minister, you are asking the public of Saskatchewan to believe that the man who's been responsible in this government for laying off or giving early retirement, forced early retirement to some 2,000 people in the public service over the last few months, including over 140 technical institute instructors and administrative staff at our technical institutes, and at least a couple of dozen more in the community college system, is now the same man who today claims that the lay-offs are behind us, and that we're somehow into a new era of building with this newly created super-institute.

And, Mr. Minister, I want to say to being with, that the structure that you set up is not the key here. The question is going to be how the staff that you're working with in the institutes feel about the new system. And the first mistake that you've made, Mr. Minister, which is symbolic of the policy of your government, is that you failed to meaningfully consult with the staff and the faculty and the students in Saskatchewan's community college and institute system before you brought down this Bill today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Your idea, Mr. Minister, your idea of consultation is a quick trip around to the four Saskatchewan technical institutes two weeks ago to announce that the amalgamation Bill was going to come down and to respond to questions from the audience.

And, Mr. Minister, I think that the feeling of faculty and staff and students in the technical institute system in this province was summed up by your visit to Prince Albert, where when you went to Prince Albert and you laid on your fancy rhetoric and made your announcement, the faculty at the Northern Institute of Technology greeted you with what you deserved — which was absolute

silence. They didn't have a single comment or a single question, and it's not because that faculty doesn't have excellent ideas about what the future of post-secondary education in this province should be. It's because you, sir, and your government intentionally left them out of the process of shaping the future of the technical institute and community college system in this province.

And I say, Mr. Minister, and members on this side of the House say, that we have outstanding professional educators in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — And, Mr. Minister, you only get as much as you put into the process. You failed to consult the staff of Kelsey or Regina Plains Community College or the Prince Albert Regional Community College or STI. Those faculty members — as they told you at the meetings that I was in attendance at — faculty members again and again pointed out to you that they had not been meaningfully involved in the process.

I stand by that accusation today, Mr. Minister, and I say to you that instead of rushing through an amalgamation, which you are now trying to do today in a period of four or five months, you should have gone about developing a new structure for the technical institute and community college system in this province if you think the changes are needed. And we on this side of the House thought the changes were called for. You should have done that over a period of 12 to 18 months in full consultation with the faculty and staff and students involved in open meetings, Mr. Minister, where anyone who was interested in education could come and attend and express their views, instead of at closed meetings where the only people that were there were people who were invited by you and your staff.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — And that's the crux of the issue in my mind, Mr. Minister, is the question of process.

And the second issue, of course, is the issue of funding. I noted with interest, Mr. Minister, that you didn't say a word about new funding for the institute and community college system. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is important because if the minister is expecting the existing technical institute and existing community colleges in this province, which will soon I take it, be referred to as regional colleges; if you are expecting those institutions to deliver a major extension initiative in rural Saskatchewan in university education and technical school education, which we on this side of the House would strongly support; but if you were expecting that to be done under your existing budget which represents a significant budget cut in fiscal year 1987-88 over fiscal year 1986-87, then you are sadly mistaken, Mr. Minister. You've just finished laying off over 140 professional educators; you're retired dozens of others who had years of experience in the educational system, and now you're asking us to believe that you're going to launch a major new extension initiative in this province, Mr. Speaker, after all those lay-offs.

And I say, Mr. Minister, that you'll only be able to do that with substantial new funding, and I didn't hear a word about new funding in your second reading speech today, and I found that to be very interesting.

Now, Mr. Minister, I want to move to the question of the structure of this new institute. This Bill has only been before us for a day, and I think that that's very typical of the way your government has gone about preparing legislation for the people of Saskatchewan in this session.

The tradition of this House has always been that if you have a major piece of legislation you bring that piece of legislation down, you put it before the people of Saskatchewan and provide an opportunity for public comment for a month or two, and then debate begins in earnest. And I find it interesting that debate begins on this Bill today, only 24 hours after it's been tabled in this Assembly, and after there's obviously, Mr. Deputy Speaker, been no opportunity for public comment.

But I think that some things about the Bill are obvious. And the first thing that I want to address, Mr. Minister, and Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the issue of centralization versus decentralization. Because we on this side of the House believe that in order to have a responsive educational system, in order to have a post-secondary education system that is responsive to community need, that is responsive to changing employer needs in our province, that we have to have a post-secondary education system that is geared, provisioned for local input.

And in our mind, Mr. Minister, what you are doing with this Bill today is centralizing the decision making process in post-secondary education in the province of Saskatchewan. Now albeit, Mr. Minister, that does offer some advantages, I don't deny that. And we on this side of the House don't deny that it offers some co-ordination advantages. But with that centralization, Mr. Minister, come a great many disadvantages.

And in our mind the major disadvantage is the lost opportunity for student input, for faculty input, and for community input in the governance of the technical institutes and the community colleges. And I want to address this for a moment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the premise of the community college system when it was set up in communities like Saskatoon and Regina and Prince Albert and Moose Jaw was that it was going to be a system that was geared to responding to community need; that there would be local boards that would be sensitive to community need.

And what you are doing by way of this legislation is abolishing those local community college boards and replacing them, as you've said yourself, with one central board made up of between 10 and 20 people that you will appoint. And we will no doubt see, if the record of your government bears any resemblance to the record that will come with this Bill, we'll not doubt see, apart from probably the appointment of two or three outstanding professional educators in this province, a large number of patronage appointments by your government, which has been the record on the appointments of all your boards.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we on this side of the House

want to outline what the potential alternative to this is, because we don't claim for a minute that the existing system didn't need changes. And we're of the view, Mr. Minister, and Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the time has come for making provision in the educational system not only for autonomy but for local autonomy and for elected boards — for an elected component to our boards.

And my challenge to you today, Mr. Minister, is to bring forward amendments to your legislation that will make provision for community input and for opportunities for board members to be elected. And I lay out to you today, sir, an alternative structure for your changes to the post-secondary education system.

And I say to you that we on this side of the House, instead of supporting one large super-institute with a board appointed by government, call on the Government of Saskatchewan to establish four boards, amalgamate the community college and the technical institute in Prince Albert — NIT (Northern Institute of Technology) — together under one board, and make provision for an elected student representative, at least one, at least one elected representative from the faculty and staff, and an opportunity for elected representatives from community organizations that are interested in post-secondary education in the city of Prince Albert.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — And establish the same model, establish the same model in Saskatoon and Moose Jaw and Regina. And, Mr. Minister, I think that this model, and the effectiveness of this model, has been clearly demonstrated by the historical record of the regional college in the city of Prince Albert.

That regional collect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has been operating for many years with a great deal of success, and I think that what has made the Prince Albert Regional Community College stand out from the other community colleges in the province of Saskatchewan is its ability to be responsive to community need. And I think that's been demonstrated by the large turn-out of hundreds of people at public meetings in Prince Albert when you set about abolishing that regional community college board, Mr. Minister.

And what we're suggesting today in this legislature is that you establish a local council in each of Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina and Moose Jaw; that council to be made up of community organizations in each of those centres and their surrounding geographical area that are interested in adult education. They will be made up of organizations that vary from the Red Cross and the Metis society through to the local cancer foundation and the chamber of commerce and a large variety of other organizations that will be interested in education, whether it be from the point of view of being employers or whether it be from the point of view of being consumers of education in this province.

(1545)

And I say to you, Mr. Minister, establish that kind of a council in each of those communities — it will no doubt

have anywhere from 50 to 100 organizations involved in it — and then let those organizations and the representatives that they send to that council elect three or four members on to each of the boards that will run the amalgamated community college and technical institute in each of the centres of Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw, and Prince Albert.

In all, Mr. Minister, what I'm suggesting to you is a local board in each one of those four centres made up of approximately 10 to 12 members. The details should be worked out in consultation with the people who will be affected, but that makes provision for two things: one, for elected representation from faculty and staff at the technical institute and community college in that centre; and second, that makes opportunity for elected representatives from interested community organizations who are concerned about the future of post-secondary education in this province.

In addition to that, Mr. Minister, if you're concerned about getting a province-wide perspective on the boards of each of the institutes, and I think there's a good deal of merit to that, there's nothing to stop you from appointing two or three members to the local board that will bring that kind of a perspective with them. And our suggestion, therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that this piece of legislation be amended and instead of one super-institute being created, we have four locally autonomous institutes and community colleges run by boards that are largely made up of elected members.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, if you're concerned about attaining excellence in the community college and technical institute system, and if you're concerned about providing and obtaining public input in that system, then you'll look seriously at the model that we're proposing today.

And, Mr. Minister, I have a second challenge for you. And that is, if you are so certain — and I'd be grateful for your attention — if you're so certain that your system that you're proposing here today is good, then instead of rushing it through the legislature as you obviously propose to do, you'll be prepared to make provision for public hearings on this Bill.

Take it to the education committee of this Assembly, which hasn't met once since your government was established five years ago, and let that education committee of this Assembly go all around the province and obtain public response to this major restructuring of our post-secondary education system.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — You've said yourself, Mr. Minister, you've said yourself that this constitutes a major restructuring of the post-secondary education system in this province. And we agree with that, Mr. Minister, and we say therefore that this Bill deserves to get the kind of public scrutiny that the people of Saskatchewan want to give it. Put your education committee to work in this legislature, and let's go out and have all-party hearings in

this province to get public response to this Bill.

I would welcome that, and I think we'd be very well served by the public comment that we'd receive from professional educators and interested members of the general public who, as of yet, have not had an opportunity to be consulted in open forums on your plan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Now, Mr. Minister, I want to address another issue before adjourning the debate today, and that is that you claim that you are taking so-called good care of the employees who have been working for you in the technical institute and community college systems of Saskatchewan.

And I, of course, beg to differ. I say that never before have we had a Minister of Education and a Department of Education that has treated its professional educators with such arrogance, with such insensitivity, and with such callousness.

Laying off 142 professional staff virtually without notice, and in some cases asking them to leave their offices on the same day that they got their notice, is the kind of record that any Minister of Education ought to be thoroughly ashamed of, and the kind of record that members on this side of the House will never practise, I can assure you.

But I want to turn specifically to the Bill and point out to the minister, as he has acknowledged himself, that despite the requests at each of the meetings that I attended to have him ensure that employees in the technical institute and community college system would have their union rights protected under section 37 of The Trade Union Act, the minister has made a conscious decision not to do that. And I want to point out to the members of the public, and all members of this Assembly what a significant decision that is, because it's always been tradition in this province that when members of an institution, when staff and faculty and employees of an institution are transferred from one institution to another, their collective bargaining agreement and their trade union rights are transferred with them.

And what you are telling every employee in the technical institute and community college system in this province, most of whom are represented by Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union, is that the union that represents them now will not represent them the day that this Bill comes into effect. And I say, Mr. Minister, that you have no business disregarding the tradition of the collective bargaining rights and trade union rights of employees in this province, and that's exactly what you're choosing to do. And this is symbolic of the way that you've been treating technical institute and community college staff ever since you became the Minister of Education.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — So I can assure you, Mr. Minister, that we'll also be introducing amendments to this legislation which will force your government, if they're adopted, to recognize employee rights under section 37 of The Trade

Union Act.

I might note, Mr. Minister, that there are a number of other concerns which employees in the technical institute and community college system ought to rightly have upon reviewing this Bill. As I've said, I've had less than 24 hours to review the Bill, but a number of things strike me as serious questions right off the top. And I want to mention two or three of those to you before adjourning the debate today.

One is that instructors and faculty in the technical institute and in many of the community colleges are presently covered by the long-term disability plan that's operated by Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union. It's less than clear what kind of disability plan your government is now proposing that they have with the creation of this super-institute.

There is also no mention of seniority and seniority rights for long-time employees of the technical institute and community college system. And I'm not accusing you of ignoring their seniority, I'm simply saying that the Bill doesn't address that issue.

And I ask you, Mr. Minister, surely you're not going to tell this Assembly that people who've worked for you loyally in the education system for 15 or 20 years are not going to have their seniority recognized with the creation of this new institute. I hope that you're planning to recognize their seniority, but there's no reference to that in the Bill, and I hope that you'll clarify that issue.

There's no mention of the question of grievance procedures either, Mr. Minister. There's no indication of a dispute settlement mechanism under the Bill. I hope you'll also clarify that matter.

Mr. Minister, I've outlined a number of concerns that members on this side of the Assembly have. I hope that instead of rushing this Bill through the Assembly you will consider my suggest for setting up public hearings on the Bill. That will not delay the Bill, Mr. Minister, for more than a matter of three to four weeks. I think it's the least you can do, given the sweeping changes that you're proposing to make, and I urge you to consider that suggestion.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 47 — An Act respecting Regional Colleges

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well as I mentioned in my remarks on Bill No. 46 that much of the rationale for why we're making the changes in our . . . whether it be in our regional college system, the community college side, or the institute urban college side, the rationale is the same for both Bills, and that's why they are companion pieces of legislation.

I've talked about some of the social and demographic

changes the world is undergoing, as well as some of the economic changes the world is undergoing. And so I won't go through that again, but I would want it to be on the record that the rationale, the "why" if you like, is the same for this Bill as it was for the previous Bill.

When one looks at Bill No. 47, Mr. Speaker, An Act respecting Regional Colleges, as I mentioned at a meeting that I think my hon. colleague the member from Saskatoon University was at, in fact, when I met with regional college of community college chairmen and chairpersons and their principals, really what this Act could be called in a more functional sense is an Act respecting accessibility to adult education in this province., because that's really what we're talking about here, Mr. Speaker — accessibility. That's what this Bill means in its purest terms.

As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, during the meetings I held across this province, and the hon. member in his earlier remarks relatives to the Bills that fact us, are before us today, suggested somehow that there's been no consultation. And, Mr. Speaker, I say again, and I say again for this record that I have difficulty with that observation because I don't know what you call conferences that were established last year by the Department of Advanced Education, Leadership 2000, which in many ways started it, the *Issues and Options* paper that the university has undergone, the Better Tomorrow that the community college has done, the 20 meetings that I attended across this province last winter. He wants public meetings now.

I say, Mr. Speaker, where was the hon. member last winter? We cannot run this government by paralysis by analysis, Mr. Speaker. There's a job that has to get done because the world is changing, and is changing day by day.

We had 20 meetings across this province — myself, my colleague from Regina Wascana — 20 meetings; 500 groups, associations, individuals including, Mr. Speaker, unions, employees, employers, business, industry, educators, students, parents, school boards, teachers, service clubs, volunteer agencies across this province, Mr. Speaker. And they told us in clear, and in no uncertain terms . . . and I've gone through what we heard, but I'll say it again, Mr. Speaker, because we heard time and time again that there was the question and a lack of accessibility to a wide range or educational opportunities, particularly in the rural areas.

People told me that they wanted more skill training, more university courses to help them upgrade and keep their children closer to home, keep them in the community. We hear a lot of talk about the community. Well what better way, Mr. Speaker? Not that you can do everything in the community. You cannot replace the milieu of a campus, whether it be a technical institute campus or a university campus. You cannot do everything there.

But that first or second year of university or institute programming, if we could provide more of that in their own communities, it's a lot cheaper for the individuals, cheaper for the parents, Mr. Speaker — more basic education to help adults upgrade their skills in reading

and writing and giving them an opportunity to be eligible for technical institute or university training.

They suggested things like the distance education. They told us people working in rural areas needed upgrading of skills without having to travel hundreds of miles, leaving jobs and families behind.

I listened again with interest when the hon. member talked about Regina and Prince Albert and Saskatoon and Moose Jaw. We must look beyond, Mr. Speaker. What of the rest of the province? What of Meadow Lake? Yes, it's a tragedy and a hardship to have to drive from Regina to Moose Jaw to take a course that was once here. But what of that individual from Meadow Lake or Nipawin? Are you not thinking of him? You can't have this narrow view of merely that the core should be in four centres of this province.

The issue for us and our government is how do we get that core, whether it be university programming or technical institute programming, delivered across this province? And that's what this Bill is about. The pipeline will be the regional college network, Mr. Speaker, and the Northlands Career College. That is what is going to make education accessible across this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — A phrase used at one of the meetings was that the system will have to bend to improve access to non-traditional groups. Natives, Mr. Speaker, the disabled — greater attention has to be paid there; and a recurring major issue, Mr. Speaker, the need for retraining those already in the work place.

I was on an open line show this very morning, Mr. Speaker. One of the questions that was put to me by a caller was, I'm in the work-force now and I want to be able to have training because that's how I'm going to keep my job with this technological change, he said, and I've got to be able to take those courses at night. That's why I say we have to have a system that's flexible in terms of method, time, and place, Mr. Speaker.

The need for retraining those already in the work-force — persons representing women's groups, natives and people with disabilities spoke passionately, Mr. Speaker, about social inequalities. That again I heard across the province time and time again.

(1600)

Well with respect to this new Act, specifically, Mr. Speaker, I would touch on a couple of areas, a technical review, once again, of the meat of the Act, if you like. But first I would like to give some background and some history to put it in perspective for all members.

Community colleges were first established under legislation in 1973 — four colleges, so-called pilots were established in La Ronge, Humboldt, Melville and Swift Current. By 1975-76, 11 more were in place, including colleges in Regina and Saskatoon. Within another couple of years, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Indian Community College and Lakeland College were

established and finally the North East Regional Community College came into being in 1980.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, it is fair to say that in 1972 it was very clear that the community college system was being established to serve rural Saskatchewan. It was to provide learning opportunities for rural adults that did not have ready access to the two university campuses or the then three technical institute campuses, or the larger libraries and the services they provided, or the YWs and the YMCAs or the evening class at the university extension department and the institute the extension departments offered, and the many private vocational schools located mainly in Regina and Saskatoon, and the story goes on and on.

I have no doubt that that community college network was put in place to try to address the inequality, if you like, Mr. Speaker, in the system.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, the colleges were established to serve those adults who were not being sufficiently served, and I suppose one word we could say rural adults. And what was the mandate of the college system, Mr. Speaker, back then in the early '70s? The mandate, as I understand it from the legislation, was left very general and broad in scope — “to provide any programs requested by adults,” and that is in quotation marks, Mr. Speaker.

In those early years, we look at the history of the community college system in those early years. Over 80 per cent of the programs delivered were hobby and recreation courses. It was useful for residents to finally have a focus in the community for all these courses that were in several instances previously offered by school boards, recreation associations, and others.

During the last decade the world has changed and the colleges have matured, Mr. Speaker. Rural residents have gradually requested more credit and specialized skill training, upgrading and updating courses, and university programs. The college was now trying to attract the young person who needed career counselling or adults who wished to broaden their employability to be able to relate to an increasingly sophisticated and technologic world.

The world of the community college, in fact, Mr. Speaker, has changed so dramatically that last year only 5 per cent of its programming was devoted to the hobby and recreation area. The people were telling us, by the courses they were wanting and taking, Mr. Speaker — it went from 80 per cent in the early '70s to last year of 5 per cent.

And that should tell us something. That should tell us that the system has matured and they want more sophisticated programming in these colleges, Mr. Speaker. And yes, Mr. Speaker, we have been criticized by some for our change in policy regarding the hobby and leisure programs, and whereby we have asked the regional college to make arrangements for their delivery by other means, Mr. Speaker, as was done in the past — I suspect in the late '60s and even the early '70s.

Clearly, as I have indicated before, Mr. Speaker, the

colleges and the adults of the province were sending a signal to the government — 80 per cent down to 5 per cent. They were sending a signal to change the focus, redeploy your resources at the colleges to a clearer mandate, one that is directed at credit programs and courses that enhance employability.

Now that doesn't mean to say, Mr. Speaker, that there aren't a number of people that haven't been substantively helped through the leisure courses. I particularly recall stories of those who got their first chance to enter a system that ultimately led them into some adult basic education, and their first entry was often with hobby and recreation programs. But we expect these to continue as a vital part of the community being delivered by volunteer or community recreation associations and so forth, Mr. Speaker.

Well specifically, The Regional Colleges Act — and move to the meat of the Bill, Mr. Speaker. The major objectives of The Regional Colleges Act are threefold: to clearly establish in legislation a new mandate for the colleges; to establish updated and flexible management practices; and third, to establish the new Northlands Career College. I would like to elaborate on these points.

The mandate of the colleges explicitly spells out the business, once again, that the college is in. They will provide technical institute and university programs under contract, cost-recoverable training, career services, and adult basic education, upgrading, and literacy programs. The colleges will continue to work co-operatively with businesses to ensure that training is provided to meet the labour market needs of the communities, Mr. Speaker.

In the next year — and this is particularly exciting, Mr. Speaker — in the next year we will be working with the two universities to establish a common first and second year arts and science program that will allow students to access either university after successfully completing two years at a regional college. Now, Mr. Speaker, is that not going to be another historic day in this province's educational history when, for the first time, you don't have to go to Regina or Saskatoon or the Prince Alberts of the world, or wherever — two or three spots to this very day, to get that first and second year arts and science . . . access it in the communities, maybe at night even in some instances, and get that first and second year university and be able to go to either campus.

I mean, to me, Mr. Speaker, it is a sad comment in this province today when we don't have transferability between our institutions, our educational institutions. We are too small a province for that kind of bottle-neck, Mr. Speaker. And this is a point I have raised with regional colleges, I've raised with the institute, and I've raised with the boards of governors of our two universities. And, Mr. Speaker, we will be undeterred in our goal to have standard first and second year arts and science classes across the province through our regional college network, Mr. Speaker.

And what a great day that will be for members of this legislature, again, Mr. Speaker. A strong partnership will be forged between the regional colleges and the new institute. The institute will continue to provide the

expertise and vocational and technical programs. The regional college network, as I've said before, Mr. Speaker, will act as the pipeline to take this training out to all areas of the province.

To ensure that the college remain attuned to the needs of the community, I'm proposing a new item that is vital for evolving educational enterprise — the requirement for a regular review of its mandate every five years. It will be an opportunity to assess their past achievements and look ahead to the future so that we discipline ourselves to look at where we've come from and where we're going, Mr. Speaker. It will be a time to make any of those mid-course corrections that are needed in this rapidly changing world.

Mr. Speaker, as I've previously mentioned, the institute Act and the regional colleges Act are in two parts — companion parts of an integral whole. To make the new world of the colleges closer to the institute you will note that we expect the colleges and the institute to conduct their affairs in a similar manner. The colleges will continue to be led by a seven-member board of directors appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council in addition to their normal powers, which I will not go through, Mr. Speaker.

Board members asked, during this legislation and during our consultation, asked that a variety of changes be made to make their work more efficient and more effective, and this has been done. And we can go through those changes in the Committee of the Whole, Mr. Speaker.

We are, too, giving them more autonomy, the college boards, in their personnel management. As it relates to the question of space for our colleges, Mr. Speaker, it has been an issue for some time. Colleges have been saying there is a need for more permanent facilities — if not owned by the colleges, at least longer-term leases are required. In some rural areas and in the North this has become a critical need as the regional college attempts to provide specialty technical training.

The new regional colleges Act, Mr. Speaker, will provide colleges with an increased capacity to raise funds for these new facilities. Similar to the new institute Act a section clearly outlines the necessity of colleges to run on a break-even basis — no deficits are allowed. As in the current colleges Act, the requirement remains for colleges to have their budgets approved by the minister. However the need for these so-called "double approvals" has been eliminated. Once the annual budget plan is agreed to, no further approvals are necessary, Mr. Speaker; that's what I'm talking about in terms of more autonomy.

The new Act also allows the colleges to use the same wide variety of financial instruments for borrowing, lines of credit, issuance of notes, etc. that the institutes have, Mr. Speaker. You can see the parallel design on our two structures.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there is a section which provides for the smooth transition of staff and property from the former colleges to the new ones without disruption. We are all aware here, too, that the specially skilled and

experienced staff are the college's most valuable resource. Therefore special care has been taken to ensure that the employees of the non-urban colleges will continue as employees of the regional colleges. Salaries, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment will not change as a result of the formation of the regional colleges. I reiterate, Mr. Speaker, that it is the employees who will achieve, for the regional colleges and the new institute, the goals of tomorrow.

And now I want to spend some several moments discussing, Mr. Speaker, because this Bill mandates it as well — the Northlands Career College. The creation of the Northlands Career College will be a landmark I believe, Mr. Speaker, in providing educational services to the North. They intend to combine the regional strengths and contacts of the three colleges into a new college with a new focus, Mr. Speaker. Careers for Northerners — that will be the new focus.

This is another piece of the mosaic, Mr. Speaker, which will help us to address more seriously than ever before the concerns northern people are constantly raising with me. Concerns about young people leaving school and not finishing their high school education; concern about needing upgrading courses that will allow them to enter university or technical institute training; concerns about accessing programming in La Ronge, Creighton, Beauval, Buffalo Narrows, Ile-a-la-Cross, Cumberland House, La Loche, and other northern communities.

Mr. Speaker, the Northlands Career College will provide the North with a clearer focus of attention, a clearer mandate, and a more efficient and effective operation. The multi-purpose lab in La Ronge, the residential vocational complex in Buffalo Narrows, and existing facilities in Creighton, Beauval, will become satellite facilities of the college. These facilities will be used to deliver technical and vocational programs, broken from the institute and the university systems.

Further, northern employees, business industry and government, and people in traditional enterprises will have access to these facilities for modular training in specific job-related skills. Learning centres will continue to be the college's major contact facilities in many northern communities. These centres will provide a wide range of educational and career counselling and will offer individual progress academic upgrading.

Career information access stations from schools, friendship centres, and other community facilities will provide a focus for the distribution of printed materials offering the services of the college. The Northlands Career College will assume certain aspects of certain . . . of rather . . . Mr. Speaker, the Northlands Career College will assume certain aspects of current junior colleges.

Mr. Speaker, in this Bill I mentioned at the outset that what . . . Another term, if you like, that came to my mind when I looked at this Bill and what it can do for Saskatchewan, as I said, it could be an Act respecting accessibility to adult education. And certainly that's true, even more true in the northern part of this province than anywhere else.

And as well when I read this reference, Mr. Speaker, to junior colleges, I suppose in a functional sense and in another day and another time and another place I might have called this Bill an Act respecting junior colleges. Because when you look at it and what our expectation is, that too, that junior college, in a way, says it in a word perhaps more aptly than the term regional college.

So I would want people to have that understanding in their mind's eye, Mr. Speaker, that junior college . . . if an image of that conjures up in the mind is not . . . they're not too far off the mark in terms of our expectations. And certainly that's true with the Northlands Career College.

The Northlands Career College will provide professional and paraprofessional career development training through co-operative projects between employees and their provincial universities. The college will offer academic support and counselling needed to facilitate the . . . (inaudible) . . . university level career training. Further, the college will provide support and counselling for year one and two university credit courses offered in the North.

Because functional competency in the basic academic areas of mathematics, communication, and applied science is becoming a prerequisite for an increasing number of occupations, Mr. Speaker, the demand for competent development teaching must be addressed. The role of the northern secondary school system and competence development should be explored as soon as possible, and a working group composed of staff in the northern division and secondary system should be assigned the specific task of addressing this issue in the North, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the new initiatives that we have, or will be undertaking, that we will be striving for in the North. And I can only say to you and to the members of this Assembly and to the public of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, stay tuned, because for northern Saskatchewan an exciting future lies ahead.

One final word too about personnel. We have again provided for an orderly transfer of employees from the three northern colleges to the new northern career college. Again, no lay-offs will occur as a result of this amalgamation, Mr. Speaker.

Well in conclusion, the new regional college network, the start of a new and exciting chapter in educational history, Mr. Speaker, is well on its way as yet another part, another building block in our blueprint. And I urge, once again, all members of this legislature to support Bill No. 47, An Act respecting Regional Colleges.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, we on this side of the House feel more disfavoured to this initiative than we do to the one that we've just been debating prior to this. We'll not be supporting your proposals for a super institute, but we do welcome your initiative to offer more university and more technical institute classes in rural Saskatchewan communities.

(1615)

Our concern, however, Mr. Minister, is going to be to ensure that your offerings are going to be high quality offerings in rural Saskatchewan, and that in so initiating this extension program, you do not erode the quality of education at the University of Saskatchewan, at the University of Regina, and in the existing technical institute system, Mr. Speaker.

And I noted in the debate on Bill 46, Mr. Speaker, that the real issue here, in terms of seeing whether the regional college network that the government is proposing is effective, will be when the 1988-89 budget comes down and we see what kind of budgetary provisions are in place for this major extension initiative.

Because, Mr. Speaker, once again if the minister is proposing that this extension initiative be done largely out of the budgets that the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan have now — and I hope he's not proposing that — then the quality of education at our two university campuses will be seriously eroded. But if he's proposing that this will be new money to launch an extension initiative in rural Saskatchewan, then I say that I'm sure the people of rural Saskatchewan and the people of Saskatchewan will welcome the initiative.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to specifically comment on a couple of changes that once again we as members of the opposition would like to see the government seriously look at with respect to this Bill.

Our concerns are largely the same concerns that I expressed about Bill 46, Mr. Speaker. First of all we're concerned that employees in the community college system are not going to have their trade union rights recognized and transferred with them to the new regional college system that the minister is proposing to create.

Once again this government is choosing to break the long-standing practice of transferring trade union representation when employees are transferred from one institution to another; he is breaking that long-standing practice and telling unionized members, unionized employees of the community college system, that their union rights will not be recognized in the new regional college system that he's creating, Mr. Speaker. And we will be bringing forward an amendment to change that and to insure that those union rights are recognized.

And second, Mr. Speaker, we're once again proposing to the government that they ought to look at the notion of at least partially elected boards rather than appointed boards in the regional college system. We see no good reason, Mr. Speaker, why the board of a regional community college should simply be made up of appointments by the Minister of Education. We think that the local geographical area that the regional college will serve would be much better served by a board that was at least partially elected.

And our proposal once again, Mr. Minister, is that you look seriously at the very successful Prince Albert model and apply it to the new regional college boards and

ensure that at least four of the seven members of a regional college board are elected members — elected by community organizations that are interested in post-secondary education and the service that post-secondary education provides in their region of the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think that if the minister was to look at those two changes to the Bill, we may have a Bill which all members of the House could be satisfied with.

So in summary, Mr. Speaker, we expect to be opposing Bill 46 because of the sweeping changes that the minister is making which we don't think in many cases are reflective of the desire that faculty, staff, and students and employers in this province have who are interested in education, and that are not reflective of the concerns that community leaders have about education.

And we will be more favourably disposed to Bill 47 if the minister would be prepared to consider the amendments that we put forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — I would like to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lane that Bill No. 41 — **An Act to amend The Provincial Auditor Act** be now read a second time.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to participate in this debate, a debate surrounding An Act to amend The Provincial Auditor Act. This Bill, contrary to what the Minister of Finance says, does not strengthen the audit process, nor does it maintain accountability of all Crown corporations. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the amendments to The Provincial Auditor Act weakens the role of our Saskatchewan auditor, Mr. Lutz.

This Bill lessens the role of the auditor and undermines the political independence — an arm's length relationship of auditor and provincial government. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would argue that the Tories are trying to muzzle yet another watch-dog agency that reports directly to this legislature. It's a well-known fact, Mr. Speaker, that the Provincial Auditor and the Conservative government have been at odds over access to information for some time now. Mr. Lutz has been trying for some time to get information out of the Crown Management Board. To date this request for information has been futile.

Mr. Speaker, we now have a situation where the Provincial Auditor is considering legal action to force the Conservative government to give information that by law he is entitled to and by law the government must give to the Provincial Auditor.

Why is it, Mr. Speaker, that the Crown Management

Board refuses to give the Provincial Auditor the cost associated with the use of private sector auditors? Is it more costly or is it less costly than the use of the Provincial Auditor's office? That's a question that the people of this province have a right to know, and Mr. Lutz has the right to ask for that information and be given that information.

As members of this legislature, a legislature that the auditor reports directly to and is accountable to — and he doesn't report to the cabinet, and he doesn't report to the Premier, and he doesn't report to the members opposite — we have the right to know, and Mr. Lutz has the obligation to provide the information to us, and the government has the obligation to provide the information to Mr. Lutz. By making the request the Provincial Auditor is simply doing his job. By denying the request the Conservative government is violating the legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lutz's efforts to determine whether the Crown Management Board's books were examined by the private sector in the same manner as his office would have examined them in the past is a reasonable request, and a request that the government and the members opposite should secede to. The denial of this information is a denial of the members of this legislature. It is a denial to the people of this province, and it's a denial to the people of this province because it is the people of this province who have put us all here. They're the ones who elected us. To deny us access to information is to deny the people of Saskatchewan information.

And now, Mr. Speaker, the government wants to change the auditor's Act. They want to amend the Act so that Conservative members, and Conservative members only, will know the state of the Crown corporations and other agencies.

Now the government argues and the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden, the Minister of Finance, argues that the provincial government can still scrutinize the audits done by private sector auditors. But the real question is, can they? Can he audit those books when private sector auditors have been involved?

With changes to the Act, the Provincial Auditor no longer has the right to instruct a private sector auditor to do the following. Under the old Act, the old section, the Provincial Auditor had the right to instruct another auditor to do the following: include any procedures that the Provincial Auditor deems necessary to allow the Provincial Auditor to fulfil his responsibility under the Act.

With the amendments to the old Act, the Provincial Auditor will no longer be given this authority. As a result of this amendment to the Act, the Provincial Auditor loses the right to instruct an appointed auditor to provide information to the Provincial Auditor over and above what is strictly necessary, MR. Speaker. Mr. Lutz loses the right to request further clarification, and in effect, Mr. Lutz cannot properly fulfil his function as the Provincial Auditor.

In effect, Mr. Speaker, the changes to the auditor's Act

emasculates the ability of the Provincial Auditor to look into the affairs of government beyond what the government is willing to allow the auditor to see.

And that's an important issue, Mr. Speaker. The Provincial Auditor at this stage can request information and, by legislation, the members opposite, the Government of Saskatchewan, is obligated to give the Provincial Auditor that information. These amendments today, I suspect, are here because the government wants to hide its mismanagement and its incompetence. Could this Bill be a cover-up? Well I think it is, Mr. Speaker. I think this Bill is a cover-up of their fiscal mismanagement and their incompetence.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, with the amendments to the Act it now appears that private sector auditors don't have to supply the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Lutz, with documents that they use to produce their audited reports. In effect, while the Minister of Finance may say that the Provincial Auditor can still scrutinize the audits done by private sector auditors, the Provincial Auditor, with these changes, Mr. Speaker, has no way of verifying the validity of the private sector auditors' audited reports. Now how is that scrutiny, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, we have a further problem with this Bill. They have deleted probably the most important provision of the existing legislation. They have deleted the power of the Provincial Auditor to conduct further examination or audits of accounts, records or financial statements of the Government of Saskatchewan, a Crown agency or a Crown corporation that the auditor may consider necessary. In short, this Bill limits the ability of the Provincial Auditor to conduct a thorough investigation of the public books.

Mr. Speaker, with these changes in the auditor's Act the government will only have to give the auditor documents that they want to give him. The government will be able to withhold documents; the Provincial Auditor will be unable to do anything about it. I think that's important. The government, with these changes to The Provincial Auditor Act, can withhold documents, and the Provincial Auditor, the watch-dog for this legislature, will be unable to do anything about it.

Now right now, Mr. Speaker, the government can be taken to court to gain access to information and documents. The Provincial Auditor up until now has not had to do it. And it's interesting that the Provincial Auditor is considering legal action because the Crown Management Board will not give over information that's been requested. Under the proposed changes to this legislation the Provincial Auditor will be unable to take any kind of court action to force these members, this government, this cabinet, that Premier, to provide information to the auditor.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill substantially weakens and undermines the power of the auditor. It takes away his power to examine the accounts of this province in as great a detail as he deems necessary. It takes away his power to instruct a private sector auditor to include any procedures

necessary to allow the Provincial Auditor to fulfil his responsibility under the Act. It also takes away his power to request further information from private auditors when they submit their audited report. It takes away his power to request and receive from private auditors, documents used to produce their audited reports. The auditor has no way of verifying the validity of those reports. And finally, Mr. Speaker, it takes away his power to do whatever is necessary to fulfil his function, his statutory function, an obligation to the people of this province through their elected representatives.

(1630)

These amendments, Mr. Speaker, are not in the best interests of the people of this province. These amendments take away our right to know how those people are spending the public's money. And that's an important point, Mr. Speaker. This Bill is another muzzle. They're muzzling this legislature. They're muzzling every watch-dog agency that's directly responsible to this legislature, and when they introduce these amendments, they're muzzling the Provincial Auditor who, by statute, is responsible to this legislature, and that's unacceptable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — This Bill takes away very specific powers of the Provincial Auditor and should be defeated, Mr. Speaker. It should be defeated.

This Bill is before us today because these members opposite do not want the people of this province to know what's going on. We've had enough of closed cabinet door meetings. We've had enough of these people stymieing the electoral process by refusing to give us an agenda so that we know what's going to be happening the next day in the legislature. We've had enough of that. We've had enough of ministers and members playing games. We've already had a major rule change which will effectively stymie committee work. We've had it, Mr. Speaker, and it's important that the people of this province know what every one of those members opposite stand for because they certainly don't stand for democracy, Mr. Speaker, because if they did, they would not be bringing this Bill forward today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I have a lot more to say about this and I now beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lane that Bill No. 42 — **An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the Enactment of The Provincial Auditor Amendment Act, 1987** be now read a second time.

Mr. Rolfes: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a few remarks on Bill No. 42, which is a consequential Bill of 41. And one simply can't discuss Bill 42 without Bill 41 because Bill 42 wouldn't exist unless Bill 41 was here.

Mr. Speaker, as the members on this side have already indicated there is a lot of fear that one has to express when we have Bills coming forward of the nature of Bill 41 and Bill 42. Up until now, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor has the role of not only auditing all of the departments of the government but also the Crowns and all agencies which expend government or public funds.

With this Bill, Bill 42, Mr. Speaker, that is no longer true. And what will happen is that the Executive Council will take upon itself the powers that before were given to us in this Assembly through the Provincial Auditor. And let me explain this to the people of Saskatchewan so that they will understand what the debate is all about.

In the past and up until now, the legislature has appointed the Provincial Auditor and has told him, through legislation, what his role should be, and it has been a very comprehensive role and a very complex role.

This year, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance took upon himself to ignore the law of the land and simply said that he would implement new policy, which is contrary to the law that presently exists, and that he would hire private auditors to do the examining of the books of some Crown corporations.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance did this knowing full well that under the present law only the Provincial Auditor is allowed to examine the books of any Crown agency or any Crown corporation or any department, with the exception, Mr. Speaker, of any Crown corporation that is designated as such that they can be examined by private auditors. Other than that, only the Provincial Auditor is allowed to examine those books.

I think it's incumbent upon democratic governments to abide by the laws that are made by democratic governments and made by the legislature. And for a minister of the Crown to ignore those laws and simply saying, I know what the laws are, but I'm not going to abide by them because I'm going to implement a policy that I think is right, and I don't care what the legislature says, and then, Mr. Speaker, to try and absolve himself from the error or the sin that he has committed, he brings in a Bill which he makes retroactive to January 1 in order to cover up his own misdeed.

Mr. Speaker, in second reading of Bill 42, the Minister of Finance said that an opportunity was given to the Provincial Auditor to participate in this policy change. And he said, now the Provincial Auditor is changing his mind. Well, Mr. Speaker, there is sufficient evidence by the Provincial Auditor that he has requested for some time to participate in this particular change, and to no avail.

And I refer all members to a brochure or a write-up on Crown corporation accountability by the Provincial Auditor wherein he states:

I responded to the minister in January 1987, asking that his officials contact me when they wish to discuss this matter.

And the matter was the hiring of private auditors. He says

on February 19, 1987:

I wrote to the minister indicating that I had not heard from his officials regarding the change in policy, and brought to his attention some serious concerns that I had.

Which were summarized as follows, and I quote:

In summary, as the officer of the Legislative Assembly appointed specifically to assist the members of the Legislative Assembly in its responsibility to hold the executive government accountable, I believe that any legislative enactments to permit the appointment of private sector auditors should not in any way detract from my ability to satisfy myself as to the true state of affairs of all public money, including that managed by Crown corporations, in order to report with confidence to the members of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the problem here is not the hiring of private auditors. That is the prerogative of the government if they so wish. The problem here is that the present law doesn't allow the Executive Council, the Premier and his cabinet ministers, to hire private auditors at this time, because the law that presently exists says that the Provincial Auditor shall audit all the books of every department, every Crown corporation, and every agency except those that are specifically stated that can be done by private auditors.

That, Mr. Speaker, is the problem that we are debating today — the accountability of the government to this legislature and hence to the people of Saskatchewan.

And secondly, Mr. Speaker, the diminishing role that the members opposite, the Premier and the cabinet, have inflicted upon the Provincial Auditor in spite of the fact that they know that by law the Provincial Auditor has an obligation and a responsibility to examine all those books, and no one else. That is, Mr. Speaker, what we are debating today.

And members opposite should note that the law is there to be upheld, particularly by those people who make the laws. And the executive branch of government should not become so arrogant and so powerful and so overbearing that they can simply ignore the Legislative Assembly, and say we don't care. We are going to do what we want to do, and we don't care what the law is.

If they want to change the policy, and they want to change the law, then let them bring in legislation first, have it passed by the Legislative Assembly, and then act on that legislation. They can't do the reverse. That, Mr. Speaker, does not only diminish the role of the Provincial Auditor who is an employee of this Legislative Assembly, but it's also an insult to us as members of the Legislative Assembly. They are simply saying we want you to rubber-stamp. We want you to rubber-stamp something which was illegal, and we're going to correct it now and you have no right to question it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in Public Accounts this was debated

to some extent, and in my questioning of the president of the Crown Management Board as to whether or not he didn't realize that the law says that the Provincial Auditor has the right to that information, his answer to me was, Mr. Speaker, that he had been instructed, he had been instructed not to give that information to the Provincial Auditor, although he was required by law to do so.

And it is interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, as to who instructed him not to give that information to the Provincial Auditor. In questioning him further, he said it was the board of directors of the Crown Management Board. But, Mr. Speaker, who is the vice-chairman of that Crown Management Board but the Premier of this province. That, Mr. Speaker, is a frightening situation when one looks at it, that the Premier of this province, knowing full well what the law is, instructs the president of the Crown Management Board to refuse information to the Provincial Auditor whose job it is to audit all the books — except those which are excluded — to refuse that information to the Provincial Auditor, knowing full well that they are contravening the law of this land.

That, Mr. Speaker, is what we are debating in these two Bills, and that is what we are so determined to make the public aware of. We are not opposed to private sector auditors if it can be shown — and we had them before in 1982 when we were the government — and if they can be shown that they are cost-effective, then fine. But how can the Provincial Auditor, how can the Provincial Auditor know whether they are cost-effective and whether or not the public's money is well spent unless, Mr. Speaker, that information is made available to the Provincial Auditor.

So Bill 42, Mr. Speaker, is a Bill that does several things: first of all I think it's an insult to the Legislative Assembly because it is retroactive in a sense because it's a consequential Bill of Bill 41; and secondly, it certainly does diminish the role of the Provincial Auditor who is an employee of this legislature. He is not an employee of the executive branch of government. He, Mr. Speaker, is the watch-dog to make sure that the executive branch of government is spending our money wisely, efficiently, and effectively.

And therefore the report is tabled in this legislature through you, sir, but to us, and not to the executive branch of government. And that, Mr. Speaker, is something that I think every member in this House must try to protect, that we don't let the executive branch of government diminish our roles as members of the Legislative Assembly and the roles of those people who are employees of this Legislative Assembly.

I want to use two examples, Mr. Speaker, of what is so frightening because this is not the first time that this has happened. We saw what happened to the Ombudsman when he had the audacity to criticize the executive branch of government. When he criticized the executive branch of government, he was severely criticized by members of the Executive Council, and he's no longer with us. He's no longer with us.

(1645)

When the Provincial Auditor did the same thing, and is

very critical, so what did they do? They want to restrict his role. They're saying, all right, if that's the way you're going to deal with your role and you're going to be too critical and you're going to carry out your duties and responsibilities very religiously and that means criticism for us, what do we do? Well, we simply reduce your role. We make sure that you can't carry out your function and your role in that manner. That again, Mr. Speaker, I say is a frightening trend, and we should avoid that with all our strength.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other people who wish to speak on this Bill, and because they could not be here today, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly resume the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lane that Bill No. 43 — **An Act to repeal The Public Utilities Review Commission** be now read a second time.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. I have wanted for some time to address a few words on this question. This government came into office on a promise of open and accessible government.

It's interesting to see, Mr. Speaker, how thin this has worn over the five years they've been in office. One of the signs, I suppose, of a government getting long in the tooth is they get a little tired of the public. And I suggest that's what's happening with this . . . that's what this evidence is — that's what the Bill is evidence of — evidence, Mr. Speaker, that this government's getting long in the tooth, getting tired of the public. I say, Mr. Speaker, it's a very short step between the government getting tired of the public, and the public getting tired of the government. And the polls show that perhaps the feeling's mutual.

Mr. Minister, the PURC (Public Utilities Review Commission) legislation which we all voted on back in 1982 and which was one of the flagships of the current administration, and which I think received the unanimous support of the House, I believe, was intended to provide public input into the setting of utility rates. It's a bit more complex than that, but not very much.

The utility rates before that had been set by order in council. It was democratic in the sense that those who made the decisions were answerable to the public. And I often believe, Mr. Speaker, that part of the '82 results stemmed, in part at least, from very high utility rate increases in the previous period. It was also a period of very high inflation. There probably wasn't much the former government could have done except to increase the utility rates. But if there weren't any options, that wasn't explained to the public, and perhaps that was one of the failings with the system of cabinet simply setting them, announcing them, is that there's no system of explaining that to the public.

The advantage that the Public Utilities Review Commission had is that it gave the public an opportunity to participate, gave the public the assurance that the decision was being made on a cost basis and on a sound financial basis. And so it accomplished two objectives,

Mr. Speaker.

There was an educational result — the public had an opportunity to see why the rates were being increased. It gave them an opportunity to participate, and we can all think of examples where that was done. One can think, for instance, of some of the industrial companies which have long complained that the rates which they pay are too high. They had an opportunity to say so, and indeed PURC found in their favour. The government reversed that, but they had a forum in which they could present their view.

So for those reasons the previous method, which had accountability in the sense that the government was accountable to the public — that proved to be painfully true in fact — lacked accessibility. It was not an accessible system. the public misunderstood it. This was brought in instead — the PURC system. It was, I think, warmly received by the public and, I think, was relatively popular. That it had some flaws was, I think, misunderstood, although, I think, was not seen by the public. The system did have some flaws.

Perhaps because of the number of lawyers involved — I don't know — it became very complex — the process. It wasn't easy for a farmer in Souris-Cannington to go to PURC and say, I think my power rates are too high, and I wish you devils would do something about it . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, that's true. That's true. That's true. No one in Souris-Cannington would think of addressing any comments to anyone but he local MLA. I could have picked a much better example, and that's Maple Creek. I'll leave that alone, Mr. Chairman.

Suffice it to say the procedure was complicated perhaps because there was a lawyer as chairman; I don't know. I think in some ways it was a failure of this government to set the rules of procedure. I always think it's a mistake for a government to allow a regulatory agency to set its own rules of procedure. Those rules will be inevitably designed for the convenience of the regulatory agency and not the convenience of the public. To some extent that's what's happened here. A solution would have been for the government to have established some rules of procedure which would have simplified the process. It could have been easily done, but they didn't.

It was also a fairly expensive process. And once again I think that had something to do with the complexity of the process. That again could have been cured by simply promulgating some rules for that body, though what we have in fact now is that they've thrown the baby out with the bath water. They have one more case of an election promise broken, Mr. Speaker, one more case of this government getting tired in office, tired of listening to the public; thus they simply cut the public off. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that that will work until this government's mandate runs out, and then they're going to find the public equally tired of them.

Mr. Speaker, there is now no way in which the . . . the public really have no effective means of addressing any concerns or comments they have with respect to power rates. The theory once was that they did that through their

MLAs. The fallacy with that approach, though, is that the MLAs don't . . . is that the public do not know about increases in utility rates before they become *fait accompli*, and that was the problem with the old process.

I am one, Mr. Speaker, who supported the pre-'82 process — while we were in office — but I now say, and say openly, that it's not acceptable to the public. That's in fact what this government is going back to, the pre-'82 procedure. It's not acceptable to the public. Utility rate increases which come out of the blue, as they now will, are not acceptable, and this government is going to pay a heavy price for this particular promise which was broken.

Mr. Speaker, this government came into office talking about accessibility, talking about open government. They now are proceeding in the opposite direction, and it's part of a pattern which we've seen — a fairly marked pattern, actually, which we've seen since the election.

We saw the Provincial Auditor's legislation — the cutting out of the Provincial Auditor from at least a supervisory role over the private accounting firms — once again government which prefers to operate in secret, prefers not to be held accountable. This is part of the same process.

As an alternative, Mr. Speaker, the government could have set up an advisory body which solicited opinions from the public but left the ultimate decision to cabinet. There are many ways, Mr. Speaker, in which the public input could have been solicited, but this simple repeal of the legislation provides none of that.

The public will now have no means, Mr. Speaker, of addressing their comments to the . . . If the government House Leader indicates he wants to go in the Committee of Finance before 5, I will adjourn debate and . . . Mr. Speaker, I'll move to adjourn debate at this point in time.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.