

AFTERNOON SITTING

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce some 50 grade 7 and 8 students from Argyle School in Regina in my constituency. They are here to watch the proceedings for a bit this afternoon. They are accompanied by their teachers, Heather Hewson and Elizabeth Paul. And Shelley Howard, an intern, is also with them, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to ask the members of the Legislative Assembly to give them the appropriate welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you, three people seated in your gallery, sir: Rick Parsons and Blanche MacDonald from Toronto with the Beat the Street program, and as well Marion Gracey, who is the executive director of Youth Unlimited here in Regina.

For the information of the members of the legislature, Mr. Speaker, Beat the Street is a literacy program for street people — those people who often live in the cores of our cities, homeless, unemployed. It's a program to help those people, Mr. Speaker, to teach these people how to read and write. Mr. Parsons has been very successful in Toronto and was recently looking for a second city, a city in western Canada, for his program, and they have selected the city of Regina.

I would ask that our guests stand in your gallery, sir, and be acknowledged, and I would ask all members to join with me and welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and to members of this Assembly, 53 students, grade 7 and 8 students, in the east gallery, from St. Bernadette School in Walsh Acres. I'd like to, on behalf of my colleagues, extend a very warm welcome.

I hope you enjoy the question period today, and I'll be looking forward to meeting with you after question period for some conversation, to answer your questions, and to have some refreshments and get your pictures taken.

As well, with the students, Mr. Speaker, are two teachers and an intern: Don Zaharia, Pat Lederhouse, and Fred Curts. So I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming the students from St. Bernadette School.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions to make. I know all members of the Assembly will want to join with me in welcoming someone who has made an enormous contribution to this Assembly and to this province over the years, and received very little recognition. I refer to Anne Blakeney, who's seated in the opposition gallery, quite comfortable among the school children up there. I know you'll want to join with me in welcoming her.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — I know members opposite will applaud just as enthusiastically for my next introduction. I'd like to introduce to members of the Assembly the president of the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party, Dwain Lingenfelter, and a former member of this Assembly; and as well, Reg Gross, a former member for Gravelbourg. So I'd ask you to join in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Dispensing Fee Charges at Pasqua Hospital

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier or, in the alternative, to the Acting Minister of Health, and it concerns a hospital owned by the government in the constituency of Elphinstone, which I have the honour to represent.

I ask you, Mr. Premier, or Mr. Minister: are you aware that chronic care patients at the Pasqua Hospital are being asked to pay a dispensing fee for drugs which are administered in that hospital; and if so, is this part of a policy of having specific charges for specific services — bandages, dressings, soaps, and the like — which we see operating in many other hospitals in other less-favoured lands?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I would have to take notice of the member's question. I'm not aware of that taking place in the Pasqua Hospital. I will certainly investigate that and report back to the member. Should the proceedings of this House end today and we don't have an opportunity in question period, he has my assurance that at my earliest convenience I will reply to him the correct responses regarding this.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, while you're taking notice of that question, would you also check to see whether the Pasqua Hospital has been forced to operate a lottery in order to meet a budget deficit, and would you find out whether or not that staff have been asked to donate one day's pay back to the institution in order to deal with some of the deficit problems of that institution. Mr. Minister, these stories reach me. I would ask you whether you could confirm them, and whether, if you cannot confirm them, you would take notice and advise me.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, as the member correctly indicates, there are stories that have come to his attention, and I will investigate if there's any authenticity to these stories, because they may be nothing more than stories.

However, as the member well knows, the hospitals in Saskatchewan do have foundation activities in which they raise money from a number of sources. I don't think any hospital is forced to have a lottery. I don't think that's the correct terminology. But I will take notice of the stories that have come to you and investigate these and get back to you as quickly as possible.

Call for Restoration of School-based Dental Program

Ms. Atkinson: — My question is to the Premier. Over the last several months, Mr. Premier, you and your government has spent a lot of time in this legislature trying to convince the people of Saskatchewan that your \$18.6 million worth of health care cuts have been well received by the Saskatchewan public. I think, Mr. Premier, it's quite clear not that you've been dreaming in Technicolor, and the evidence that is mounting each day is contrary to what you've been trying to lead the people of this province to believe.

This week the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association voted unanimously to ask your government to restore the children's dental program which was school-based. My question is this: will you now restore the children's school-based dental program to its former self?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the member as I did yesterday and to the members of this Assembly, that I think we in Saskatchewan can truthfully say that we have perhaps the best medical care and health care services of anywhere in Canada. I am aware of the motion that came forward at the SHA (Saskatchewan Health-Care Association) convention. I'm also aware that there are a number of dentists starting to have satellite practices in various parts of this province, which they did not have before, which I believe is an extended benefit to many of the population of this province.

So I would say to the member, no, the adolescent dental plan will not be reinstated. But again, I caution her not to try and exaggerate and build this case in a scenario that may soon prove to be false, because I feel strongly that with the dispersal of the equipment to some of the communities in this province we're going to see an expansion of dental services not only to the children but to the population as a whole.

Again I want to, before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, indicate that the member opposite is always trying to insinuate that under the adolescent program there were therapists in the school for some long period of time. I spent 15 years in the school when the program was there, and I know that they were there for a short period of time, and the rest of the time those students did not have coverage. With professional dentists serving a satellite, that coverage will

be there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, I do not think you can accuse the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association of being a bunch of New Democrats, and you cannot accuse these people of not being close to the situation, because I suspect that they know a lot more about health care than you do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Are you trying to tell these people — people who know what they're talking about — that they are wrong and that children are receiving better access to dental care in this province? Is that what you're trying to tell us here today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Certainly I'm not questioning the members of the SHA, and I'm certainly not saying that they're all New Democrats. I don't know where she got that idea from, but if that's what you want to think, then you go right ahead and say that.

I am not saying that the change in the dental plan, that there will not be better coverage to some areas of rural Saskatchewan that did not have dentists before. I want to remind you and the member opposite, I spent almost five years in the position of the Minister of Health and have a fair grasp of the medical services that are available to the population of Saskatchewan as a whole. And I stand by the statement that taking and looking across this country, across the western world, we in Saskatchewan today have the greatest health care services of anywhere on this continent or in the free world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — New question. The amount of baloney that comes from that members' mouth could fill a thousand deli's, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Last month . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. I don't think that's the type of language that is customary.

An Hon. Member: — Baloney and deli?

Mr. Speaker: — Order. I don't believe that those types of remarks are the type of language that should be used in these Chambers, and I bring that to the member's attention.

Ms. Atkinson: — Last month in this legislature we presented over 60,000 signatures opposing your health care cuts. Those signatures, along with the others that we presented this past summer, represent close to 100,000 people voicing opposition to your health care cuts. We now have the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association voicing opposition to your health care cuts. My question

is this: in view of all of the evidence and all of the concerns that have mounted over the last several months, will you, as Acting Minister of Health on behalf of your government, stop hacking and slashing away at our health care system. Will you do that, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess hacking and slashing are the terms that the member wants to use. But if she believes, if she believes for one moment that building a state of the art Rehab Centre, right here within a short distance of this building, and I can assure you the state of the art Rehab Centre, to serve southern Saskatchewan is hacking and slashing, then I differ with her terms. If she thinks, if she thinks building one of the world-class cancer facilities in Saskatoon, hooked to the University Hospital, is slashing and cutting, I differ with her terms. If she looks at a new hospital plan for St. Paul's, additions to the General Hospital, the Pasqua Hospital, just being completed in the last term of government, if that is cutting and slashing — added to a new chiropody program that was promised four times by them and never introduced — if that is slashing and cutting, I think you'd better re-examine your terms.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Call for Saskatoon Eastview By-election

Ms. Atkinson: — New question. Eighteen point six million dollars worth of cuts to the health care budget; children's dental plan, school-based, gone; public health nurses, 16 positions, gone; three audiology positions in this province, and long waiting lists at the Saskatchewan hearing aid program, gone; 11,000 on hospital waiting lists in this province, waiting to get into hospital, and no money.

My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, if you're so proud about your health record in this province, and if you agree with the minister, the Acting Minister of Health, if you are so convinced that your record is steady and sturdy, why not call the by-election in Saskatoon Eastview? Will you do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me once again indicate that if you look at the expenditures of this government since 1982 . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. The minister can't answer his question if he is constantly interrupted. I ask for the co-operation of the House to allow him to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know they don't like to hear the truth of the expenditures in health care by this government. But if you go back, and I ask any person in this province to go back and look at the expenditures since 1982 on nursing homes, on hospital construction, on staffing, on the whole myriad of things that make up the excellent health care in this province,

that the Devine government and Saskatchewan stands head and shoulders above the expenditures of any other government in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. I realize sometimes members use another member's name by force of habit, but I'd just like to draw the attention to the member that that's not permissible.

Deficiency Payments to Farmers

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, Saskatchewan farmers need a deficiency payment. I realize there is no impending election . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order.

Mr. Upshall: — But surely if the Prime Minister intends to put out a deficiency payment, you and other western premiers will know some of the details. Farmers, Mr. Minister, are sick and tired of you dodging these questions, and so am I, so can you tell us: when can farmers of this province expect some money in their hands from a federal deficiency payments?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, as I've said to the hon. member during estimates and several times during question period, this year the farmers have received in the month of June about \$10,000 apiece from the deficiency payment in the western grain stabilization program — that's \$10,000 in cash that they don't have to repay.

Now our request, from meeting with the western premiers and the premiers across Canada and the ministers of Agriculture, is the same kind of payment be made, only one that's larger, from 1.6 to \$3 billion dollars, and to be announced when they are looking at the size of the final payments, when they're looking at what the grain stabilization payment will be, and when they look at the crops that are being harvested and finished, not only in western Canada, but indeed across the rest of the nation.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I suspect, as I've said to the hon. member in the past, the deficiency payment was made in June of this year, and I suspect about the same time period in June — May, June of 1988 — the next deficiency payment will be made. It's not likely that you'll have two deficiency payments in one year, and he's aware of that.

So I would say to the hon. member that the payments have been very helpful. We've asked for that and more, and all the premiers and the Prime Minister agree that in fact a deficiency payment should be made, and I suspect the 1988 payment will be in much the same fashion as the '87 payment. In fact, we hope that it's higher.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Minister, the grain price deficiency payment should be keyed around the drop in the price of grain, not around the drop in Tory popularity. And I say to

you, the farmers . . . the only thing they can use your speeches for is fertilizing their land. They can't feed their kids, and they can't pay the bank with them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Minister, can you tell me what possible reasons, what are the concrete reasons, other than politics, political gain, and public relations, that we are being played around with by the provincial and federal governments on this deficiency payment?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has to raise politics rather than his sincere concern for farmers. And he deserves to be slapped around a little bit. If the farmers . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, a little verbal lesson with respect to looking after the farmers and politics would do the member a little bit of good. How long did they wait to get some help from 21 per cent interest rates? How long did they wait for deficiency payments from the NDP? How long did they wait to get some sort of land tenure other than just the government owning the land?

All over Saskatchewan people said, finally we have an administration that will make deficiency payments, protect them against high interest rates, and go to the wall for farmers. And this young fellow stands up and says, well, Mr. Premier, the farmers are going to have to wait for another deficiency payment. Who gave them the first one? Who protected their interest rates? Who goes to the wall for farmers and ranchers to give them cash advances? it isn't the NDP.

And if you want to look at the records of the NDP, and you want to look at the record of this government versus the federal government, you've never seen so much money in the hands of farmers as you have in this administration or this federal administration, and it's about time you figured that out.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Let me tell you, Mr. Minister, you don't intimidate me one bit. And that is just the attitude you have to the Saskatchewan farmers; you're going to slap them around, and that's what you're doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — You, yourself, have even said this deficiency payment is needed. You put a motion on the order paper. When? July 2. And not only have we not seen or heard when we're going to get the payment, you haven't even brought the motion forward for debate.

So I ask you, Mr. Minister: what happened? Did Brian

Mulroney tell you to cool it, or is it the fact that the issue isn't important to you now that there's no election around?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Chairman . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I can say, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member always talks about an election when he's in opposition. And when we make payments to farmers, and when we protect their farms, when we provide interest rate protection, or deficiency payments, or improve their drought payments during dry land periods, or we provide flood payments to those in the north-east, the NDP says, well that's fine, but we would have done it better. And then when they come back in the legislature, Mr. Speaker, all they can say is: well, we should have an election.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let me say . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order. The Premier cannot answer the question if he's constantly interrupted by hon. members. And I ask hon. members to please allow the Premier to answer the question without constant interruption.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, when we do answer a question with respect to agriculture, normally the NDP talks from their seat. And every time we have guests, we hear of it. They do it again and again, and the children that come in here always listen to the NDP bark from their seat . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. order. Now the member from Quill Lake realizes that he can't be for ever interrupting. And I'd like to draw to his attention the fact that I have just warned the hon. members not to interrupt when the Premier is speaking, and he immediately began. I ask him now to cease and desist.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well I just add, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you for providing some discipline and order to this Assembly so that the opposition can listen to the response. The response clearly is that the size and the amount of money going to farmers under the current Prime Minister through the deficiency payments, and western grain stabilization, and cash advances, and many other programs, Mr. Speaker, is the largest any farmers have seen anywhere in Saskatchewan or, indeed, across Canada.

And I agree with the hon. member, we would like to have more money. And we will be asking for more money, and we expect continued support from the federal government and from the provincial government. And I just say to the hon. member, please remember, when you had the opportunity to help farmers and put them in this big trouble, you didn't do anything for them. So before you stand up a little bit self-righteous and sanctimonious, please remember your record which wasn't one dime in the face of 21 per cent interest rates, not one dime.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Rail Car Shortage for Transporting Grain

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the “slap ‘em around” Minister of Agriculture. It’s reported in *The Globe and Mail* today that the chief commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board says that difficulties with rail car shortages have forced the Canadian Wheat Board to say no to some sales this fall.

Now when workers are out on strike or locked out, your government is very anxious to force them back to work; when there’s no grain sales lost, you like to slap them around. Will you be contacting the federal government today to make sure they clear up the railcar shortage problem and get farmers’ grain moving again in this province.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I’ll point out to the hon. member that the Canadian Wheat Board is making record grain sales and using the cars to the fullest capacity. And to maintain the record sales, we’re finding now we may even have to have additional boxcar capacity because of the large amount of volume that’s going out.

Secondly, people are now forecasting, at the rate of the demand for the high quality wheat, we may in fact have a shortage of high-quality wheat to meet some of these markets.

So in essence you’re giving a bouquet to the Canadian Wheat Board for marketing, one, a great deal of volume; and secondly, very high quality wheat world-wide, and it’s putting tremendous pressure on the system.

Now that’s good news for the farmers, and we may have to look at increasing the capacity with respect to grain handling and the rolling stock so in fact we can meet the commitments and the demand world-wide, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Well, thank you. A new question to the Minister of Agriculture. I don’t think he heard the question. But we’ll go on to boxcars. We’ll talk about boxcars for a minute, and that’s my new question to you.

As you well know, neither of the two main rail companies have purchased any hopper cars. In fact they’ve purchased no grain cars whatsoever, hopper or otherwise, in about the past 30 years. They rely on hopper cars purchased by the provincial governments or through the public through the federal government.

When are you going to make sure that that grain moves? We should be proud of those record grain sales, that farmers are able to sell their grain, but if they can’t move it to the market, that’s your responsibility. Where are the boxcars going to come from? When will you make representation to the federal government? Will you do it today to make sure the grain moves?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think the hon. member has answered his own question. They are record sales, and the wheat board should be congratulated for record sales. We are marketing them world-wide. In fact the capacity is such now that we find that we may in fact need additional rolling stock to increase the record beyond that being set to date.

So it’s a rather envious position. I’m sure that Americans and Australians and others who market grain in competition with us don’t like to see a record in terms of the Canadians marketing grain internationally and having that stock used to full capacity. So if indeed we are going to increase the record beyond this year’s, we may have to look at additional rolling stock. That’s a nice kind of problem to have in terms of record production and record sales, particularly for high quality grain.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Farm Fuel Rebates

Mr. Goodale: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier and has to do with the draft of a free trade agreement between Canada and the United States, particularly the energy provisions of any such agreement and the prohibition against discriminatory pricing as between Canadian and American consumers of Canadian energy.

I’d like to know, Mr. Premier, specifically with respect to farm fuel rebates, either federal or provincial rebates, do we yet have in the legal drafting that is going on, a firm definition of what precisely constitutes discriminatory pricing, and will rebates provided by either the federal government or other provincial government to farmers be exempt from any such definition?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well from my recollection of the discussion I don’t recall anything regarding farm fuel rebates in the conversations, and I haven’t seen anything in draft. We do know that American farm subsidies are much higher than Canadian farm subsidies. The indication is to harmonize those over time and in fact move them closer and closer to some common denominator which is much less.

So my initial reaction would be that they would not be included, but I would want to go back and examine anything that’s being looked at that I am not familiar with. So I’d say, my initial reaction is that there’s nothing that I’ve seen that would say it would be of any impact on the pricing of farm fuel here in Saskatchewan or indeed in Canada.

MOTION

Tribute to the Leader of the Opposition

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day — I wasn’t sure whether you were going to call orders of the day or not, but I’ll take this opportunity to say before orders of the day — I would like to take this opportunity to put forward what I believe to be a matter of pressing necessity and of some urgency in the form of a motion. And I’ll read the motion, Mr. Speaker, so the members

may acquaint themselves of the fact so that I may obtain leave, if possible.

The motion is as follows:

That the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan hereby pays tribute to the Hon. Allan Blakeney for his 27 years of distinguished service to the people of Saskatchewan as a member of this Assembly; for his leadership, statesmanship and dedication to the public interest; for having exemplified throughout his public life the qualities on which a free, democratic and civilized society are based; and for his contributions to the better and brighter future for all Saskatchewan people.

It's moved by myself, Mr. Speaker, and seconded by the member from Estevan, the Premier. And if I get leave, I'd like to say a few words on it.

Leave granted.

Mr. Brockelbank: — I want to thank the members for granting leave to this motion which is before us, Mr. Speaker. It's a very useful parliamentary practice to permit discussion on matters of urgent and pressing necessity, which is contained in this particular motion. Mr. Speaker, you will recognize that this item is equally as urgent as it is pressing.

When I came to this House, Mr. Speaker, in 1964, I found the hon. member for Elphinstone had arrived before me — that wasn't in my plan, but however he did arrive before me. By 1964, and I repeat, by the year 1964 his accomplishments and recognition were firmly established through his contribution as an outstanding public servant and an accomplished cabinet minister. Over the next 17 years, Mr. Speaker, it was an honour and a truly educational experience to have had such an ally and a leader as the most hon. member from Regina Elphinstone. He led by example, his word was his bond.

On a personal note, leaving aside family, I cannot think of anyone who would have been better and given me more pleasure to sit with in this Legislative Assembly.

What about the future, Mr. Speaker? Some time, perhaps 20 or 30 years from now, when the member for Elphinstone's mental abilities start to slow down somewhat, I believe that this member should be declared an historic national treasure. And I want to say to the Premier that this may give us an opportunity to access federal grants whereby we can preserve and maintain him into the future.

I assure hon. members that my comments are not meant to hasten the departure from this legislature in any way, unless of course I can get an agreement from the Premier that his departure will bring two immediate by-elections.

On the other hand, comments from a subject such as this are a delicate . . . there is a delicate balance that is required. To begin with, Mr. Speaker, it's necessary that the words convey some social credit to the member, without being so liberal as to offend his conservative nature. It must all be delivered with a new and

democratic eye to the future, to which we may all subscribe.

Mr. Speaker, the first draft of my remarks, which I prepared earlier, were so complimentary to this person that it would have obligated him to stay on indefinitely in this Chamber. Now that member has earned a change of pace, a look at some other new fields, and I have therefore reduced the complimentary level of my remarks by 50 per cent, at least, so that the member may leave in due course, but feel free to Tory awhile — I mean, tarry awhile. In any case, I don't feel I could be too generous in my remarks at any time.

As I conclude my remarks on this important motion, Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere wish that you may be able to conclude this debate with a phrase we hardly ever seek, and seldom see, that being *nemine contradicente*. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured to second the motion by the member from Saskatoon Westmount. I wish to take a few moments in this legislature to make note of a milestone in Saskatchewan history, and particularly in Saskatchewan's legislative history.

For 17 years the member of the legislature for Regina Elphinstone has served as leader of his party in the Saskatchewan legislature. During those 17 years as leader, the member for Regina Elphinstone served the people of Saskatchewan as both Leader of the Opposition and indeed as Premier.

This weekend at a convention here in Regina the member from Regina Elphinstone will step down as leader of his party. Today I wish to pay special recognition to the member from Regina Elphinstone and mark this milestone in the history of the province of Saskatchewan.

The member for Regina Elphinstone and I are, as they say, political adversaries, and I am sure he would be the first to agree. Yet there are times in the cut and thrust of political affairs, Mr. Speaker, when those of us in the political arena put aside our partisan differences to pay recognition to those who have served with honour and respect in politics. Today is such a day.

I am sure all members of this legislative Assembly would concur that the member for Regina Elphinstone has served his party and province with honour. Since 1960 — over 27 years — the member for Regina Elphinstone has been an active participant in politics as a member of the Saskatchewan legislature, as an MLA, cabinet minister, Leader of the Opposition, premier, and political leader on the national scene.

The member for Regina Elphinstone is respected for his commitment to service in public life. Eight consecutive elections to this legislature have made him one of the longest-serving politicians in the nation. For 17 of his 27 years in public life the member for Regina Elphinstone has been the leader of a political party. He has been at the front row centre of the political stage in a very political

province.

And all of us who are politicians recognize — yes we recognize — the dedication and the commitment and indeed the effort that goes into leading a political party. Mr. Speaker, anyone who has led a political party for 17 years in victory and defeat deserves the praise and tribute of his colleagues in public life. I wish to commend the member for his years of service as the leader of his party and as a political leader in the province of Saskatchewan.

When the member from Regina Elphinstone came to Saskatchewan in 1950 from Nova Scotia, I am sure he did not expect that some 37 years later he would be part of history and such a party of the political history of the province of Saskatchewan. All of us recognize that he earned national recognition for his role in the patriation of the Canadian constitution. We recognize his years of service as a premier of the province of Saskatchewan. And on a personal note we recognize his wit, his solid commitment to his political philosophy, and his dedication to his wife and to his family.

The member from Regina Elphinstone is proud of his personal beliefs, and though from time to time we may disagree, I respect his lifelong loyalty to the cause, and I want him to know that today.

I want to extend to the member from Regina Elphinstone much joy and happiness in his retirement. You have been as they say, sir, a happy warrior of Saskatchewan politics, and we wish you many good years ahead to spend with your family and, indeed, your friends.

On a day like this, I will leave it to the historians to judge the record of the member for Regina Elphinstone. But I am sure all members would agree that in his years of being a politician, he fits the description by Theodore Roosevelt, who once said, and I quote:

Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though chequered by failures, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much because they live in the grey twilight that knows not victory nor defeat.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Elphinstone knows both victory and defeat, but I'm sure his life will be one of victory.

And today we salute him for his 17 years in this legislature as the leader of an important political party in the province of Saskatchewan. Congratulations, sir.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I too would like to say a few words on this motion.

I want to say that I first knew of the hon. member of Elphinstone for many years before I actually met him, which was around 1970, when I was a young person articling in the law firm of MacPherson Leslie & Tyreman in Regina. And I'm sure the hon. member from Elphinstone remembers nothing about this first meeting

because there was nothing significant about it. But it made an impression on me, Mr. Speaker, because it gave me the opportunity to meet a man of reputation and someone with respect, for whom I've had a great deal of respect.

Later in '73 to '77 I worked for this Assembly as Law Clerk and Legislative Counsel, and at that time I observed very closely the hon. member of Elphinstone and his government, and I admired the fair and competent manner in which he governed this province.

And I watched and I was inspired by his fairness, his competence, and his keen sense of justice. And now, as a colleague of his in this legislature, and observing him firsthand as Leader of the Opposition, I've developed even a greater respect for him, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm awed by his vast knowledge of government. A 15-minute or half-hour conversation with the member from Regina Elphinstone is worth three days of research, Mr. Speaker. And I'm inspired by what many people have described as his academic brilliance, and that is a very important part of his personality.

But there's one thing, above all else, that inspires me, Mr. Speaker, and that is that the hon. member from Regina Elphinstone has defined in his own person an exemplary standard of public life. His honesty, his tolerance, his fairness, his keen sense of justice, and his abiding commitment to democracy — these are all values, Mr. Speaker, that I hold very dear, and I see them personified in the member for Regina Elphinstone.

And I consider myself a very lucky person to have rubbed shoulders with a man of his stature and his integrity. It has enriched my life, as I know it has done for many others, and what I want to say today to Al is thank you. Thank you, Al.

(1445)

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with other members here today to pay a special tribute to our leader, and to say at the outset that my relationship with Mr. Blakeney goes back a large number of years — almost more than what he and I want to remember, almost 25 years.

When I came out of law school, I first association with Mr. Blakeney . . . I had known him politically before, but I had the privilege of articling in the law firm of Griffin, Blakeney, Beke, and later, Koskie. And later in the association in 1971-1974 I worked in the then premier's office as a special assistant, and more recently, from 1975 to the present, served in his caucus and his cabinet, and in the caucus in opposition.

I want to say that there are many ups and downs in the political career. And I can say that in 1982 the then premier showed, I think, the strength of his character in receiving a defeat. And out of that defeat the strength of his character was shown that he was not a quitter, nor was he bitter. But with his little band of seven we came in

here, led by him, to challenge the enthusiastic 56 members of the government side who had, by the way, been out of power for 50 years. And I must say indeed, Mr. Speaker, they were hungry. and they were enthusiastic.

But Mr. Blakeney joined with us, and we were able to survive the onslaught. And what he has been able to do with his determination to serve his party and this province is to rebuild the party. And today we sit in opposition with a strengthened opposition of 25 members.

As others will have said, Mr. Blakeney is a distinguished scholar, a Rhodes scholar, and a man of great integrity. He served in a way that distinguished himself both as a civil servant, as a lawyer, and as a politician. And I think all of the people of Saskatchewan, whether he was winning elections or losing elections, still admired and trusted the man, and I say that it's a great tribute to his character and dedication.

And I think he was respected as premier of this province for his outstanding knowledge of the area of finance and administration. And I can well recall the indications of the financial community saying that under his stewardship Saskatchewan was the best-managed area in North American — what a tribute!

I say that no doubt Mr. Blakeney could well have excelled in the corporate and business world, but he chose — and fortunately for Saskatchewan — to take on the arduous task, as the Premier indicated, of the job of politics.

And so I want to join with all of you here today to pay a tribute to a long-time leader and a friend. And I say that the annals of history, I am sure, will speak well of the contribution that he has made.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am more than happy to bring a few words to this motion and, Mr. Speaker, I bring them to this motion as a member of a generation of Saskatchewan people who have been influenced by this member from Elphinstone, this current Leader of the Opposition.

Now I don't want to compare our ages today, Mr. Speaker, but I would observe to some of the children in the galleries and to other members that when this member was entering this House, I was entering grade 3. Mr. Speaker, through my years at university this member was my Premier, and frankly there is a generation of us in this province who do not know public life or politics in this province apart from this man.

Mr. Speaker, I've often said to family and friends and in public forums that I will treasure for a lifetime the opportunity to have served with this man. For more than one reason I would have wished that opportunity could have been extended to a number of others. I will treasure it for a lifetime. And I believe that I can speak for all of us on this side of the House who make up the class of '86, who came here for the first time in October 1986 — we have considered it our good fortune to serve under the leadership of this man.

Mr. Speaker, this man has been our teacher. He has been, we, the class of '86, he has been our teacher in the workings of this House. He has been our tutor in understanding the functions of government. He has spent many an hour with us, helping us to understand the complexities and the intricacies of public policy. For those of us who are new to this House, Mr. Speaker, and new to this caucus, this member has been more than our leader. He has been our teacher, our tutor, our mentor, and we could not have asked for any wiser or any better.

Mr. Speaker, but this member from Elphinstone has been more than our teacher. He has also been, frankly, an inspiration to us. Not by word alone, but by his every act he has inspired in us a love for this legislature, a love for this parliamentary process, a love for parliamentary democracy, a deep respect for this institution. And rarely, Mr. Speaker, have I or have we known an individual whose deeply-held commitments were so reflected and matched by his action.

We have been inspired by the courage of this man's convictions. We have been inspired by his commitment to service. We have been inspired by his humility in service. We have been inspired by his commitment to social democracy. Rarely, Mr. Speaker, have we seen a man whose deeply held convictions were so matched by action.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think I can be excused if I wrap up with a verse of scripture. Mr. Speaker, I close with this little thought from the scriptures by saying, that in all things, this member, this former minister, this former premier, this leader, has fought the good fight. But I do not complete the scripture, Mr. Speaker, for this man's course is far from finished — far from finished, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It has been my pleasure to have served with the member from Elphinstone since 1975 in this Legislative Assembly. I think the member from Elphinstone has had a career which is unique, without precedent, and I doubt very much it will ever be repeated. It is truly spectacular.

I think there are two or three members who have served longer in the Assembly than the member from Elphinstone. What I think is unique about the member from Elphinstone's career is, the entire 27 years were spent at centre stage. He has been in the centre of every pivotal event in this province's history since he was first elected.

I entirely agree with all of the comments which were made by my colleagues. I don't wish to repeat them, but I do want to refer to one quality in the member from Elphinstone which I think has had the most profound importance, and which isn't always seen, because it's not exercised in the public platform. He has demonstrated an ability, in difficult times, to find a compromise that everybody can live with, while never abandoning his principles.

He was first elected in 1960; if my recollection of events

were correct, was made Minister of Education — never did serve as a back-bencher. Members will recall that the Douglas government had promised to bring in medicare. The opposition provided to be ferocious, and anything that could go wrong, did go wrong. The minister of Health, Walter Erb, resigned — crossed the floor. Again, as would happen time and time again, the member from Elphinstone was asked to fill the void.

It would be going too far to credit the eventual outcome of that entirely to the member from Elphinstone, but he and others with him exhibited that same quality; they stuck to their principles and yet found a compromise which got this province out of what was undoubtedly one of its more dangerous events that could well have ended in bloodshed. It didn't, and that it didn't is a credit, I think, not to the cool tempers on the other side, but it was a credit to the diplomatic skills of the member from Elphinstone.

Going forward a bit — I don't want to take too long — that same quality of judgement and balance was exhibited after the leadership convention in 1970, in what I thought was a master-stroke. The convention was only over by a couple of months, and he appointed his former rival, the member from Riversdale, as the deputy leader. I had not theretofore known there was a position of deputy leader, and I'm not sure there was on the opposition, but it was a masterful stroke and not always easy to do.

I wonder if the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, who might contemplate how much better off the federal Liberal party would have been if Mr. Turner could have made similar use of Mr. Chrétien's skills . . . that's often difficult to do. Again a spirit of compromise and judgement and balance.

The same skills were exhibited again in the take-over of the potash mine. This was the largest take-over in the province's history, an undertaking of enormous risk and enormous complexity; as it turned out, all done without expropriating a single mine.

The same qualities of compromise without losing sight of your essential principles were in evidence. The goals were achieved, no expropriations took place, and everybody in the end result felt they had been fairly treated.

Those same skills — compromise, diplomacy, and striking a balance — were again evident in the discussions leading up to the constitution, in which the member from Elphinstone was one of the lead players.

I was asked by a reporter, what was his finest hour? It's an impossible question to ask, but the comment that came to mind was the period after the defeat of the government in '82.

It was an extremely difficult period, I think, for many of us — totally unexpected. We watched our friends, people whom we had lived with and worked with for years, unemployed, going through a difficult period, somehow or other feeling some responsibility for that, feeling as if we didn't deserve to be so badly treated. None of those emotions which I suspect presented themselves to the

member from Elphinstone were ever in evidence.

Took over an opposition, none of whom had ever been in opposition before. Apart from the member from Elphinstone, none of us had served previous to '75 — there were none of the veterans. Turned it into what I think would fairly be . . . I think everyone would fairly agree it was a competent opposition. Came back from a devastating defeat to near victory in '86. The distribution of seats don't show it, but the vote was extremely close.

Before sitting down, I want to mention Anne Blakeney. As is often the case, I think our spouses are not always accorded credit for the role they play. I don't wish to embarrass the visitor in the gallery, but suffice it to say that the two complemented each other. Their personalities and skills complement each other, and they made an extremely effective political team, one that I think most of us would envy. With those I will, of course, be joining others in voting for this motion.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very honoured to have the opportunity to speak in tribute to the member from Elphinstone here today and support this resolution.

I recollect when I first met this man, it was in 1970 when there was then a leadership campaign. And I remember the member from Elphinstone coming to the constituency of Humboldt to meet the delegates and the executive. And I remember after he left how all of those delegates and that executive worked so hard to explain to me why this would be the best choice as the leader of the New Democratic Party at that time. And as the years have passed, they have proven to be correct.

He has distinguished himself in the tasks that have been put before him, and deserves very much the honour and the tribute that not only that we are giving today, but I think all the people in Saskatchewan give.

(1500)

When I was elected in 1971, I came to Regina for the first time in my life. That may sound strange to some people. And I came into this Chamber and I felt, as I think a lot of new members usually do, somewhat intimidated by all of what is here. And then the premier came to me and said, will you second the motion on the Speech from the Throne. And I can tell you that that was the beginning for me of losing this sense of intimidation. And I've appreciated that opportunity ever since.

The member from Elphinstone, as has been said, has provided 27 years of distinguished service in a wide range of capacities as a leader of the New Democratic Party, and the Leader of the Opposition, and the premier, and the member from his constituency. And he has also, in doing that, achieved national prominence and contributed immensely to the growth and the maturity of Canada as a nation. And this province and this country of ours is better off for this man's willingness to serve with statesmanship and dedication in public life.

And although the member will be stepping down from his present role in public life in the near future, I somehow don't believe that his continuing contribution will stop. It may be made in different capacities, but many will continue to benefit from his passionate beliefs, his commitment to serve, and his vast experience and knowledge.

In a personal sense I want to say, and if I may use the member's name at this one occasion, to Allan Blakeney: thank you for the opportunities you made available to me; for the advice given when needed; for the time I was fortunate to have had to be a colleague of yours. To have had the opportunity to be associated with you has made a big and positive impact on my life, as it has on the life of many people, if not all the people of Saskatchewan. And I know that as we say thank you to you today, that those sentiments which have been expressed here today are shared by everyone in Saskatchewan.

I salute as well, Anne Blakeney, who is in the gallery. She has, too, made a major contribution. And I join with members of this Assembly in wishing you both well, and happiness and all of those things that should come in a positive way as you take the next steps in your life together.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goodale: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak in support of this motion and associate myself with the tributes that have been paid today to the hon. member for Elphinstone. This may be his final day in the sitting of this Assembly as he turns over the reins of leadership in his party to someone else later on this weekend.

He arrived on the political scene, particularly in this legislature, of course, long before I did. Indeed, as a young news reporter 17 years ago I covered that convention which selected him as the leader of his party. But for a few years we have been contestants and competitors in Saskatchewan's political arena. His reputation has, of course, been well established, as an orator and a debater, as a fighter, as a believer in democracy, a man of deep conviction, and a man of very significant leadership skill and acumen.

While there are many of us, of course, Mr. Speaker, who take a different political view on the issues, there are none who would doubt this man's sincerity, his ability, or his commitment to Saskatchewan. He has served Saskatchewan long and well, with wit and with wisdom — oh yes, with lots of controversy took, along the way — but certainly with the respect of both his political allies and foes alike.

We thank him for those years of service. We congratulate him upon his contribution to Saskatchewan and to Canada, and we wish him well in what the future may bring for him and his wife and his family.

And before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be remiss if I did not convey a message to the hon. member for Elphinstone from one who sat across the way from him for quite some years, a message from Senator Dave Steuart, who wishes to be remembered to Mr. Blakeney

on this occasion, to congratulate him, to pay tribute to his record of service, to say that if circumstances present themselves, Senator Steuart will prepared a place in the Senate, if that becomes . . . and to remind Mr. Blakeney, of course, of each and every point, in detail, upon which they disagreed over the years, and I won't review that record.

But, Mr. Speaker, I suspect this motion to going to pass unanimously. It's an appropriate, democratic demonstration of respect and admiration for a man, the member for Elphinstone, who has served this institution — the legislature — and Saskatchewan with distinction.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, and members of the House, I have felt my pulse and it is still beating, and I was reassured by feeling that pulse, because I was beginning to fear that I'd somehow posthumously stumbled upon the consideration of a condolence motion. I want to assure hon. members that I . . . at least I believe I'm still alive.

I was particularly pleased that my wife Anne heard all this. She has from time to time been less impressed than you so kindly said you have been.

I do want to thank you all for warm words, from my colleagues, and particularly from the Premier — not only in his capacity as Premier, but because he is a political adversary, and he none the less found some kind things to say.

I want to take a little moment of the House's time to talk about serving in the legislature, and to be a little serious for a minute. When we look around and consider the human condition generally, there are many things which depress us, but some things in which we can take some pride.

And one of the things which gives us some cause for encouragement, as we look on the world scene, is the fact that free men have developed institutions to govern themselves. We've seen great advances in the world in technology and economics, but we've also, I think, appreciated that technology and economic achievement is not enough. We must also find some way for fairness and physical well-being to be available to the largest possible number of people, and also ways to permit the human spirit to soar.

And so we have devised these methods of public or parliamentary government, and we are involved in that process. And I'm sure that those of us who have been involved in it think from time to time that it's a pretty untidy process, and we wonder whether it's all worthwhile. If I may say something to the newer members, I believe it is worthwhile.

It is worthwhile because it is a contribution to a very important part of human striving, and that is to find ways where free men can govern themselves. From time to time the press, and sometimes ourselves, feel that it isn't worthwhile because it's a slow and cumbersome way to make decisions. But I say to members of the legislature,

we're not primarily here to make decisions — other agencies of government make decisions; we pass upon them. We can, on rare occasions, cause the executive arm of government to change their decision, but rarely.

Our job fundamentally is to talk about them, to discuss them, to question, to explain them, to reply to questions, and all this is so that the voters and the public will understand. Because the voters, if our system works, are entitled to know why we're doing things. They're entitled to have a chance to contact their member to raise a protest if, in fact, they have one.

I say to new members, and to others, in the tedium that frequently engulfs this House and every other chamber of parliamentary or popular government, don't assume that fundamentally what you're doing isn't worthwhile, because in my judgement you'd be making a mistake. It is worthwhile. One only has to look at areas which do not have this cumbersome, untidy, tedious system to know that they are far poorer in the things that really count than are we.

Having said that, I don't think we need to take ourselves quite so seriously as we sometimes do. There's no law against a little humour. A little levity is not illegal — this is something that the member for Souris-Cannington has always been aware of. And when I look around, when I look back, I think some of my happiest memories have been of some of the characters we've had in this House, the Minty Loptsons, or the Dave Steuarts, or the Tommy Douglasses, or the Jim Snedkers, or the member for Souris-Cannington. And they have added something which makes the work of the House, the talking of the House, and the questioning and the replying a little more bearable and a little more effective.

If I may just touch upon a few personal things. In personal terms, my years in this House and in public life have been stimulating and rewarding. As the Premier mentioned, I was a young man who came from Nova Scotia, and within 10 years and a few months of arriving here I was not only a member of the legislature but a member of the cabinet. And that demonstrated a level of tolerance and an open society which has characterized Saskatchewan, which is far rarer than we sometimes think. And I have always been grateful to the people of Saskatchewan in this sense: that they are open; they do permit people to come in and join them and to build the sort of society which each of us is striving for.

And I look back on my years, and I won't try to recall all of the events. One thinks of the medicare dispute, which was the first occasion which I had to be in a political and public battle where emotions ran very, very high. And as I've said the press, how do I illustrate the nature of the battle then? I was saying that I was subbing for the premier from time to time and taking news conferences, and we were having, during this brief period, two news conferences a day, at which there were never less than 60 reporters. This gives you some idea of the nature of the political conflict in which we were involved.

And then the battle over resources in the mid '70s with the federal government and the Supreme Court and the resource companies, which ultimately was resolved one

way or another, and with section 92(a) of the constitution. The referendum debate, and patriation — and that story is familiar.

And closer to home, and not of national significance but things which I am proud of — and I think there's no shame in being proud of some of one's accomplishments — I think of the Wascana Centre park project, which has always been a favourite of mine; the establishment of the new University of Regina; and forward strides that we have made, and I know are continuing to make in what I regard as the greatest ongoing social problem in this province, and that is the relations between native and non-native.

(1515)

And I'm proud of what has been accomplished, since I came into public life, in giving people of native origin a feeling that they are full citizens, and I know that others on both sides of the House share my view that this continues to be an important, indeed a very important, issue that needs to be addressed at all times by governments if we are to avoid a level of social conflict that we see occasionally elsewhere, and which we have seen instances of here. So I commend all hon. members — I invite you to consider that problem, because it's one that's going to be with this legislature and many in the future.

And so to my wife and my family, and the voters of Saskatchewan, and the members of this House, and to members of previous Houses, I say, thank you. It's been a great experience, for which I will continue to be, and am, very grateful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you all.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Legislation Ombudsman — Program Services Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 21

Item 13

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

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I have, sitting on my left, Earl McKeen, chief investigator from the Ombudsman's office.

Ms. Simard: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. You will recall, Mr. Minister, that earlier on in this session the New Democratic opposition complained very loudly about the fact that your new Ombudsman was appointed without any consultation with the opposition; notwithstanding the fact that we had asked for such consultations.

So I'd like to ask the minister why he did not consult with the opposition before he put forward a name as Acting

Ombudsman?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — We've been through this debate before as the hon. member has acknowledged and at some length. And you know, we were criticized considerably by the opposition at that time. I don't think anyone in the opposition criticized the credentials of the appointment, or since the appointment I don't think anyone has criticized the effectiveness of that particular Ombudsman.

The fact is — and I forget the dates — but there was a letter sent to the Leader of the Opposition indicating that we would be, in accordance with the Act, recommending . . . or appointing Mr. McLellan as the Acting Ombudsman and we would be seeking confirmation for that appointment by resolution in the legislature . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The letter, she says the letter came after. The letter was sent to the Leader of the Opposition prior to the appointment of the now Ombudsman as the Ombudsman, and the appointment was made in accordance with the Act because the position cannot be vacant.

Ms. Simard: — There was absolutely no notification, Mr. Minister, before the appointment had been made, and it's solely a semantical argument on your part to suggest that there was notification. The appointment of Acting Ombudsman was made without any notifications, and at that point it is virtually a fait accompli. And you have to admit that, Mr. Minister. To suggest otherwise is not being fair to this House.

The fact of the matter is there was no consultation and there was no all-party committee set up in spite of the fact that we had requested that. And you have failed to give us today any good reason as to why that was not done, other than the fact that your government chose to engage in a very anti-democratic method, contrary to the traditions of this House, in appointing the present Ombudsman. And as I understand, that appointment was not advertised. Now I would like you to tell me what you see the role of the Ombudsman to be?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — The Ombudsman's role is . . . It's not something that's been a deep, dark secret in this province, or in other provinces where ombudsmen exist.

The Ombudsman is simply to be the arbiter, if you like, to settle grievances or disputes between the citizens of the province and its government. And there are some limiting factors in that role. I think it's limited to the level of deputy minister or the level below that, and that hasn't changed. That's been the case, I think, since the day we had the original Ombudsman in this province, Mr. Justice Boychuk. But — perhaps a little over-simplified — but that is the role of the Ombudsman.

Ms. Simard: — Statements were made, Mr. Minister, by your government that perhaps we didn't need an Ombudsman any longer, and the Office of Ombudsman could be eliminated. Could you tell us now how you . . .

An Hon. Member: — Who said that?

Ms. Simard: — I believe the member from Melville made

those statements.

An Hon. Member: — I don't agree with him.

Ms. Simard: — Well let's have it for the record, Mr. Minister. You shouted over that you don't agree with him. Well could you please put in on record that you don't agree with him, and I want to know whether you feel the position of Ombudsman is necessary and whether you will be maintaining that office in the province.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm on record in more than one place. I spoke to the — this is a few years ago — I spoke to the ombudsmen of Canada when they gathered in Saskatoon. And at that time I made it very clear what my views were relative to the Office of the Ombudsman. And it's a very important role that they have in our society and their . . . While individual members of either caucus may have their individual views on the Office of the Ombudsman, the position of me and the position of the government is that the Ombudsman's office has played a very important role and will continue to play a very important role in the society of Saskatchewan.

Ms. Simard: — Could you also tell me, Mr. Minister, how you view the independence of the Ombudsman, vis-a-vis government?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — There's no doubt, and I think his independence is beyond question. The investigations are made by his own staff. He can make recommendations to government. Government has a certain period set out in statute that they can either act on the recommendation or reject the recommendation.

But the decision and the recommendations of the Ombudsman are his, and come from his own investigations and those of his staff.

Ms. Simard: — With respect to Mr. McLellan directly, Mr. Minister, could you please tell me what human rights experience he had prior to becoming Ombudsman?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I can't today. I think I did during the debate when he was appointed, and I think I remember going through the resumé of the man at that time. And several members from your side in fact, on the record, have stated that they had no quarrel with the credentials of the individual.

Ms. Simard: — You did put the credentials on record, however you did not refer, if I recall correctly, to any human rights experience. And what I'm suggesting today is, that is one of the requirements for an Ombudsman. And I'm wondering whether Mr. McLellan has had this human rights experience, because I don't recall you having mentioned it.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I suppose in many respects, and I don't know if he's had formal training or experience directly in the area of human rights, but I suppose that — and you will know better than I — that a man with legal training and living in the community of Saskatchewan for 50-odd years, as he has done, he will have a pretty good feel for matters relative to human rights.

Ms. Simard: — Would you please tell the House what the terms of employment are for Mr. McLellan, and I'm referring now to salary, benefits, holidays and any special benefits?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — It's set by statute under section 6:

(1) The Ombudsman shall be paid:

(a) a salary equal to the salary fixed from time to time by the Lieutenant Governor in Council . . .

and shall be equal to that paid to a provincial court judge.

Ms. Simard: — Are there any other terms of employment over and above what's stipulated in the statute?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — My understanding is that it is a direct linkage.

Ms. Simard: — It's a direct linkage. You mean that that's the entire package? You're shaking your head, yes.

With respect to the former ombudsman, Mr. Speaker, you will recall . . . Mr. Minister, rather — you will recall that he came forward with a report that your government wasn't too pleased with and there was a general sort of attitude by the government that they didn't like this messenger so they were going to shoot the messenger.

I'm just wondering with respect to his report on child abuse whether the Office of the Ombudsman has seen that this has been followed through on and what has taken place since the ombudsman came down with that special report.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — With respect to that investigation and that report, there were inquiries and responses from right across the country and so other agencies, not only in Saskatchewan but across the country, have more or less picked up that ball and the Ombudsman's office here in Saskatchewan is monitoring what is going on in those other agencies or with those other agencies relative to that issue.

Ms. Simard: — Will we be getting some sort of formal review and update, say a few months down the road, as to what is happening on the issue?

(1530)

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — The Ombudsman may report from time to time, as ombudsmen do from time to time, but I can't speak for the Ombudsman. And as you have already stated, the independence of the office is paramount, so I think I'll just leave that decision with him.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, I have here a list of the staff cut-backs in three of our major public watchdogs in the province . . .

An Hon. Member: — Three of the what?

Ms. Simard: — Three of the major public watchdogs: the

provincial Ombudsman, the Provincial Auditor, and the Human Rights Commission. Now I don't know how up to date these are; I think I got the statistics in April or May of this year.

The provincial Ombudsman in '81-82 had 16.1 people on staff, and there's been . . . it went up to 16.8 in '82-83 and then started sliding downwards, and in '87-88 the staff is 13.4.

The Provincial Auditor has gone down from 72 to 63 in the same sort of time period, and the Human Rights Commission down 21.1 to 15.4 in the same time period.

And the point I wish to make, Mr. Minister, is the fact that, in spite of the fact these agencies particularly — and I can speak from knowledge with respect to the Ombudsman and the Human Rights Commission — have had an increasing work-load over the years, and it has been very, very difficult for them to do all the work that is required of them, but what we've seen under the PC government is a slow cut-back of the staff, notwithstanding the fact that the work-load has been decreasing.

And I wish to make the point that the effect of decreasing the amount of staff that's available for an agency like this is to muzzle the agency, to make it very difficult for the agency to perform the duties and responsibilities that are prescribed in legislation.

And so I'd like to know from the minister whether this trend is going to quit, and whether we will actually see the staff requirements of the provincial Ombudsman in particular here, because that's what we're dealing with, being met properly by your government.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Okay, I can't speak for the Human Rights Commission; you're going to have to talk to the Minister of Justice there. I have some familiarity with what has gone on in the Provincial Auditor's office and, you know, the Minister of Finance has put those arguments forth on more than one occasion.

There were two positions vacant in the Ombudsman's office at the end of April, or beginning of April . . .

An Hon. Member: — April 1.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — April 1. And they were, in the case of the one at least, was a gentleman that retired, having reached retirement age. I'm not familiar with the other one, but the only cut-back that has . . . or reduced staffing that has happened in the Ombudsman's office is that those two positions that became vacant at that time were not refilled.

And the case-load, I'm told, this year is down, year to date, slightly from what it was last year. And if that trend continues, it, you know, will be down even more by year end.

Ms. Simard: — Are those two positions going to be filled?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — No, because of the restraint mode that we're in across government, those two positions have been deleted.

Ms. Simard: That's two positions from '86-87, as I understand. When you look at '82 down to '87 you're talking about almost three positions, I believe. So is the Ombudsman going outside of Regina and Saskatoon, and going into rural Saskatchewan and small towns around Saskatchewan to make the services of the Ombudsman more accessible, more available, to rural Saskatchewan?

And I'm wondering if the Ombudsman is also engaging in an education program vis-a-vis the Ombudsman's role and government with people living outside of the two major centres.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Yes, the question of travelling outside of Regina or Saskatoon . . . I'm told that one of the reasons the travel budget is relatively high in the Ombudsman's office is that they do get out into other parts of Saskatchewan, and last year there were 20 communities visited. And what they do is they go into the community with two people and have a temporary office for one day or two days, depending on anticipated load or perhaps actual load, and that itinerary as well is being advanced for the balance of this year.

Ms. Simard: — You just said it was an annual thing, and they do it every year. And the Ombudsman will be continuing to do that in the future, I take it. And the answer is affirmative.

Well, I'm pleased to hear that because I think that outreach is absolutely essential to the proper functioning of the office. It's very important to get out to rural Saskatchewan because people in rural Saskatchewan have difficulty coming into the cities or may simply not be aware that the service is there and they are having difficulty with something or other. They don't know where to turn, and they're not aware that the Ombudsman is there to help them.

So I am very pleased to see that that service to the public is still continuing. And I would urge the minister and the Ombudsman to continue with that service, expand it if the budget allows, but I see it as a very vital and important part of the role of Ombudsman.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Part of the travel budget that I've talked about, getting out into rural Saskatchewan . . . I'm not talking about just Carlyle and Maple Creek and Tisdale. The travel budget relative to CVA (central vehicle agency) or charter aircraft into the North, they spend a lot of time going into the small northern communities as well. So no corner of Saskatchewan is ignored relative to these outreach exercises as you called them.

Ms. Simard: — Could the minister please tell me whether there has been any contracting out of these services of the Ombudsman, and if so, to whom and how much was the contract?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Now the only thing that has been contracted out, I understand, ever, in the Ombudsman's office is from time to time if there's a clerical vacancy or for some reason an unanticipated backlog, they will contract a position or two of clerical.

Ms. Simard: — I referred earlier to a staff overload in this, and . . . you know, to the staff being overworked. For example, out of the 1985 annual report of the Ombudsman, it states:

Faced with further workload increases in 1985 and no additional staff or other resources, there is again, a special need to express my appreciation . . . for an effort above and beyond the call of the duty.

My appreciation to my staff is what was said.

And then in the most recent annual report, 1986, at page 6, referring to the budget, the Ombudsman says:

. . . I would ask the members to note that the Ombudsman's budget for fiscal 1986-87 was some \$20,000 less than for 1985-86 and, indeed, less than for 1983-84.

This kind of seemingly innocuous budget reduction necessarily and seriously limits our operational capabilities at a time of increasing (work-loads).

And then I look at a comparison of the staff and the work-load from '82 to '86, and we see that the complaints against agencies, government agencies, from '82 to '86 increased by some 18 per cent. And then there were other complaints which increased by approximately 13 per cent over the same period, making an average of 15 per cent.

But there was a staff reduction of some 8 per cent, and that, I believe, is what the Ombudsman was referring to in the 1986 report, and the fact that there had been in effect a budget reduction in that period of time.

Now you made a statement earlier today that the work-load was slightly decreasing this year. I'm wondering if you could explain to me whether that's a temporary thing, whether that's a trend, what the reason for that is — if you can. And I'm wondering whether you will take into consideration the comments of the Ombudsman in the most recent report that was taken forth.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Yes, I think it's too early to say whether we have a trend established as it relates to declining numbers. I hope that it's a trend.

And as to the question relative to the comments of the Ombudsman, budget and staffing comments, I would like to add my words to those of the Ombudsman, both old and new, in complimenting the staff over there for the fine work that they do, recognizing that they have a significant work-load and do put in lengthy hours in all kinds of different locations right across Saskatchewan, not just in Regina and Saskatoon.

I would hope that when this restraint exercise is over, that we will be in a position to give the kind of budget attention to the Ombudsman's office that is necessary to give some relief to the staff people that are there.

Ms. Simard: — There was an increase, Mr. Minister, from '86-87 to '87-88, but it didn't got to staff. Could you please explain to me what categories that increase fell under. Like how much to, for example, materials, supplies and equipment, other contractual services, investigator, and travel expenses?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — The most significant bump there is because of the changes relative to property management. In the old scheme of things, Supply and Services used to pick up the bill for the rent. Now the Ombudsman's office pays property management corporation for their own space.

Ms. Simard: — Has there been any out-of-province travel?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Six people attended the Canadian conference in Edmonton, and less than \$2,000 was the cost of those six people attending in Edmonton I'm told. That's the only out-of-province travel.

(1545)

Ms. Simard: — I'm sorry, six people attending, what was that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — The Canadian Conference of Ombudsman in Edmonton.

Ms. Simard: — The other point that I would like to make with you: you had spoken about two positions being eliminated, and one of them was the sort of deputy ombudsman or the Assistant Ombudsman. You had said that you weren't going to fill that position in times of restraint. I would like to know whether the minister might reconsider that because I understand that that is a very key position and a very important position?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — There has been an application made to the Public Service Commission to eliminate a position of investigator and maintain the position of Assistant Ombudsman. It was the Assistant Ombudsman's position that was vacated, because that position — or was eliminated, because it was vacant at the time. In fact, Mr. McKeen is acting as the Assistant Ombudsman today, and when this application is dealt with, hopefully he will be, not only acting, but the Assistant Ombudsman.

Ms. Simard: — Thank you. I understand there were some 71 written recommendations made by the Ombudsman in 1986. Could you please tell me if that's correct. I also understand that there were approximately 67 outstanding at the year end, and I am wondering how many are still outstanding.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — We'll give you an undertaking. We don't have that here, but we'll get it for you.

Ms. Simard: — Could I please have an undertaking to be advised exactly what the written recommendations were, and which ones are outstanding.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — We can give you the number, the nature and the department, etc., but we can't give you the

substance of the recommendation. There may be a point that we could give it to you, but we would be very reluctant to give that, or to make those public until . . . or at least until we see them ourselves or know what they are.

Ms. Simard: — Okay. Is there a further answer to that question?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Just that it's a kind of a rolling number, if you like, because some are dealt with, and we can give you current numbers as opposed to year end, as is in the annual report, and some of them have been dealt with already. new ones have come up, so we can give you current numbers, and we can give you the nature of each recommendation, but we wouldn't be prepared to give you the substance of those recommendations.

Ms. Simard: — When can I get that information, Mr. Minister?

An Hon. Member: — I would say within a few days.

Ms. Simard: — Within the next week you said, is that correct? Within the next week? Okay, well we'll be waiting for it then. Thank you.

Item 13 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1988
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Legislation
Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 21**

Mr. Chairman: — Any questions?

**Supplementary Estimates 1987
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Legislation
Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 21**

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 21 agreed to.

**Consolidated Fund Loans, Advances and Investments
Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Vote 152**

Item 1 — Statutory

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Mr. Minister, can you please tell me what this amount of money . . . whether you can break down specifically what this amount of money was borrowed for.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I will give you an undertaking to have my officials prepare an explanation and send it to you. I obviously don't have that at my fingertips.

Ms. Simard: — When will that be sent, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — If I get out of here before 5 o'clock, I'll have it to you within a matter of a couple of days — very quickly.

Ms. Simard: — I'm not so sure you'll get out of here by 4 or 5 o'clock.

Mr. Minister, we haven't dealt with all the issues in Sask Power Corporation in Crown Corporations Committee at this point. And one that I've asked you about repeatedly in the legislature, but I haven't had an opportunity, or haven't done so yet in the Crown corporations meeting, so I'm going to do here today, and that's the amount of George Hill's salary and benefits that is being paid. And I mean the entire package.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, my answer . . . And the hon. member is right — she has raised this on more than one occasion. And my answer has been consistently the same, and that is that in keeping with the long-standing practice of this government and previous governments, both NDP and Liberal and before, that we will provide that information only in the form of the aggregate sum of the management group, whether it's Sask Power or SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation), or whatever. That's been the way that it's been handled in the past, and that's the way that we will continue to handle it.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, does that mean that you will not give us Mr. Hill's salary, in specific amounts, his salary and benefits pertaining to him? Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — That's a fair interpretation of what I've just said.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, the appointment of George Hill, as you very well know, is a highly political appointment, and everybody in this . . . many people in this province look at it in that fashion. We all know that he's being paid a very handsome sum of money — very handsome sum of money. We have been advised that it's probably in the area of \$200,000 a year when you look at all the benefits. Maybe that's an underestimation; I don't know.

I think you have an obligation, Mr. Minister, to come forward with that information to the public. When we're talking those sums of money, you have an obligation to come forward. Now we know . . . having some idea what the other presidents of SPC were being paid. And I want to know why we don't know what Mr. Hill's being paid, because I think you have that obligation to come forward. I want to know whether you'll reconsider that decision, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, the position of president of Sask Power was filled by one Bruce Campbell for several years. He retired about a year ago, perhaps a little more than a year ago, and prior to his retirement the position was advertised and there was a . . . I forget the nice word for head-hunter, but there was a head-hunter research consultant, executive search consultant . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Thank you, member for Rosemont.

There was an executive search consultant from Toronto who had a lot of experience with electrical utilities. The person who conducted the electrical search, I'm told,

himself was once a senior manager in Ontario Hydro. And so this search was conducted.

I believe, and I'm going from memory, but I believe there were 140 applicants. And at the end of the day, George Hill— after the interviews were all conducted this man who had experience as chairman of the board with Sask Power previously, who has an excellent reputation as a business man and a lawyer and an administrator, and nobody would question his credentials — some people, most of them in this House, feel that it somehow takes from the real credentials of a person if you happen to affiliate yourself with a political party, particularly, in this case, if it happens to be the Tory party.

I can remember in the olden days when we used to accuse you of offering huge sums, obscene sums to your political hacks when David Dombowsky was president of Sask potash corporation. And you people, particularly the member from Riversdale, would stand here, in this very chair as a matter of fact, and far more eloquently than I ever could, far more eloquently than I ever could, advance the arguments as to why they would only give the aggregate sums of the management team for the various Crowns.

And my position has not changed. I will not reconsider. I've answered the question — I don't know — dozens of times, and the answer has been consistently the same.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, there's one credential that Mr. Hill had that the other 130 applicants didn't, and that is that he was the past president of the PC Party. What then, Mr. Minister, is the aggregate sum that you referred to?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I don't have it here. I mean, count the officials. This is a statutory vote, and normally it's voted on. You ask me that question in Crown Corporations Committee, and I would be very pleased to give you the aggregate sum of the management group at that time.

Ms. Simard: — Would you be willing to give me that sum within the next week, please?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I answered a question a while ago, and I even forget what it was, but I . . . oh, it was a breakdown of this statutory vote. I can include it in that.

Ms. Simard: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

Now you also indicated . . . rather, what I would like to know is how the Shand-Rafferty project — Shand from the point of view of SPC, primarily Shand although there is some money being paid towards Rafferty — is going to affect the amount that has to be borrowed by SPC in the next few months, and how does it affect this figure in here that we're dealing with today, the 206 billion?

(1600)

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I don't mind dealing with these, Mr. Speaker. They're normally dealt with in Crown corporations where I have staff. Normally where the statutory vote, you know, it's just that. You vote it. But if

the member persists in going along this route, I'm afraid I'm going to have to get my officials in to get that kind of detail.

Ms. Simard: — Are you going to provide me with that information, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — No, Mr. Speaker. I will provide that kind of information in Crown Corporations Committee, or we can pull this and I can get some officials and we can do it tomorrow, here, if that's your wish.

Ms. Simard: — Do you really want to do it tomorrow? We will be asking you in Crown corporations.

Mr. Minister, could you please describe for us, because I note that the corporate debt has risen from 1.1 billion to 2.5 billion, since 1981, and that there was a \$58 million increase in 1986 alone. I'm wondering if you could describe for us your plans to reduce the corporate debt.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — We've done several things as it relates to reducing the corporate debt. And one of them, Mr. Speaker, is on the Table here today, The Power Corporation Act, and I hope we can get through so that we can have a better opportunity at some of the money markets and better plan and manage those opportunities as they present themselves.

Another thing that we've done, Mr. Speaker, is we've taken the collection agencies, or the collection agents of Sask Power, and they were primarily in the two major centres, in Saskatoon and Regina. One of them was a drug store on Lorne Street, four blocks from the Sask Power building, that the hon. member argued long and hard to keep as an agent.

So those kinds of things — that was a saving of about \$210,000 a year, we estimate. And we have down-sized Sask Power about 27 per cent since 1982. The number of people that are working at Sask power now would number, I would guess, approximately 2,700 — maybe 2,650, but in that ballpark, as compared to about 33 or 3,400 in 1982, and Sask Power is still providing an excellent service right across the province.

So those are some of the things that we're doing relative to getting a handle on the efficiencies necessary to turn Sask Power around. There's no doubt that there is a horrendous debt there to deal with. We must get our arms around it. And further detail, I would invite the member to seek in Crown Corporations Committee.

Ms. Simard: — With respect to down-sizing, Mr. Minister, I should advise you that — as I'm sure you're well aware — there has been a considerable amount of contracting out. So when you say down-sizing, it doesn't necessarily mean that the money isn't being paid to get the work done, you're just paying it through a different method; rather than having people on staff, you're contracting out.

I also want to make a point with respect to down-sizing and the safety department because I understand that there's been a considerable down-sizing in the safety

department and many of the people who were responsible for employee and customer safety have been let go. And I want to know if that's correct.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know. I'll take that under advisement, or you can raise it in Crown corporations.

Mr. Chairman: — If there are no further questions, and since it's statutory when there's no vote required, we'll go on to the next order of business which is vote 166, page 106.

Consolidated Fund Loans, Advances and Investments Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 166

Item 1

Mr. Chairman: — Are there any questions?

Mr. Mitchell: — Can I ask, Mr. Chairman, who it is over on the other side of the House who's going to answer questions?

An Hon. Member: — I'm not going to answer any. I'll just take them under advisement and ship you the information.

Mr. Mitchell: — Okay. I would like to know the purpose for the amount being requested, Mr. Chairman?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I'll have that sent to the hon. member within the next few days from the officials at SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation).

Mr. Mitchell: — Can I ask the minister a different question then? Can the minister outline to us the state of the negotiations between SMDC and Eldor Resources with respect to a possible merger? This is something that we read about in the newspaper last summer and I've heard rumours about off and on since then, but nothing recently.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I will try and give you a thumb-nail — without offering a great deal of detail for fear of jeopardizing or compromising any of the discussions that may be going on. There has been, of course, the desire by both the federal government and the Government of Saskatchewan, who is a shareholder of SMDC, to have these two companies merge, and over time do public offerings to get them into the hands of the people of Saskatchewan and Canada.

And there are some outstanding issues to be dealt with before that can happen, and in fact I hope that it wouldn't turn out that the merger didn't happen. It's very possible, but I'm optimistic that the merger will take place and that we will have then a very, very large mining company, primarily uranium, headquartered here in Saskatchewan with all of the things that spin around a very large mining company headquartered here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Mitchell: — I have another area where I planned to ask some questions, Minister, but perhaps I could suggest

a solution, and we could let this item go. I wanted to ask about some aspects of the Cigar Lake development, and specifically the sale of shares in the project to the Korean government agency, and the contract for the sale of uranium to the Korean government agency.

Now I could ask those questions in Crown corporations if you like. Problem is that they're not . . . it may not be in the year under review. But if we could have your assurance that those questions could be addressed in Crown corporations this year, I wouldn't have to ask them today.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I can't commit the other minister responsible to answering those in Crown corporations, but to the extent that the information can be provided without breaching commercial or confidentiality agreements that SMDC might have with Korea, I will have the officials of SMDC give you the kind of information that they can reasonably give you.

Mr. Mitchell: — All right, thank you, Mr. Minister, for the forthcoming way in which you were able to answer all my questions. I've no further. I've covered them.

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 166 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1987
Consolidated Fund Loans, Advances and Investments
Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation
Vote 166**

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 166 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1987
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Employment Development Agency
Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 65**

Item 2

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I've got one question to the minister responsible. I wonder if the minister could perhaps tell me how many jobs were created through that expenditure of over \$100 million?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I just happen to have in front of me a status report as of September 10. And at that date, based on the formulas that are in place across the country, we estimate that there was over 9,000 jobs that were either created or maintained as a result of that program.

Mr. Lyons: — I'm sorry, Mr. Minister. I didn't get the first couple of numbers there.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — As of September 10 we estimated slightly over 9,000.

Mr. Lyons: — Were those 9,000 permanent jobs or were they . . . Do you have a breakdown as to part time, permanent, and any demographics? And can you . . . It would be fine if you could just give me the paper on

which your statistics are written so I have some idea of how the breakdown . . . break-out works.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, the calculation of these employment years or jobs or whatever that you want, however you want to define it, is as a result of a formula that's in existence, either federally or provincially, and so many dollars of activity equals a job and the like, and that's what we use.

Mr. Lyons: — You can't actually go around and say that here are the 9,000 people that were put to work through this program?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I suppose, Mr. Chairman, that the best way that you could do that is point to our unemployment insurance . . . or our unemployment statistical rate in Saskatchewan, which for the last several years has been maintained at either the second or third or first best in Canada. And at a time when other jobs are falling, ours are continuing to rise. And the figures are there for everybody to see.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, without getting into a long harangue, because we have done it for 112 days in this legislature, you know very well you're the only province and the only government in this country that had a negative job creation rate — negative job creation, i.e., you lost jobs, you lost employment — of any province in Canada, including Newfoundland.

One final question. Do you have . . . can you provide me with the formula upon which you made the statement that 9,000 jobs are created through the \$100 million expenditure?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, you know, when we did debate Sask Housing estimate here a week or so ago, we . . . And I'm reading right from Hansard, page 3640:

We agreed on these figures yesterday. Since July of '86 there's been an increase of over 7,000 jobs in the service sector, with another 2,000 in construction — even the member . . . (could agree) to that — manufacturing was up over 1,000. Clearly . . . (the home program is) doing it's job.

Ms. Smart: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I noticed that part way through the home improvement grant, you took . . . withdrew the funds or decreased the funds for any investigation of the work done under those home improvement grants and any investigation of the way in which that money was used, as reported in the *Star-Phoenix*, anyway.

And I would like an explanation from you as to why you had so little surveillance over how that money was used, when your government at the same time was putting in place, or has for some time had in place, an RCMP-type investigation of the people who are on social assistance.

They have had very heavy surveillance of the pittance of money that they get to live on, and yet with the home improvement grant you've allowed it to go through with

very little surveillance. Can you explain to me the thinking behind that?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well I don't know the article, Mr. Chairman, that the member is referring to, but as it relates to a check and balance of the home improvement program, inspections take place. People that apply for the grants sign to the effect that they have in fact spent that money on their homes.

I think that the inspectors are doing their job, and there's been nothing changed. I don't know what article you're referring to, and there's been very, very little abuse in the home program. And by and large I don't think that people are out to beat it. We trust the people of this province.

Ms. Smart: — People who are on social assistance have to fill out a 16-page form regarding their circumstances, and they are constantly under surveillance.

An Hon. Member: — But they're not people of this province.

Ms. Smart: — Are they not people of this province, for one, and can you explain to me in more detail exactly what kind of inspection and surveillance you've had on this home improvement grant. It's not enough to just and up and say you do some inspections from time to time. could you explain how that money's been spent on investigations?

(1615)

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, you know, to say that money has been spent on an investigation is not the right way to put it, Mr. Chairman, and I suppose the best example that I could tell you — members of your benches have partaken in the home program and used it. Ask them how the inspections went about at their work.

Item 2 agreed to.

Vote 65 agreed to.

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Saskatchewan Water Corporation Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 50

Mr. Chairman: — Does the minister want to introduce his officials?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes, seated beside me is Vern Fowke, president of the Saskatchewan Water Corporation, and behind me, Wayne Phillips, vice-president in charge of finance.

Item 1

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have a few questions this afternoon to the minister regarding the activities of the water corporation. And first of all, I'd like to say hello to the officials that we've met during the course of the Crown corporations estimates, and I don't intend to cover the same ground.

There's some very specific projects I would like to ask

about though. And the first one relates to the activities of the water corporation in the Melfort area where the water corporation is one of a proponent for a pipeline which I understand will cost in the vicinity of \$16 million to deliver water to the town of Melfort.

At the same time, there is an experimental treatment for a water treatment plant, utilizing a technique which has been developed here in Saskatchewan. It's a new technique to the country and in fact to the world. I understand that the water corporation, however, is opposing the use of that treatment; in fact, that the treatment trailer which was undergoing this treatment has now been moved to the city of Regina because the city of Regina is interested in this pre-treatment facility.

Meanwhile the water corporation is pushing its proposal for a pipeline, despite the fact that it will cost the city of Melfort almost eight times as much to deliver the water to the city of Melfort as it does, in fact, to install the pre-treatment facility which was there — the pre-treatment technique which has been developed in this province.

And I'm wondering what the rationale for the water corporation . . . what is the water corporation's rationale for laying that kind of financial burden on the citizen of Melfort?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — To begin with, the treatment method that was being tested at Melfort was strictly that. It was a test program to see whether the method that the engineer was recommending would indeed make the water suitable for human consumption.

To this point in history there's been no report from that particular consultant to say that the project would work. And the community was not satisfied, and so the community have asked us to look at the possibility of a pipeline to bring water from a river to the town.

Now there's no money spent. It's in the study stages at this time. Whether or not the project will go forward, I couldn't tell you. It's been costed at approximately \$9.5 million if it should go, but there's no approval for it to go at this time.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Minister, let's go back then and take a few steps back. First of all, is it true, in fact, that the pre-treatment trailer has been pushed out of Melfort, and that the technique has met with disapproval from the water corporation from the start? And that officials from the water corporation, as well as the Department of the Environment, which you're also responsible for, in fact, were opposed to this pre-treatment?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I can advise the member that we have not indicated one way or another whether we would approve of the treatment method that was being proposed. It's very hard to tell anybody that you agree with the treatment method when we have not been able to get a report. We have asked many times and have not received a report. Whether or not the consultant has moved his trailer away, that's something that I would have no knowledge of. That's out in Melfort. We don't go out every day to look to see where the trailers are.

Mr. Lyons: — Now, Mr. Minister, you know very well thought that there is a divisional officer of the water corporation up in that area and that one of the projects being monitored, and as you said yourself is being considered, is this whole question of supplying water to the city of Melfort, down from the Saskatchewan River.

Let me put it this way. Is the water corporation, or has the water corporation involved itself with this new method of water treatment, and has it taken an interest in that new method, and has there been discussions . . . or have there been discussions between officials of the water corporation and the engineering firm involved with this new method of water, or the city of Melfort, in regards to the new method? And secondly, if there has been, what is the water corporation doing to evaluate . . . and I'm not saying that it's . . . because I'm not a water quality engineer and don't pretend to be, but it seems to me if we have a new technique developed here in Saskatchewan that in fact has implications on a world-wide basis for a marketing of anew technology, it seems to me that the Government of Saskatchewan, if they're sincere about diversifying the economy, would be in fact trying to promote, or trying to evaluate, and trying to give that kind of technology the best evaluation possible.

Given that it's water treatment, given that it's within your sphere of competence, is in fact the water corporation involved in some kind of evaluating of this new technique?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — It's very difficult to say that we have a new technique. We have a consulting firm who are suggesting that they may have a method of dealing with the type of water that Melfort has. They went in and did initial types of tests. Our department, or the water corporation rather, put in approximately \$100,000 into that test. The Department of Science and Technology also put some money in. So yes, we did have an interest, and we showed the interest by putting money forward.

But after the tests had been run by the consultant, we were not able to get any final reports. We don't to this day have a final report from that consultant. The city of Melfort indicated to us that they had waited long enough and they were now wanting to proceed with something different, and they've asked us to give a cost figure on what the cost would be to bring water in from the Saskatchewan River, and that's the process that has taken place up to this time.

Mr. Lyons: — I'm glad, Mr. Minister, to hear that in fact that the water corporation has been involved to that extent. That's good. Now you say there has been no final test, no final report, pardon me . . . excuse me, there was no final consultant's report given to the water corporation. When were the tests completed, and over what period of time were those tests to be evaluated so that in fact the consultant's report could be drawn up?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — They've been ongoing tests over a period of several months — like six, eight, nine months. I don't know the exact date that he started. Up to this point we've had no report, and we've asked numerous times for a report and haven't been able to receive it. I guess the best I can tell you is that the relationship between the consultant and the water corporation have not been

satisfactory. You can't continually deal with a person who will not give you any report of whether the project is successful or not.

So the city of Melfort are the ones that have asked for the change in direction and asked us to give a cost study of what the cost might be to bring water in from the Saskatchewan River.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, perhaps you didn't hear my question. My question was: when was the test period completed upon which the report would be based? That's the first question.

Secondly, you just said that you've asked the consultants numerous times for this report. I don't know if you did; I don't know if you didn't. How did you ask the consultants? Was it by form of letter from the water corporation formally requesting the consultant's report? Have you received a reply from the consultant?

It seems to me when you put that much money into a test like this, you'd surely want to develop at least some kind of formal relationship with what potentially could be a boon for the province. Can you answer those questions? When was test section completed? And when were the requests made in terms of completing the reports? And who made those requests.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — It's very difficult for me to give you a date when the tests were completed, because when the consulting firm goes to a city like Melfort and does its own tests and then doesn't give you any report back of what the tests said or whether they're finished, I don't know whether he ever did finish the tests. I have no way of knowing.

As far as who asked — the city of Melfort has asked, the Department of Environment has asked, the water corporation has asked, and I personally have asked. And to this point, we've had no report with all of those people involved.

Mr. Lyons: — Now, Mr. Minister, when you say you've asked, I assume you're talking about written letters and written correspondence with the consultant firm. How have you asked for it if you haven't . . . first of all, did you make a written request? And secondly, if you didn't make a written request, how did you ask?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — From the department . . . from the water corporation there have been letters. I don't have the letters, so I couldn't give you the dates of those letters.

Personally I did not write and ask; I sat across the table in my office and asked, directly to the consultant responsible, and still was not able to get a final report.

Mr. Lyons: — Were you given any indication at all, Mr. Minister, of when you could expect a final report from the consulting firm? Did the consultant say to you that he would get it at a future date? Did he say that you're never going to get a report? I mean, what did he say to you in terms of expectation of a report?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I could not get from the consultant any

commitment of time frame. I would simply have to say that he did not promise to give a report.

Mr. Lyons: — That's a double negative — that's a double negative. Did he say, did the consultant — I assume it was a he, it may have been a she; I don't know the consultant — did the consulting firm indicate to you that you would receive a final report on this matter? Did they say would get it after a certain event took place, or after a certain . . . If you didn't say time frame, how about an event frame?

(1630)

Let me put it this way, Mr. Minister, without beating around the bush. I was told via the grape-vine that in fact that final report was sent away for independent evaluation by water quality experts outside the country — independent laboratories that in fact are going to look at the results of that report — and that that report was sent away precisely because of the water corporation and the Department of the Environment's problems, let's say, problems of official interference into both the process and also problems of official interference in terms of the report; that the consulting firm sent the report away in order to have it independently evaluated by water quality experts.

Isn't it true that you were promised that report after that independent evaluation took place?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No, that's not true. I don't know what kind of grape-vines you're listening to, but we usually use telephones and other methods of communication.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Minister, given some of the monkeys on the other side, and given some of the swinging and back . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order. Order. I think that our language should be watched a little bit better, and I don't think that the analogy is necessarily appropriate.

Mr. Lyons: — Given the *sapiens* simians on the other side, Mr. Chairman, and the some kind of to and fro answers we get here, I think the description of a grape-vine is not out of order.

Be that as it may, can I get, Mr. Minister . . . If in fact you receive the consultant's report and those independent evaluations, will you do two things: first of all make them public; secondly, will you make public the technical comments from the water corporation as to those reports. And thirdly, will you also make the commitment not to go ahead with the pipeline which is going to cost the city of Melfort eight times more than a pre-treatment plant according to the calculations that have been bandied about. Will you make the commitment that the pipeline will not go ahead until you have had an independent evaluation of those reports studied?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I believe that the member draws a lot of conclusions that may or may not happen when he asks his question. To begin with, we have no commitment that we will ever get a report. In all the times that I've asked, I've had no commitment that there would be a report

forthcoming.

I can't guarantee to wait to infinity because the city of Melfort does have a water problem, and a very serious one. The flavour of that water is worse than anything that Regina had, and Regina felt they had a problem. The quantity of water is also a very serious problem in the city of Melfort, so the city is looking at a more permanent solution that would guarantee both quality and quantity of water.

I believe that as a water corporation we can't go out and dictate to the people of Melfort which method they might like to use. They come forward and they make a proposal, and if they want to proceed to draw water from the river and the water is there and it's a feasible project and they're prepared to put some money into it, I believe that we have a responsibility as a water corporation to deal fairly with that city. And that's exactly what we intend to do.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, nobody's denying the following facts. First of all, Melfort does have a water quality problem. Secondly, no one will deny that the quality of water from the source that a pipeline intended to draw on, i.e., the Saskatchewan River, that the water quality is no different between Melfort and the Saskatchewan River, and that piping water in through a pipeline would not solve the water quality problem. The water quality problem will only be solved through treatment of the water . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Chairman, as much as I enjoy the humorous wit and wisdom of the member from Souris-Cannington, it seems to me when we're talking about a potential problem for the city of Melfort which will cost them eight times — eight times, sir, — what they could possibly get their problem solved for, that we should be dealing with the issue here, is would ask him to please maintain a little order and decorum. And, you know, we've had enough monkey business here.

Now, Mr. Minister, the water quality will be the same. Let's not beat around . . . The water quality from the river and of Melfort will be the same . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well we can disagree . . . you and I can disagree on that, but I can probably bring you an engineering report which will say that the water quality is the same. But let's leave that aside for a moment — let's leave that aside for a moment.

The fact is, and the question I asked you is this: will you, first of all, make a commitment that — say within a reasonable time frame; I'll say two months, and that's quite reasonable when we're talking about the kind of money you're talking about — will you make a commitment that in fact there will be no promises of a pipeline to Melfort until you have received the consultant's report, and/or any independent evaluation of the consultant's report, in order to save the municipality of Melfort, potentially save them water costs eight times greater than could possibly be achieved through the introduction of the new technique. Will you make that commitment?

All I'm saying is, don't spend any of the taxpayers' money

on what could be a useless pipeline until at least the end of January.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The member is throwing around figures like “eight times.” I believe that that is pure conjecture because we have no idea what a water treatment method might cost, even if one was available. We have no idea what could produce the volume of water that Melfort is going to need, and for you to stand here and say that the water quality from the Saskatchewan River and the water quality from Melfort’s present supply are the same, is pure foolishness.

The water quality that they have now comes from a place with a lot of algae, and the algae is causing the problem. You go to the Saskatchewan River and they don’t have the algae, so you have clear water . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Not where they’re going to draw their water; they’re pretty much algae-free.

So there are two entirely different systems, and my staff tell me that the difference in the quality of water would be just night and day difference.

Mr. Lyons: — Well I’m not going to get into an argument with that, Mr. Minister. We obviously are getting different advice from different professional and qualified people.

But it’s obvious from your last answer, it’s obvious that you have made the decision, in fact, to go ahead and build that pipeline and to cost the people, the good folk of Melfort, an increase in their mill rate, because you use the phrase “from where they’re going to draw their water” — from the river. So you obviously have a site in mind, and you obviously have the pipeline fairly well firmed up in your own mind. So I’ll drop this issue for the time being. I’ll drop this issue.

But you did mention the city of Regina and its water quality problems. And I’m wondering whether the water corporation undertakes any long-term monitoring of Regina city and the city of Saskatoon and also the other major urban areas such as Moose Jaw, monitoring of water quality, particularly for viral and viral infestations.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I would advise the hon. member that water quality is taken care of through the Department of the Environment, not through the water corporation.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, does the Department of the Environment work with the Saskatchewan Water Corporation on questions of water quality, and of water and the management of water, and of monitoring of water quality? Is it not true that, in fact, that many of the projects undertaken for urban areas for water treatment by the water corporation are precisely because of concerns raised as a result of concerns about water quality? Isn’t that true?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well, of course, the Department of the Environment does the water quality studies, and the delivery of a project to deal with that quality would be done by the water corporation, but the actual studies of water quality are done by the Department of Environment, not by water corporation.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Minister, would I be remiss, for example, in talking about the city of Regina and its new treatment facility and the development of the pipeline and the carbon filtration treatment, that the water corporation . . . Would I be remiss in saying that the water corporation had a hand in developing that system? Isn’t it true that you did have a hand in developing that system?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I’m advised that in the case of the Regina water treatment situation the water corporation was not even started at that point when this project was brought on stream, the beginnings of it. Later on they were very modestly involved. The Department of Environment, the city of Regina, the federal government, and the provincial government worked very closely together. And the water corporation came in during the tag-end of the delivery of that, but they were not in existence at the planning stage.

Mr. Lyons: — But you will admit that they . . . in fact you did admit that they were involved, to some extent.

The reason I asked you that question was this: when there is a major water management undertaking, does the water corporation monitor the results? For example, we have vast amounts of money expended in Regina on a carbon filtration plant that deals with water management from the Buffalo Pound water reservoir. Does the water corporation take into account things like water quality, and the success of the construction of that treatment plant, and the success of, in fact, whether the actual quality, in terms of the health component particularly, of that treatment plan was successful?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — For the most part, cities the size of Regina do their own control, but the Department of Environment would still keep track of the water quality that’s being produced through that particular treatment plant.

Mr. Lyons: — That may very well be true, but doesn’t the water corporation . . . Well let’s put it this way: if you don’t, don’t you think you should be? don’t you think that the water corporation should show some concern as to whether or not the construction of waterworks in a particular community achieve the desired end; that is, to improve the water quality for the citizens of that community?

Isn’t there some kind of mechanism inside the water corporation that says, well, the water quality in Regina, or the water quality in Saskatoon, or the water quality in Estevan or Melfort or North Battleford, or wherever, has deteriorated? Isn’t there some kind of mechanism within the water corporation that makes that evaluation?

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I’d like to advise the hon. member that the Health department and the Environment department monitor the quality of the water — one for health reasons, the other one for taste and odour and that sort of things.

If they were to identify the need for construction correction in the plant itself, then our engineers would be involved. But we are not the monitoring agent; it is

Environment or the Department of Health. And if there's need for structural types of work that require engineering and things, then our people would come and work along with them.

Mr. Lyons: — Well I understand that, Mr. Minister. What I'm asking you is, in fact, is there any kind of mechanism set up within the department to interface with Environment or public health or the city of Regina, that says, there are water quality problems here in this particular city or town or through particular waterworks; what can you do to solve the problem?

Isn't there somebody to go to in the water corporation that says, we've got this problem; here's what it is; what do you know about how to solve the problem; what can you help us with?

Isn't there some kind of mechanism within the water corporation to deal with that kind of problem?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Any time that there is a problem with the mechanical delivery of water to a community, the first stop most communities would make would be the water corporation. But if there's a water quality problem, then Environment or the Department of Health would be the first to identify it.

We do have internal mechanisms whereby they relate back and forth. If Environment identifies a water quality problem, they immediately notify the water corporation. If Health notified us that there was a problem, if there's something that we could do to correct it, of course we'd get involved.

I might use as an example for you: there was a very serious problem identified in Jans Bay in northern Saskatchewan, where the water was being polluted because of the lack of a sewage system. Our water corporation acted immediately to design a sewer and water system for that town. It's actually being installed right at this very time. But it was because the identification came through the Health department that people were getting sick because of the water quality being damaged, that we were called in to be involved in that action. And of course, we would go in and do what we can. And that would be the same in Regina or any other community. I only use that as one example.

Mr. Lyons: — I'm not talking about the question of identifying the problem. I know there's agencies that are out there that will identify the problem.

Very simply, there was a problem identified in Regina with its water quality. A certain system was put into place to fix that water quality. There's a monitoring being done by somebody — Department of the Environment, department of public health. Are the results, are the results of that monitoring transmitted to the water corporation? And if so, if you're receiving those results, are you putting it into the engineering hopper to say, well the plant's got to be modified by this, or is that solely done, just solely on request?

After the problem is identified, after the problem is identified, does the water corporation make

recommendations, or do they make recommendations only on request?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised in the case of the city of Regina, it's a large city, they have their own engineering staff that deal with the water system. so our department wouldn't be making recommendations to the city of Regina on the changes they should make. They are quite capable of making those decisions. If for some reason they're needing to consult and come to the water corporation, of course we're willing to provide any expertise we have.

Mr. Lyons: — The final question on this line is: has the city of Regina approached the water corporation or asked the water corporation to deal with any water quality problems? Has it made any requests in the last year, and are you or are you presently working on any requests made by the city of Regina to improve its water quality?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that the only involvement we've had with the city of Regina in the past year was discussions with them where they've asked us to look at helping them to deliver a larger volume of water — they need larger pipeline. And so that kind of discussion has gone on, but that's the only discussion that has been taking place in the last year or the last short while.

Mr. Lyons: — I guess there hasn't been any . . . judging from your answer, there hasn't been any questions raised or any proposals put forward, vis-a-vis the water treatment plant and the new carbon filtration water treatment plant?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — There have been discussions back and forth, but as far as the water corporation is concerned the city of Regina is quite satisfied. The plant is working well and for the most part they've had good success with producing good quality water for the residents of this city.

Mr. Lyons: — I won't go any further on that at this time. I have one more series of questions I'd like to ask and that's regarding the situation at Old Wives Lake.

Now we've all read in the . . . It doesn't have any water. And that's what I want to ask you about, Mr. Minister, because I think when your chief engineer of the water corporation says, as he has done within the past year, that we're reaching the limits of usable ground water and we start to see that water tables in the southern part of the province dropping, as they have, for example, around the border areas — Poplar and Coronach, in those areas, in that particular area. And we see signs like Old Wives Lake drying up which hasn't been dry, from my understanding, from the '30s. I see the member from Souris-Cannington's gone. He could probably tell me whether or not in fact it was dry in the '30s. But be that as it may, I'm told that the lake has not been dry since the days of the '30s.

I'm wondering, sir, what kind of long-range planning is the water corporation engaged in to deal with what is becoming more and more apparent to, I believe, more and more people, and that is the whole question of water scarcity in our province. What is the water corporation doing to address what can become a major, major problem for the people of Saskatchewan?

Particularly in light of . . . when we see things like the Brundtland Report from the United Nations, identifying our province as a danger area for desertification; that the amount . . . the climatic changes and the amount of anticipated rainfall and the amount of moisture coming to us: what long-range planning are you doing to ensure that those areas of the province which are becoming more and more prone to drought, in fact, develop some kind of infrastructure to deal with that problem.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that we are doing one very major study now that involves the federal government and the provincial and the water corporation. The study is going to cost about \$1.6 million and it's anticipated to take approximately three years to study the South Saskatchewan River Basin, which is the largest water body and water supply that southern Saskatchewan has. That study is under way, but as you can appreciate, isn't very far into its initial stages. I believe this spring was the beginning, so it's basically a year old, I'm advised — the current study. But that is the first of a number of things that we intend to do.

You realize the water corporation is three years old, so to get a major study like this under way in the third year of its operation, I think they've done extremely well.

It's not new for somebody to say that southern Saskatchewan is a desert. You know, I think if you go back to the time that Palliser first came here he saw it as a desert, and I think it's a cycle of time, it's just repetition.

Mr. Lyons: — We've all read the same book, Mr. Minister, on that one. The problem is is that it is becoming increasingly apparent to geographers, to climatologists and meteorologists that there is something going on in regards to water in this part of the country and that's identified, like I say, in the Brundtland commission and other studies, as you well know.

I also want to say that, you know, I support the setting up of the water corporation. I think it's a good idea precisely because of our geography in this province, but I support it in terms of if its aims are to develop some kind of long-range policy and planning and some new initiatives and new techniques into dealing with water and the problems of water in this province.

If it's turned into a pork-barrel operation, which it very easily could be in terms of defining who gets this project and who gets that project — and I'm not here accusing you of that by the way, but I'm saying it could very easily could be, given the amount of money, given the amount of money that goes through the water corporation's hands — for example, the money that flowed through under the Canada-Saskatchewan agreement for irrigation. I'm not going to deal with that here. We dealt with it in Crown corporations.

I want to say that I hope that water corporation will, as they have on some projects in the past, continue to ask for local and provincial involvement in the developing of a water policy. Because I think that there is some expertise around this province and around this country that can be drawn upon and, while it may take some political debate

or what are some of the best methods to use — as for example the debate we've been having over Rafferty — that the answers to those questions are going to be critical for the future water needs for the people of this province. After all, if there's no water here then there's nothing here. And I know you and I will both agree on that.

Having said that, I've got no more questions.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 50 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1988
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Saskatchewan Water Corporation
Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 50**

Mr. Chairman: — Any questions?

**Supplementary Estimates 1987
Consolidated Fund Loans, Advances and Investments
Saskatchewan Water Corporation
Vote 140**

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 140 agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: — I'd like to thank the minister and his officials.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank my officials for their assistance here and the hon. member for his questions.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Chairman, I, too, would like to join in thanking the officials for their time today.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.