

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Clerk: — I lay on the Table the following petitions:

By Mr. Goodale — Of the Stephen and Michelene Worobetz Foundation, of the city of Saskatoon, in the province of Saskatchewan.

By Mr. Toth — Of the Full Gospel Bible Institute, of the town of Eston, in the province of Saskatchewan.

By Mr. Neudorf — Of Pastor Walter Boldt, Art Ratzlaff and Barry Hertz, of the city of Saskatoon, in the province of Saskatchewan.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, 50 adult students from the R.J. Davidson Centre which is located in my constituency on Franklin Street. They're in the Speaker's gallery this afternoon. They're taking the adult basic education program at R.J. Davidson. Accompanying the students are two instructors, Bev Riffel and Donna O'Shea.

As well, we have two special guests that are not from the school but are visiting the R.J. Davidson Centre and other centres in Saskatchewan from the country of Ghana. And the two individuals are two instructors; they're here on a joint-sponsored Canada-Ghana government project. They are Doris Opayam and Perpetua Opong. I'd ask all of my colleagues to join with me in welcoming them to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It always gives me a good deal of pleasure when I have people from my constituency come into the Assembly. We have the council from the R.M. of Lawtonia here to speak with the Minister of Rural Development today. I want to introduce the reeve, Mr. Stolson, and their secretary, Art Thompson, and Brian Brown, Eldon Seidler, Dwaine Deobald and Barry Leisele. I'd like to have the Assembly recognize them. They're seated in the government gallery on the west side there.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you, in your gallery, Mr. Fred Herron, who is the general secretary of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, representing 12,000 teachers in the province of Saskatchewan, of which myself and several members are members, and who are involved for the responsibility of 200,000 students in Saskatchewan. I ask you and all members to join me in welcoming Mr. Herron.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Applications for Rebates of Gas Tax

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct a question to the Acting Minister of Finance. And, Mr. Minister, it deals with the 32 cents a gallon PC gas tax.

Saskatchewan drivers have until the end of the month to send in their applications for a rebate on this unfair extraction from the drivers of Saskatchewan. Can the minister tell us how many applications have been received, and whether or not there have been any applications processed to date?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the government set up this particular system so that the people of Saskatchewan, the consumers of Saskatchewan, would not have to pay the tax that would otherwise be paid by interprovincial truckers and large business factors and that type of thing, and that's what it was designed for.

As to exactly how many applications have been processed to date, I didn't have that at my fingertips. I will undertake to get that.

I think the Minister of Finance has said many times in this House that those forms are going to, for the most part, be processed by summer students, particularly by university students.

And for the member opposite from Quill Lakes, I could advise him that university, for the most part, is still in progress. They're writing exams, and probably will be done next week. And at that time I suspect that there will be a fair number of these processed, or far more than have been to date.

Mr. Koskie: — A supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, are you telling the Saskatchewan drivers who have started paying this tax last June, and who may have submitted their application as early as February this year, are you indicating to them that they shouldn't be looking forward to any cheques, and at the earliest, May? I'm asking you: why couldn't you set up a mechanism so that they could be processed as they come into the department?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Finance has made it clear on many occasions that we decided that we would have students who are otherwise attending post-secondary education do the job of processing these. And that would therefore accomplish, (a) the fact that we would give students a job that . . . I understand the members yesterday in the House spent most of their questions asking why we weren't providing jobs. We are in fact providing jobs to them.

So I say that number one, Mr. Speaker. And number two, to the hon. member, it's six short years ago when they were in government. They had an ad valorem tax of 20 per cent. They never employed any students to give money back to the people of Saskatchewan because they never gave any back to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, as the Estimates will indicate, you've extracted about \$73 million in respect to fuel tax. And do you realize that about \$70 million of that you have taken into the government coffers interest-free. You have extracted it from the pockets of the people; you have taken the loan of a \$70 million tax free.

All I'm asking you: don't you think you have an obligation at least to keep your commitment and to provide a rebate to the people of Saskatchewan? Why couldn't you do it in April so that at least they could assist the people to pay your excessively high income tax?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me make the point again, Mr. Speaker, that when the members opposite were in government they had rebates for a variety of things. They never had a rebate for gasoline. They had a 40 cent tax on gasoline that went right into their pocket and stayed right in their pocket.

Now what we are doing, Mr. Speaker, is processing this. We're giving it back to the consumers that have purchased it, and at the same time we are creating jobs for university and college students and technical students so that they will have a job this summer which will assist them then in going back to school next year. And that seems to me to be perfectly reasonable, Mr. Speaker. And to the member opposite, the inconsistency of the member opposite, they had rebates for almost everything, Mr. Speaker, and those rebates came six months, nine months, 10

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order.

Mr. Koskie: — Final supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, are you aware that in the province of Saskatchewan you have 45,000 people unemployed? I ask you: why couldn't you at least give consideration to employing some of these people and giving back the rebate at a reasonable time to the people of the province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, we indicated that we targeted to the students of the colleges of the university and of the institutions. I dare say, Mr. Speaker, that if we in fact were to follow the view of the hon. member from Quill Lakes and in fact made those payments out this month, he would be the first one to stand up yelling: the only reason you're doing this is because you have a couple of by-elections. So he wants it one way, or he wants it the other way, Mr. Speaker. He is inconsistent in

everything he says, Mr. Speaker.

What we are doing is reasonable, is practical. It assists the people of Saskatchewan; at the same time it assists people who are pursuing higher education in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — I have a new question to the acting minister. In view of the fact that you have extracted something like \$70 million from the people of Saskatchewan, their pockets, and since you've used it for over a year, are you prepared to provide interest on that money that you've extracted from the people of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, they spent the first year after that program was announced saying it's too complex. Now he's going to spend from now on saying complexify it a bit more, please. Mr. Speaker, he is continuing to be inconsistent. Mr. Speaker, he is continuing to be inconsistent.

I simply say to the hon. member, go back six years ago, with all your rebates, and ask the members opposite, ever once did they provide interest on a rebate that they provided through a variety of programs? The answer, Mr. Speaker, is clearly, no they did not. They are being inconsistent today, which is standard for the member from Quill Lakes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Refunds from Prescription Drug Plan

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and it deals with the ongoing hardship his prescription drug plan cuts are causing for Saskatchewan families. I want to ask the minister about a Saskatoon woman, Mrs. Nancy Skerrett, who suffers from a rare skin disease and who has had cancer-related surgery three times in recent years. Mrs. Skerrett has an average of \$285 a month for medication — that's what she pays — and on 11 occasions since last July she's submitted her receipts to the Department of Health to claim the 80 per cent refund. On nine of those 11 occasions it's taken more than 30 days to get her refund, and on two of those 11 occasions it's taken more than 60 days to get her refund.

Mr. Minister, aren't Saskatchewan families suffering enough from your prescription drug cuts, not to mention having to deal with these long delays to get their refunds?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member this question in response. When did the hon. member get this information? That's a very pertinent question, Mr. Speaker, given some of the things that have happened in this House in recent days, and some of the things that were exposed by my colleague, the Deputy Premier, when they were seen to be sitting on issues like this that are specific issues. And we don't make light of the

issues.

I say to the hon. member, if you have a specific concern, which she's expressed here today, bring it us and we'll deal with the individual issue as we have done in many cases. And that's the way it should be done, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly the way it should be done.

The hon. member would like to grandstand, and I understand that she has a penchant for that kind of grandstanding that goes on. But I would say to the member, if you're really sincere and serious about helping the individual concerned, bring it forward and we will do what we can to help them out.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, new question. Mr. Minister, this lady has contacted you. She wrote the Premier on February 15th of this year and sent a copy to you, and you haven't had the courtesy to reply to her.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — The issue here, Mr. Minister, is not when we ask the question in the House; the issue is when you promised to have money to people within 30 days, how can you justify these lengthy delays? How can you justify this incompetence and this insensitivity to sick people in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear . . . Mr. Speaker, I'll make it very clear to the hon. member: I do not accept the facts as she has laid them out here. I do not accept them.

Mr. Speaker, I will take notice of the question. Please note, I will take notice of the question and come back with the specifics of when I replied and what was done in terms of correspondence as it relates to this specific issue. I'll take notice and bring her back the answer, and the answer to the House. And once again, Mr. Speaker, I'll say to the hon. member . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I'm absolutely astounded that the minister would not be aware of this situation. I have a letter in my . . . It's a new question, Mr. Speaker. I have a letter in my possession that's dated February 15. If the minister wishes to see it from us, I will make it available for him.

But, Mr. Minister, the long delays in refunds to this family are bad enough. Mrs. Skerrett also advises us that when she contacted your department, a drug plan employee was verbally abusive to her. She indicates that she was called a liar and that she was sworn at. And I want your personal undertaking, Mr. Minister, that you will contact the Skerrett family today — this Saskatoon family, today — and find out what the facts are and deal with her case and provide her with some satisfaction.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — As I've said, Mr. Speaker, as I've

said, I will find out the facts on this particular case and I will report back.

Mr. Speaker, two things that need to be said here. One, I said in my first response about this member and her penchant for grandstanding and theatrics; she's absolutely astounded about this and about that. Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member and to all of those members over there: be absolutely sure . . . if you're really, truly concerned about individual families, bring those cases forward in a reasonable way, not in the way that you're . . . and you're grandstanding.

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. The member has taken notice and I have allowed him a very brief response, and I think he's made his point.

Contracting of Printing for SIAST

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education, and it deals with another example, Mr. Minister, of how you PCs are wasting the taxpayers' dollars through political patronage.

Since 1986 your government ordered the technical institute at Prince Albert to contract out its printing and duplicating forms. The contract was set so that it couldn't go to local firms; instead it went directly to a firm called Datacopi, which just happens to be owned by the Don Levy family of Saskatoon, who just happen to be the owners of the PC Party's printing company, Mercury printers. Mr. Speaker, as a result of this contract, work which should have cost \$106,000 now costs the province \$255,000 a year.

Mr. Minister, the taxpayers are asking this question: how can you allow this kind of waste, and how can you allow it to continue?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, Mr. Speaker, in anticipation of this question, I talked to the president of Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology as we were aware that the hon. member might have some interest in this issue. So I talked to the president, and this is what he has advised me of, Mr. Speaker, relative to SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), regarding printing and duplicating at the campuses.

The policy of the institute is to have its printing — that is to say, calendars and brochures and duplicating requirements — met by the private sector. In most instances these requirements are met by local printing shops in the community where the campus is based. In the case of . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I'd ask the hon. member to allow the minister to give his response, which he is trying to do.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — In the case of the Woodland Campus where the program delivery methods require that the duplication of learning guides occur on a demand — that is to say, one to 20 copies at a time as opposed to merely the inefficient method, I might add, of merely ordering 200 or 2,000 at one time, the batch-basis system

— no local supplier was equipped to provide the service at a reasonable rate. As a result, Datacopi Inc. of Regina was awarded the contract for the duplicating of learning guides. All printing, Mr. Speaker, all printing at Woodland was awarded to local printers, and students who use the duplicating material are charged 9 cents a page, as I think is quite reasonable, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, the work we are talking about is the work dealing with . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order, Would the member indicate whether it's a new question or a supplementary.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you very, much, Mr. Speaker. New question to the minister. The work we are dealing with here, Mr. Minister, is the work that has gone to Datacopi.

This material was tendered in such a fashion that the local printers had no option but to refuse it because they could not understand the technicalities of the contract. And at this stage, Datacopi has not yet met — has not yet met the specifications of that contract, Mr. Minister.

That's why we want to know whether you're going to . . . are willing to repeal it because it's wasting taxpayers' money; and, in the second instance, it is not — it is not — meeting the specifications that that technical institute needs, and it's costing about three days extra in time for turn around.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order. I didn't quite get a question. There might have been one in there, but I didn't quite gather it, so we'll go to the next question.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I'll repeat the question for the minister: will he stop this waste of taxpayers' money?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I ask you: which system would have more waste to it, the old batch system where you printed 200 or 2,000 copies when you might only need 20, or this system that basically prints them as needed?

As I understand this, this is state of the art printing technology. In fact, if a professor comes in one morning and decides he wants a new paragraph in the instruction manual, they put it into the computer and they print it out, addended, without having 2,000 copies that are obsolete because of that change he wants to make. It seems to me that is the more efficient and less wasteful system, Mr. Speaker, and that's why they're doing it.

That campus in Prince Albert that this member continues to kick around is a state of the art learning institution. And I ask you, Mr. Speaker: is this the kind of issue that's on the students' minds in this province when it comes to issue? Are these the burning issues of the day relative to education in the NDP's minds? Give me a break, Mr.

Speaker; bring on some real critics in education.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Heavy Oil Upgrader at Lloydminster

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Energy. Alberta's energy minister has said in Edmonton that the federal, Alberta, and Saskatchewan governments have agreed on a financial aid package worth more than \$600 million for the Husky heavy oil upgrader in Lloydminster. Can the minister confirm that she has committed Saskatchewan taxpayers to a portion of the \$600 million for Husky oil, and can she tell taxpayers the exact amount and form of this commitment? Are we talking about loan guarantees, tax breaks, or other incentives, Minister?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, despite various reports that have been in various mediums this week, unfortunately, I can tell the member we do not have an agreement at this point today. Mr. Speaker, we had anticipated that perhaps there could be an agreement by Thursday, but I must inform the House, Mr. Speaker, that there are a couple of outstanding issues that we have not been able to reach an agreement with Husky on.

Mr. Solomon: — New question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Madam Minister, your government announced the Husky heavy oil upgrader calling it the biggest job creation project in Saskatchewan's history four years ago. You've announced it time after time, preceding election campaigns federally or provincially, preceding and during by-elections. For four years the working families of Saskatchewan have been waiting for this major industrial project to get started. But four years after announcing it with such fanfare, you're still talking about it in the House. The taxpayers in this . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. The hon. member, I'm sure, is getting to a question; I'd ask him to get to it as soon as possible.

Mr. Solomon: — Well my question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister is what financial aid package have you offered to the Husky oil upgrader, heavy oil upgrader in Lloydminster, and when will the construction of this project begin?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, this government's record stands, and stands well, when it comes to the building of upgraders in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, once again, I will not release details of what is in the proposal that went to Husky by the three governments, and I will say that we have not reached an agreement on that package. If and when we do, that information will be released to the member and to the public.

Mr. Solomon: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, the Saskatchewan taxpayers want an answer to

the question that I put to you in the House the other day, a question which you dodged. That question is: why have you agreed to a financial aid package for Husky Oil which, we're told, contains huge loan guarantees, which is a debt charge against the taxpayers of this province, but you've asked for no equity position for the taxpayers? Why should Saskatchewan taxpayers take all the risk but get none of the benefits of ownership from this major industrial project?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, until an agreement is reached by all the parties involved, there obviously is not an agreed-upon package to be laid out. The member across the way is making some assumptions, as he did the other night in this House, and I had reminded him about going for a helping of crow in 1982, 1986, and suggested that he really didn't want a third helping of crow before 1990, and that he should have some patience in waiting for it.

Mr. Speaker, the package, when an agreement is reached, will be dealt with, with the member and the public knowing at that time. Until then, Mr. Speaker, I really don't think it makes a whole lot of good common sense to speculate what may be in there or what may not be in there.

Mr. Solomon: — New question, Mr. Speaker, on the same issue. Mr. Speaker, and Madam Minister, in *The Globe and Mail* it's reported as saying, and I quote:

The federal, Alberta, and Saskatchewan governments have agreed on a financial aid package worth more than \$600 million for the Husky heavy oil upgrader in Lloydminster, Alberta, energy minister, Neil Webber, says.

On television last night you said there'd be an announcement. Now which is it? Today you're saying there's no announcement. Which is it? Who is telling the truth, Madam Minister — Mr. Webber or yourself?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, there is no agreement reached at this point in time to date . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Let me finish. I listened while you asked the question.

There is no agreement reached, Mr. Speaker, between Husky and the three levels of government that are involved. Now if there is no agreement reached, details of the package could very well change until we do reach an agreement with Husky. So I think the member is being premature. As I had stated, perhaps the report coming out of Alberta has been premature.

Inventory Appraisal of SIAST

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I took notice of a question from the member from Prince Albert about inventory and asset evaluation being done at the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology. The member told this House the inventory

was being conducted by an Ontario firm. This is false, Mr. Speaker. It is being done by Sunalta Appraisals of Saskatoon.

The member suggested that SIAST not do this appraisal. Why are we doing this appraisal, he asked. Well the question of the exact value of SIAST's assets and the replacement value, Mr. Speaker, was raised by the Provincial Auditor and the Provincial Comptroller. They asked SIAST to inventory all assets and make sure they are listed at fair market value as soon as possible. Is the hon. member suggesting that we ought not comply with the auditor's request, Mr. Speaker?

The member also asked about the selection process and cost. SIAST contacted all firms in western Canada who do this type of work for proposal. There were four firms, and two submitted proposals, and Sunalta of Saskatoon was the lowest. The total cost is \$200,000.

Over and above the auditor's request, Mr. Speaker, SIAST has its own reasons for wanting the appraisal. The new institute needed proper value of assets to help in design of the financial system. Plus for insurance we needed to know the value of assets, Mr. Speaker. And thirdly, SIAST wants to set up an equipment fund and a replacement schedule to begin to replace equipment, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I would like to take this opportunity to lay on the Table the report of the Ombudsman, covering the period January 1, 1987 to December 31, 1987.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I want to raise with you a point of order and ask you to look back on the record and then judge accordingly, but yesterday the Minister of Education took notice of a question, on page 708 of Hansard, and then proceeded to answer the question. Today he stood up in the House and then once again referred to the notice and answered the question again, and I would request, Mr. Speaker, that you check the record and indicate whether that was in the right process here today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — I will take note of the member's point of order and take the proper action.

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In regards to the point of order raised from my colleague from Regina North East, I wonder if you would also consider the process by which this type of questions have been answered by the Minister of Education in the past and other members of cabinet, in which they answer at the end of the clock, not allowing other members of the House the right to respond with another supplemental.

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. That of course if a point of order that I don't believe is well taken. The hon. member, if he takes note of question period, sometimes it happens by coincidence, as it happened today, that it comes at the end. Sometimes it comes during the middle, seldom at the beginning. So that point of order is not well taken.

I will refer to the member of Regina North East's point of order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 2 — An Act respecting the Use of the English and French Languages in Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to move second reading of Bill No. 2, An Act respecting the Use of English and French in the Legislature of Saskatchewan. The need for this legislation arises out of the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the *Mercure* case.

The court in that case held that all statutes passed in this legislature from the beginning of time are invalid. Obviously that places this legislature and the laws that have been passed by this legislature, or will be passed in the future by this legislature, in a rather untenable position.

In dealing with this important issue, and why we have responded with Bill 2, let me first review the history of our province and review the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Prior to becoming provinces, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta formed part of the Northwest Territories. Early settlements into that area concentrated initially in the Manitoba region and was both, for the most part, was French and English. Courts and the legislative process used both languages. Manitoba was the first of those to become a province, and that happened in 1870.

And in the formation of the province of Manitoba in 1870, the Parliament of Canada, in passing the Manitoba Act that created the province of Manitoba, specifically provided for the use of both French and English in the legislature and in the courts of Manitoba. The language dispute that we saw in the province of Manitoba three of four years ago centred around this fundamental question and this particular issue.

And the Supreme Court found that the right to use French in the courts, in the legislature, and the statutes of Manitoba, amounted to a constitutional right, a right that found its jurisdiction in the Manitoba Act, an Act of the Parliament of Canada, specifically saying what the law was and the rules would be for the province of Manitoba. That is what constitutes a constitutional right to language, so found by the Supreme Court of Canada.

The area then that made up Saskatchewan and Alberta continued on as part of the Northwest Territories. That jurisdiction continued to be governed by The North-West

Territories Act. And as it related to language, Mr. Speaker, section 110 of that North-West Territories Act stated as follows:

Either the English or the French language may be used by any person in debates of the said council in the proceedings before the courts, and both those languages shall be used in the recordings and journals of the said council, and the ordinance of the said council shall be printed in both languages.

Mr. Speaker, as time passed and we came to a period in history of 1896. The council of the Northwest Territories had ceased to use the French language in the council of the Northwest Territories and in the courts of the Northwest Territories, and that fact is acknowledged by the Supreme Court in the *Mercure* decision. That was because . . . or in effect what had happened, Mr. Speaker, is by 1896 in this part of Canada, English had become the recognized language, one that was used both in the courts and in the legislature.

If we proceed on into history, Mr. Speaker, we come to the year 1905 when both Saskatchewan and Alberta became provinces pursuant to, again, Acts of the Parliament of Canada. And in our case we became a province pursuant to The Saskatchewan Act.

If one is to review the debates in parliament at the time of The Saskatchewan Act, there were some that sought to include in The Saskatchewan Act a clause similar to what is found in the Manitoba Act with regards to the rights to the use of both English and French in the legislatures and in the courts and in the statutes.

That was not in fact done by the parliament, Mr. Speaker, during that debate and what came out of that. And I say to members who talk, and to people who talk about the rights and the constitutional rights, to reflect upon what I believe to be a very significant and important historical fact.

I go further, Mr. Speaker, and refer members to that debate in the Parliament of Canada, and refer members specifically to the words of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, at that time the prime minister of Canada, from Quebec, clearly a champion of the rights of the people of Quebec, clearly a great Canadian prime minister. And when debating that issue, Mr. Speaker, Sir Wilfrid Laurier said the following in relation to the debate about whether or not there should be French and English rights in the province of Saskatchewan. He said the following:

That having regard to the small French population in the Territories, he could not argue in favour of a right to the official use of French.

That was stated by Sir Wilfrid Laurier speaking to the issue of The Saskatchewan Act in the Parliament of Canada, 1905. He went on to say, Mr. Speaker:

That when the courts (referring to the courts of our province) shall become provincial, (that) we (speaking there and referring to the Parliament of Canada) shall no longer have jurisdiction over

them, and therefore the legislature will have the right to deal with language in the courts as well as in the legislature.

And, Mr. Speaker, The Saskatchewan Act truly reflects that, and reflects that it is us who will determine, and who have determined, what in fact the law of our province as it relates to languages shall be.

In that same debate, the minister of Justice of the time, a Mr. Fitzpatrick, went on to say, and I quote:

It would be the law as they will have it in the province after this constitutional Act is passed. Then of course, it would become subject to the control of the local legislature, and it will be a matter to be dealt with by them; and I say emphatically . . . that it is my intention. That is, the matter as I view it, ought to be dealt with the local legislature.

Mr. Speaker, obviously then the Saskatchewan Act came down, clearly denying the rights that we saw granted to Manitoba in 1870, some 25 years before that . . . 30 years before that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think it important to refer to that quote by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, that the population in Saskatchewan was too small to recognize those rights for them. And I ask people to reflect as they talk about rights, to reflect upon the view of the prime minister of the time.

Now following . . . leading up to 1905, as I've indicated, French had fallen into disuse. Following 1905, English became the language of this legislature, English became the language of our courts, and statutes from the beginning of time of this legislature have been passed in one language, the English language.

Mr. Speaker, since 1905 up until a year ago, no individual was granted the right to speak French in the courts of law of this province. Up until today, Mr. Speaker, no Bills have been introduced in this House in both official languages. And up until today, Mr. Speaker, or soon, this legislature has not spoken to the issue of how we as legislators will govern ourselves in this Assembly as it relates to the languages of English and French.

And I ask, Mr. Speaker, why that is — why that is. And I say, Mr. Speaker, and I think a fair reflection of history, is that when we became a province it was assumed by the members that sat in our places some 80-some years ago today, it was assumed that English was the language of Saskatchewan. That's not necessarily a reflection on them. I think history would record no other way than but that was the fact.

(1445)

Mr. Speaker, in the decision of *Mercure*, the Supreme Court of Canada found that the section 110 of The North-West Territories Act, that I referred to earlier, while the province had the right to revoke it, to repeal it, it had not done so.

I think, again, a study of the history of our province would

find that the clause, basically, in The Saskatchewan Act said all Bills and all laws will continue in force until changed — a traditional catch-all clause that we probably see today in the way we draft legislation.

In *Mercure*, the Supreme Court came to the interpretation of the construction of that legislation and that language as saying the province had the right to do this, but it never specifically did it. And of course, that's a completely different decision, and our Court of Appeal had come to ruling that tradition and time had basically served the same purpose and served the same course.

Mr. Speaker, the loophole that I would suggest from a legislative point of view was seized upon by the Supreme Court, that said because all those that came to this Assembly before us had not specifically passed a law repealing section 110, that section 110 therefore stayed in place was still valid in Saskatchewan today.

Now I pose the following question to you, Mr. Speaker: throughout the last 83 years, why has this issue not been raised in this Assembly? I pose to you, Mr. Speaker: was it because those that served before us did not believe in rights, or sought to deny rights, or were somehow bigoted, as some members of the media have described people of this province?

I don't believe so, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think anyone else believes so. The issue never came up here, Mr. Speaker, because it was assumed that the language of this province was English. And that assumption was passed on through subsequent members of this Assembly and became the tradition, the practice, of this province.

What has transpired, Mr. Speaker, since 1905 when, in the words of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, that he, Laurier, could not argue the right to the official use of French because the French population was too small — what transpired, Mr. Speaker, is the migration that developed in our province following that.

In 1905, when we became a province, we had a population of 236,000 people. By 1918, following the First World War, that population had swelled to 678,000. By 1930 it had swelled even further, to 903,000.

Mr. Speaker, that in-migration from 1905 to 1930 — a very large part of that migrated from the European and eastern European part of the world. A very, very small part of that, Mr. Speaker, was French-speaking. Many of those immigrants from Poland or Germany or the Ukraine, or a variety of other countries, Mr. Speaker, those people came to this part of the world and settled this part of the world and knew neither English or French, Mr. Speaker, and had as a mother tongue something totally different. And that migration, Mr. Speaker, made up, and today makes up, a larger part of our population than even English.

I ask those who talk about rights, Mr. Speaker: what would Laurier have said in 1930 with that migration, and would his views have changed from his views of 1905?

Twenty-five years later, Mr. Speaker, the population had increased almost fourfold. And when we say that it was

assumed that English was the language of Saskatchewan, of this legislature, of our courts, I don't think it fair in the interpretation of history to somehow suggest that the issue never came and became an issue in our province and in our country.

One simply has to review history in the time of the conscription issue during the First World War, or various other school issues, language issues, that dominated the politics of this country for well over a hundred years. To somehow suggest that the issue never came before this Assembly, I think, is not true.

Mr. Speaker, there is and can be no doubt that it was assumed by all concerned, or virtually all concerned, that English was the functioning language.

Mr. Speaker, that brings me to the Bill itself. While the court has said that all statutes are invalid; that all future statutes must be in both languages; that the court should allow both languages to be used as well in the legislature and the courts, the Supreme Court of Canada in *Mercure* said two other things. One, it said that we can repeal section 110 now, or any time, and make Saskatchewan "English only". We could obviously comply with the judgement of *Mercure* and instantly translate all statutes, and operate totally in both languages in this Assembly, in our courts and all statutes, Mr. Speaker, or we could do something in between. That's the option the Supreme Court gave us, and that option was because of law, Mr. Speaker.

But the Supreme Court said something else very fundamental. I said it before, and I wish to emphasize it, Mr. Speaker. The Supreme Court said it is for us — for us, the people of Saskatchewan, to decide what we will do, Mr. Speaker. It will be Saskatchewan that makes this decision, Mr. Speaker. The court said that, and that is the way it should be.

In the few short weeks, Mr. Speaker, since the judgement, we have worked to design legislation and policies that will respond to the legitimate interests of the francophone community and the concerns of the province at large. We have consulted francophone leaders. We've consulted our colleagues in Ottawa and in other provinces. We have examined the costs and the benefits and the operational implications of implementing *Mercure*. We have searched for a balanced approach that would advance the interests of our francophone community and would meet our commitments as Canadians, and we believe and we think that this Bill represents such an approach.

This Bill has a number of features. In general terms, it repeals section 110 of the North-West Territories Act, and replaces it with a modern set of rules governing the use of English and French in the courts and the legislative process.

Let me turn to the specifics of the Bill. First, the Bill affirms certain of the rights found in the existence of *Mercure*, and effectively confirms the effect of section 110 of the North-West Territories Act with respect to the courts.

Mr. Speaker, individuals will be able to use French in the

courts as a matter of choice. They will not be obligated on any participant in any legal proceeding to use one language or the other. This right is in addition to what we have already provided in criminal trials. In September of 1987, residents of Saskatchewan have the right to a full criminal trial in French.

The Bill confirms the status of French in the Legislative Assembly. It specifically says that either English or French can be used in debate. This reflects a long-standing practice of this House.

With respect to the language to be used in records and journals, the Bill must, and does, leave that question to the Assembly itself. Records and journals may be printed and published in English only, but the Assembly is specifically authorized to extend the use of French if it so chooses.

The Language Act will also validate all Acts and regulations that were enacted in English only. This is an essential step if the province is to avoid being thrown into total legal chaos.

In addition, the Bill guarantees the validity of rights arising out of those laws. This is a precautionary step to protect the interests of ordinary citizens.

The Bill also confirms the special status of the French language in relation to statutes and regulations — does not require the enactment of a French version of every Bill. Rather, it sets out a more flexible and pragmatic approach.

It establishes a mechanism whereby existing statutes and regulations will be translated and re-enacted in English and French on the direction of cabinet.

We propose to begin with statutes relating to the courts, and expect to turn next into the field of education. And that, Mr. Speaker, is following the logic of the right to due process in our court, and because we see education as the real and meaningful way to promote the rights of French-speaking people, and the rights and the interests of the French language in this province. We will call upon francophone leaders, Mr. Speaker, to assist us in identifying those laws that are of most concern to the francophone community, and have most practical application at this point in time.

We have taken this approach for two major reasons. First, the task of translating all laws would be daunting. There are over 7,000 pages of revised statutes of Saskatchewan. There is a similar volume of regulations. The cost of translation would likely be in the twelve to fifteen million dollar range. Further, we needed to create the operational capacity to do the job.

Second, this approach will enable us to identify priorities and manage this process to ensure the greatest possible benefit to the people of Saskatchewan. We are committed to the ongoing process and we will use our authority in a reasonable and responsible way.

Statutes and regulations will be enacted in the future and will be handled in much the same way, Mr. Speaker. The

Bill gives cabinet the authority to designate which ones will be enacted in both languages.

The Department of Justice has already begun to prepare for this undertaking. We will hire necessary staff, and have commitments from other governments to provide technical support. We will introduce other bilingual Bills in this session, and we will publish a list of the first statutes to be translated in the very near future through regulations.

Federal government has indicated its willingness to provide financial and other assistance. We have acted on that undertaking, and are moving to confirm the details of that assistance.

Mr. Speaker, those are the main features of the Bill. It is pragmatic and reasonable and reflects the reality of our province. It does not deny, but confirms francophone rights in three key areas: in the courts, in the Assembly, and in the legislative process. It will enable us to move forward in a measured way that advances the interests of all people of our province.

Mr. Speaker, many have commented on this Bill; many opinions have been stated, and much emotion surrounds the issue. There are those that would say, change the Bill; that we must have a set timetable to translate the statutes; that all future statutes must be in both languages. Mr. Speaker, we looked at that option. We believe that it would not be the proper way to proceed, and we have proceeded this way, Mr. Speaker, and we intend to carry on with that process.

(1500)

Mr. Speaker, there are those that say that this Bill is contrary to the spirit of Meech Lake. Mr. Speaker, I totally disagree. Mr. Speaker, I would say to those that raise that issue: think of the situation that the Meech Lake accord — or in the event that the Meech Lake accord had not passed or had not been agreed to by all 10 provinces and the Prime Minister. Suppose we found ourselves only with the situation that we had following the constitutional accord of 1981, and Meech Lake had never taken place, or Meech Lake had have broken apart at the time the 10 premiers and the Prime Minister sat down together at Meech Lake. Had that event of Meech Lake not taken place, Mr. Speaker, I dare say you would not have seen, in this House today, Bill 2.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 2 and the response to the French-speaking community of our province is because of Meech Lake, and the decision to proceed this way is because of Meech Lake, Mr. Speaker, not because of the Supreme Court.

Mr. Speaker, our response, as I said, is because of Meech Lake. And let me look and address Meech Lake and ask what we, as people of this province, see or sense about Meech Lake. One, we acknowledge that Canada is a bilingual country. We accept that as a fact, Mr. Speaker, and we accept that as a principle.

Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that the federal government provides government services totally in both

languages. Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that different provinces provide different bilingual dimensions to their respective provinces. The services the bilingual dimension has provided in Quebec is different to what is provided in British Columbia. What is provided in New Brunswick is different to what is provided in Nova Scotia. What is provided in Manitoba is provided different to what is provided in Alberta.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's reason for that, and we must recognize that as a reality of this country. There are both constitutional reasons, and there are population reasons, and there are historical reasons as to why that is a fact.

Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that we as Canadians, and all Canadians, must move towards a time when that gap or those differences can be narrowed, when the meaning of bilingualism to Canadians perhaps has more of a meaning than it has today.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to improve for the francophone community in this province, the courts, the criminal court, quasi-criminal court, the civil court, in the legislature, and in the motions that we will provide for, and, I hope, agree to by all parties, for translation of speeches in French in this legislature.

In the statutes, Mr. Speaker, we will move and are committed to move forward today, the rest of this year, and into the future with that, and in the area of education.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members, and I ask all Canadians: do French-speaking minorities have more rights today in Saskatchewan than they had a year ago? Do French-speaking minorities have more rights today than they had in 1905 when Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the prime minister of the day, passed into force The Saskatchewan Act? Mr. Speaker, by any judgement I say they do, and anybody prepared to look at history, Mr. Speaker, must also acknowledge that.

But, Mr. Speaker, this Bill, and the impact of this Bill, must be kept in perspective. Ultimately the viability of the French language in Saskatchewan will not turn on whether laws are printed in French; it will not turn on whether French can be spoken in our courts. Those rights are important, Mr. Speaker, and we have recognized them, that there are more central considerations.

The key to moving forward, to better understand the two linguistic groups in this country, Mr. Speaker, is not through law but through education. And, Mr. Speaker, I think we must look at those trends that are taking place in our province today. And it's something that we are proud of, and I think something that other people in other parts of the country might be well to be cognizant of.

Let me, Mr. Speaker, read some of those statistics: in 1982-83, the number of students going to French-language schools for Fransaskois was 480 students. That has increased to a high, in 1985, of 1,241, and it's currently at 1,103. In 1982-83, students in immersion bilingualism for anglophones, Mr. Speaker, in 1982 that was 1,952 students. Today it is 7,681 as of '86-87. If you go to core French, Mr. Speaker, in 1982-83, core French being K to 12 system that would take at least

one class in French — in 1982 that number was 46,493; today it is 72,692.

Mr. Speaker, in the span of 1982-83 to 1986-87, there are 31,000 more students in Saskatchewan studying in a more intense way, Mr. Speaker, elements of the French language. And I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to all people of our province and all people of our country, that if you are going to find an answer to the language question that has dogged our country for 100 or so years, you will find that answer, Mr. Speaker, in our children, and you will find that answer more likely in the field of education.

As it relates, Mr. Speaker, to the cost of this program, that obviously provides us with a dilemma here in Saskatchewan. Given some difficult economic times, it's very difficult for us, or any of us in this House, to justify expenditures on translation of statutes that few, if any, people now read, let alone would read in both languages, to the preference of other priorities that many can list on a daily basis.

We are at this present time, Mr. Speaker, trying to design with the federal government a framework agreement that will allow the federal government to assist us in this, and also to deal with some other issues related to it.

Let me say this though, Mr. Speaker, and I think important as members of the legislature when we talk about our rights and what we are. Mr. Speaker, this right belongs to this Assembly, and we must guard those rights as to what this Assembly can or cannot do. And, Mr. Speaker, we should not simply ask another government to step in and pay for all of this for us, or that somehow, I suggest, diminishes the rights that we have been entrusted with.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Canadians, even those who accept nothing short of the constitutional entrenchment of French language in our province and all other provinces, on the one hand, or those that today yet deny the principle of a bilingual country — I ask both of those groups for tolerance, for understanding, and to be reasonable, Mr. Speaker.

If we are permitted to look into the future, Mr. Speaker, what you see today in existence, in an infant stage perhaps in Canada, in a much more developed state in many other parts of the world, is the advent of technology and the impact that that technology will have on this language issue. Mr. Speaker, it might not be more than three years, or perhaps longer; then you will have functioning computers that will be able to translate the written document from English to French.

Mr. Speaker, some have witnessed that type of operation, and legitimate suggestions by credible academics that have worked in this field, and are now working in this field, who suggest that within the scope of five years computer programs and systems will be in place that would translate all the statutes of this province and all the regulations of this province in one afternoon.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think in that regard, whether that comes to pass now or in the near term or 10 years from now, Mr. Speaker, I think it does speak to the issue in a

way that it has never been spoken to before. Mr. Speaker, I suspect that technology will ultimately provide the solutions that have escaped the lawyers and the laws and the courts for a hundred years.

Mr. Speaker, let me close by saying this. I asked people for understanding and for tolerance. The Premier has stated it, I think, many times, in the most direct way, of what we ask for. Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge the bilingual nature of this country, and we are proud to be Canadians. Mr. Speaker, we are going to move forward, and we must move forward as we have the physical capacity. And that political capacity, Mr. Speaker, means that we must also have the support and reflect the views of the majority of the people of our province. While that is not necessarily the only gauge, Mr. Speaker, it is an important gauge for any person serving in this Assembly, and must be cognizant of that.

But in the end, Mr. Speaker, and the point that is so often missed out in this debate, is what we do, we must do it as Saskatchewan's . . . we must do it as the people of our province, because the issue is a Saskatchewan issue, Mr. Speaker.

I ask all members: give consideration to history, give consideration as to what the reflections of the people are, give consideration to the rights of the francophones of our province. Mr. Speaker, this is reasonable, this is responsible, this is moving forward. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 2.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1515)

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I listened with some care to the minister's relatively lengthy speech on the subject, and I want to make a few brief comments. I may say that I look forward to reviewing the minister's remarks and considering them, and in a few moments, having made a few comments, I'll be asking for leave to adjourn this.

I think I might say, initially, that there has been some confusion within government ranks, among government members, about what their policy is. We've had the unfortunate example of contradictory statements being made by the Premier, by the Minister of Justice, and that's led to some confusion. We had the Premier quoted at length in the national media, and then we were told by the Minister of Justice that the news story was wrong and, as I recall it, he attacked the reporter who gave the story. Then we had the Premier's staff correcting the Minister of Justice and telling us that the Minister of Justice was wrong and the national news story was right, and then we had the Premier saying that the reporter had misunderstood the story all along. And that's caused some confusion among government members, Mr. Speaker, and understandably, among Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, the minister went on for some length about the history of this province, occasionally bordering on an accurate interpretation — occasionally bordering on an

accurate interpretation, but not often. Out of his lengthy discussion of the Saskatchewan history, he drew the conclusion that English had become the language of this province; that is, Saskatchewan's language, and he drew the conclusion that this province is a unilingual English province. And that's the conclusion he drew from his view of Saskatchewan's history.

Mr. Speaker, that is not, I think, an accurate rendition of Saskatchewan's history, and that is not Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister, Mr. Speaker, as is the case with much of Canada, is a multicultural province. We have people from all lands, each of whom have made their contribution.

If I can be forgiven for taking a personal example, my family came to Canada almost 200 years ago — almost 100 years ago, from Ireland, and obviously English was the language of that. My wife, however, her grandparents came from Ukraine. She spoke Ukrainian, and that's the only language she spoke until she was a child. On the Canadian census form where it asks the question: what is your first language? Defined as the language first spoken and still spoken, my wife answers that, Ukrainian.

I would very much like my children to speak English and French, both our national languages, but I would very much like my children to speak Ukrainian and to have a grasp and understanding of the rich Ukrainian culture, which I barely understand and have barely been acquainted with.

But, Mr. Speaker . . . and I think that's true of many Saskatchewan people. I think my colleague from Regina North East will forgive me if I say that his experience was much the same as my wife's. I think it's fair to say he began speaking Polish, learned to speak English when he got out of the house and began to reach into the larger community. It's a very common experience. Probably the member from Saskatoon Nutana . . .

An Hon. Member: — South.

Mr. Shillington: — South, I'm sorry . . . would make exactly the same comment about the German language. And I'm sure my colleague wants his children to appreciate the rich German culture that is available to us. But those cultures are not going to be possible to preserve them unless there is underlying it a basis of a language. If we lose the language, we will, within a few generations, lose the culture.

Mr. Speaker, it's worth while asking oneself why Father Mercure brought the action he did. I don't think it was because he objected to paying a speeding ticket that must have . . . Unless he was going at quite a rate of speed, it would have certainly cost him less than a hundred dollars to pay. I don't think it had anything to do with his guilt or innocence. I don't think he did it simply because he was a difficult person and tried to make trouble.

I suspect that that cleric, the man of the cloth, as is so often, I think, the case with clergymen, felt a responsibility not just for the religious life of his community, but felt a larger responsibility to preserve and enhance the community itself, and the community's life.

He was seeking to preserve a small minority culture which is seriously threatened with extinction. The people and their children will be here, but the cultural community will not.

And thus he brought it, not because he couldn't deal with the ticket — I don't think that's the case; I suspect he was bilingual — he brought it to try to preserve his culture and his language, just as I and my wife want to preserve the Ukrainian culture, and my colleague from Regina North East wants to preserve for his children the Polish culture, and as my colleague from Regina South wants to preserve the Germanic culture for him and for his children. And I could go on around the caucus.

I would be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I went on at great length about the various cultures. I want to mention another one in a minute. I want to say that over the years Saskatchewan and Canada have been enriched by those coming from a rich variety of lands. The first Canadians were, of course, the aboriginal people, and they developed their own rich culture. There is much we could learn from them and have not. They at least, Mr. Speaker, lived in harmony with their environment. If we could learn that from them, generations untold might continue to enjoy the earth.

I wish them luck in preserving their culture; they still have it. But the experience of European and Asian cultures has been that without the language, the culture does not survive very long.

They were followed . . . the aboriginal people were followed by — after a great length of time — by people from France into what was then New France, and from people from England into the territories controlled by the Hudson's Bay Company.

Eventually those people were joined by people from western, northern Europe, and, in this century, by people from eastern Europe. Now, Mr. Speaker, we see people coming, not from Europe but from Africa. The immigrants of the 1980s tend to come from Africa, from Asia, from Latin America.

Whether it's the 1880s or the 1980s, they came for several reasons: for hope, for opportunity, for tolerance, and to escape oppressive regimes, whether that be in the old country or in the newer countries of Asia and Africa and South America.

Mr. Speaker, all of these people will be proud of their citizenship in this country, will make a rich contribution but they will feel that if something of their culture, whether it be South American or African or Asian, they will feel that this province will be richer if something of their culture is preserved.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's going to be very difficult to do if they're not able to preserve something of their language. And that, I think, Mr. Speaker, is why Father Mercure took the position he did, not because he didn't want to pay the speeding ticket but because his community was an embattled community and he saw the cultural life of that community disappearing unless its rights were respected.

The government opposite's failure to understand the multicultural nature of this province, Mr. Speaker, is regrettable. But what is even more regrettable is its complete lack of consultation. And it has been completely lacking, Mr. Minister.

The Minister of Justice made some arguments in the House today. It's noteworthy that he didn't have the nerve to try those arguments on the French-speaking community who were affected.

Meetings, Mr. Speaker, were infrequent, usually after decisions had been announced, and always one-sided in the sense that the community affected made their argument, but there was neither discussion . . . the government for their part neither listened nor responded. A government's failure to consult is inadequate, and it's not enough.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, does not resolve the rights and needs of the francophone community, and it doesn't resolve the needs of the other cultural communities in this province. The government opposite has talked about making Saskatchewan bilingual in law. I say, Mr. Minister, that given this government's treatment of minorities — and I could name a fair number of them — given this government's treatment of minorities, I doubt any minority wants their rights to depend on the whim of this cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, in no Canadian province is multiculturalism more evident that it is here in Saskatchewan. Unfortunately this government has no appreciation of that, has no appreciation of what cultural minorities need to survive, and don't have the nerve or the courage to place their position before them.

Mr. Speaker, I said in the beginning that I wanted to consider the minister's comments in the light of the Bill. I therefore beg leave to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

(1530)

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Rural Development
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 43**

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, yesterday you were going to send me over some annual reports from the rural development corporations. They've failed to arrive here, and I'm sure it was just by error in the context of what we were talking about yesterday, and I was wondering if you could in fact provide me with a couple of annual reports so we can track a little more closely what's happening with the rural development corporations in the province.

Mr. Minister, while your officials are looking for those, I would like to turn to your plans for youth employment,

summer employment, within your department. And I am wondering what plans you have for hiring students during the summer months in the department of rural affairs — or Rural Development, pardon me.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — My understanding is that we have five summer students, three out in the district offices will be working with the district field people, one in planning, and one in bridges.

Mr. Anguish: — Can you tell me, Mr. Minister, how that compares with other years? Could you give me the number of students you've hired in the summer of 1987, 1986, 1985?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — It's the same as last year. We're not sure about the year before. We can maybe find out, have to go back to the offices and find out. But it was the same number as last year.

Mr. Anguish: — Well the figure that I'm really interested in, Mr. Minister, would be the summer of 1986. And I don't want to have someone sent back to the office to get that figure, but if maybe someone could make a phone call, if that information is available. I can understand that you would have the same number of students this year as last year because the funding, which I assume you get from the Public Service Commission, is exactly the same this year as it was last year. However, I believe for 1986 that sum may have been higher.

I know that under the Opportunities '86 program there was some \$10.5 million provided, and I know that you don't use that funding for your particular program in hiring students. I believe, and correct me if I'm wrong, you use funding that's provided in these estimates under the Public Service Commission, and so I would appreciate if you could give me the figure for the summer of 1986, the actual number of students you hired in that year.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — To answer two of your questions: one, reports. We phoned over to the department and they're sending over a copy of the reports and they're phoning . . . make a phone call to see how many was in 1986.

Mr. Anguish: — The member's asking for us to do research. If you . . .

An Hon. Member: — Should have done it in question period.

Mr. Anguish: — Well question period is very accurate. If you want to take your socks off and count on your toes, the member from Bengough-Milestone, you'd more than welcome to do that. I think that people that would be watching today would find that very, very entertaining.

An Hon. Member: — I don't have to take off my shoes and socks.

Mr. Anguish: — I beg your pardon . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, I can hardly believe that. I can hardly believe that. Would you like to rise and participate in the estimates? Or is it the member from Regina South there

would like to participate in the estimates?

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order. Can I ask the members just to . . . Order, please. Can I ask the members just to . . . (inaudible) . . . with us and allow the member to participate, continue on and debate, or the committee.

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, it's very difficult to concentrate on all the research and all the information you have here when the members opposite continue to chirp and yap from their seats. I'm a very sensitive kind of guy and it hurts my feelings and I have a hard time concentrating. You'd be aware of that, I'm sure, so I thank you for calling them to order.

Mr. Minister, I'd like to ask you if there isn't some way in which your department couldn't employ more students for the summer months, and whether or not there's been any consideration by your officials as to specialized projects that may be on the verge of being outside of the mandate of your particular department, but nevertheless working with your department to do some of the many necessary things that are required for rural Saskatchewan during a time of great changes in the rural part of our province.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, Mr. Chairman, you know, the running of the department is sort of a responsibility. Beyond that, we have done things. We have set up, as the member knows, RDCs (rural development corporation). There's the economic development committees that's paid for through the Department of Rural Development. R.M.'s — we fund them in many different ways through unconditional grants that they do . . . they hire students or people, not necessarily students, employees out there for the summer months. It's extra employment. Those kinds of things, I believe, are how we do the extra types of funding or extra type of curricular work that creates jobs.

One other area that may be of interest to the area is that, I believe, last year 98 per cent of all the road construction and contracts were done by Saskatchewan contractors, and those were hired by the R.M.'s out there. So I guess a bouquet off to the R.M.'s of Saskatchewan to make sure we keep jobs in Saskatchewan, also keeping the local people working, which is really, really important in a small community.

Mr. Anguish: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm talking more about directly within your department. Do you acknowledge that in fact these five students that you're going to be hiring for the summer months — the money that goes to pay them actually comes through the Public Service Commission under vote 33, item 6?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Correct.

Mr. Anguish: — Well, Mr. Minister, what is the dollar amount that's been approved for your department out of that vote 33?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — It's in the neighbourhood between — there's a variance, depends on the amount of exact expenses — between 30 and \$35,000.

Mr. Anguish: — Could you maybe tell us a little bit about

the process, as to how your department gets 30 to \$35,000 out of that particular budget item? Is there a negotiation process? Does the Public Service Commission tell you that you have to take five students, or do you request a number of students in some kind of work plan and they approve or negotiate with you?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Usually early in, like in December and November of 1987, for 1988, we do an estimate of what we're going to need for summer employment out there, extra help. We submit it to Public Service Commission — the amount of dollars we'll need, the amount of employees we will need — and about February, which usually we get confirmation of it, so we can go ahead and do the hiring process to fill those positions. So that's the process it goes through.

Mr. Anguish: — What was the actual amount and number of positions you requested from the Public Service Commission?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — We got exactly what we applied for. We asked for five, with the funding necessary for them, and it ranges between 30 and \$35,000. Depends, you know, if they stay an extra couple weeks or whatever the case may be, and there's a variance there, but it'll run between . . . We asked for five employees for the summer months, we give them the lengths of time we needed them for, and we got the money and the allocations of the employees.

Mr. Anguish: — Well it seems like a very small sum, and I can't understand why your department couldn't employ more people in rural Saskatchewan during the course of the summer months when there are literally thousands of students in the job market, have a great deal of difficulty finding jobs, and incidentally, taking the maximum amount of what you said, \$35,000 approximately, that you'll be utilizing to hire summer students out of a budget item that amounts to \$4,321,500.

Where do all these students go to in terms of allocation amongst the departments? It seems to me that you're getting the short end of the stick by only having five students at a dollar amount of \$35,000 when there's available to government departments and agencies in excess of 4.3 million.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we asked for what we needed to do the seasonal work that's done by the Department of Rural Development.

As I mentioned earlier, we do fund otherwise. We give the R.M.'s, unconditionally, in excess of 17 millions of dollars. But they do in fact hire many people during the summer, not all students, but some would be students and some would be folks in the area that need jobs. That's how we do it.

We do it other ways, too. We bring in a regravelling program that created a large number of jobs, helps all the R.M. roads out there in regards to maintaining the quality of roads. We have worked with the R.M.'s and certainly to their credit we have most . . . nearly all of the contracts being done by Saskatchewan people creating a lot of jobs.

We put out a total of over 48 millions of dollars to R.M.'s during the year. Most of it's spent during the summer months creating jobs and building roads — certainly creating a lot of opportunities, both for students coming out of university and for high school students going to go back to work . . . to school in the fall, and especially for summer employment, and it's been a . . .

I believe it's a very major initiative out there, one of the most major initiatives there is as far as employment goes because it's almost totally that 48 millions of dollars is spent in the summer months creating jobs and employment and repairing and fixing roads.

Mr. Anguish: — It seems to me, Mr. Minister, that you're stuck in low gear . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I can appreciate that you have to be stuck in low gear because of some of those roads as the member from Saskatoon South says. But I mean that you're stuck in low gear in that there's no new thinking coming from you. You're talking about programs that have been there for year after year after year.

And I acknowledge that students are hired in some of those other programs in the other branches within your department, but you're getting a very unfair share of the \$4.3 million that's available through the Public Service Commission when your department only gets \$35,000 of that amount.

And the minister can't be saying to us today that everything that needs to be done is being done in rural Saskatchewan. Many of these students are children and young people who come from rural areas, and I think they appreciate the opportunity, in many cases, to go back home to their home communities during the summer to find the employment that they require. And it would seem to me, Mr. Minister, that there's something wrong that you would only request such a small, minuscule fraction of a \$4.3 million budget, when there's so much can be done in rural Saskatchewan. And are you telling me today, Mr. Minister, you cannot think of any more new directions that you could use in your department so that students could be back into the rural communities during the summer months and have some respectable employment through your department in the rural areas, so that you could utilize a fair share of the portion of that \$4.3 million?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Now Herman, you be nice.

Okay, I'd just like to answer some of the comments that the member from The Battlefords made in regards to no new ideas and nothing new within Rural Development in the way of jobs, in the way of . . . of way we handled the whole road systems.

(1545)

If he had been at the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) convention when I announced a complete revitalization or reallocation of all the roads in Saskatchewan, we called it road rationalization. We have worked with every R.M. out there in regards to not only

rebuilding, or looking at the restructuring of roads in rural Saskatchewan, to the upgrading of roads in rural Saskatchewan, to the redesignation of roads in rural Saskatchewan; but we also looked at how they interconnect with other municipalities, how they get from their . . . to their delivery points, to their service centres.

We've done a great deal of work with them. We've brought in the new program and I think if anybody had been at the SARM convention, it was pretty well received. I think most, if not all, of the R.M.'s were in total agreement with it. We had one R.M. in this morning. I met with them this morning from Lawtonia, and I think they were introduced here into the legislature. Where they went into the road rationalization program. They had four miles that they felt should be put into a different type of an area and reallocated in. We looked at it; they were right; we made the . . . we're going to make the change that's necessary. We've done a great deal out there in regards to roads and road rationalization.

We've also brought in the RDCs, the rural development corporation concept, which will create and has created a number of jobs out there. We hope they'll create a great number of jobs out there and keep our young people in rural Saskatchewan.

What our focus has been, and I feel very strongly about it, is that we have allocated moneys such as the regravell program of \$7.1 million, which is a new program put into place. We put it in on a one-year base, decided to go back and let the R.M.'s use the \$7.1 million to gravel the roads and to maintain the road status they have. They'll hire people out there, they'll hire a great number of people out there. So it'll be an R.M. decision, a local decision. They'll hire local people, government's to help do the funding — 50 per cent of the funding, by the way there — to create jobs and also to maintain our road system.

So although we don't maybe directly go into the little fund you talk . . . the \$4 million that's in that fund that's being used for students that need it . . . maybe a lot of the urban students that really could use a lot of that funding.

We have decided that we have \$48 million, of which 7.1 is for regravelling. We believe the R.M.'s will use that very wisely and create one lot of jobs out there. So maybe not directly, as you say, we didn't take it all out of the funding because I believe some urban centres can use some of that. We have \$48 million out there to spend in job creation and maintaining road systems, and I believe that will create jobs in itself.

Mr. Anguish: — Well a couple of points, Mr. Minister. You alluded in your opening comments to the fact that if I had been at the SARM convention — I don't know that you keep attendance on where I go to and where I don't, but I was at the SARM convention, and I heard the very good speech that you delivered to the SARM delegates at that time.

An Hon. Member: — Read it?

Mr. Anguish: — Read it? Well whatever, I thought it was a good speech that he had given to the SARM convention. So I'd appreciate if you don't make reference to where I

was, or where I wasn't, because you obviously don't know where I was and where I wasn't, so I wanted to correct you on that.

In terms of the urban centres needing this funding, I would maintain to you, Mr. Minister, that what you're doing is trying to put another nail in the coffin of rural Saskatchewan. Many of the students that'll be working in urban centres are from rural areas of the province, and in fact, if I was in your department, I'd be going after the Public Service Commission to try and get one student for every rural municipality in the province of Saskatchewan, which could fall within that budget. And so that a local student could go back home to a local area and do some meaningful work along with the rural municipality, get some knowledge as to what the problems are, get that information back into your department and your officials, to have an understanding from a young person's perspective as to what is happening in rural Saskatchewan. In fact it would take a good portion of the budget, but it would be technically possible to do that.

And so although we can appreciate the high unemployment rates in urban Saskatchewan, it wouldn't be as high in urban Saskatchewan if people had jobs to keep them in the rural communities, in the rural areas of the province of Saskatchewan. The unemployment problems wouldn't be nearly as bad.

So I would ask you, Mr. Minister, if you're saying that you've let this money lie so that it can go to urban centres, can you tell me which departments then in fact get the lion's share of the \$4.3 million that's allocated by the Public Service Commission? Surely your officials know that because they've had communication with the Public Service Commission on the summer youth employment program.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we could chase this around for a long time, but I believe students get all the jobs. That's how it was designed, the program was designed.

I just believe sincerely that rural municipalities hire a large number of people, either through contracting of building roads or bridges or maintenance. They also hire a large number of people in regards to the general maintenance such as clearing right of ways, putting up signs, and all that. Those are mostly and almost totally summer employment.

I don't have a breakdown of the number of jobs, but it would be, you know, literally in the thousands of jobs per year. And I believe that's where it should be. They'll make the decision; they'll hire local people. They'll know who they want; they'll know the people that's in need and how they best do it. I trust those R.M.'s out there, and I think that that's where it should be.

We've done . . . like I said, there's \$48 million that we spend in rural Saskatchewan in regards to grants or funding. They will spend it wisely and they will create a lot of jobs.

Mr. Anguish: — Well the \$48 million you keep referring to is year after year being reduced. And when times are

getting tighter economically, there's going to be less summer employment for students in rural areas of Saskatchewan. And we can leave this point.

I'd like to know whether or not you've got the employment figures for 1986 yet, which I'd asked you for — someone had phoned back to the office on — and I would say that I think that you're being short-changed out of this pool of funding.

Granted, there are these other things that you've done and other things you can do, but you could do so much more than to have five summer students in the Department of Rural Development. There's many, many things that could be taking new directions that you could be providing during the summer months to employ students. And I would ask, Mr. Minister, if you have that 1986 figure yet.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Just for your information there, in 1986 . . . 1988 when I told you there was . . . I believe I said five. There's five from Public Service Commission, and we also are going to be hiring three through the department to fill some part-time positions, so there is a total of eight would be through . . . for 1988 summer employment.

In 1986 we had a total number of 14; five of which was with the road planning and Transportation department, of which now is being done by consultants. We don't do that any more. Under the R.M., the R.M.'s hire their own now, and so they are now, I understand, hiring students as well into there. So our best guess is that those same five that we hired there for that particular department we don't have any longer, is now being hired by the private consultant.

And we had two other positions which were actually full-time positions but we decided to bring on some part-time students who were taking that type of a course, to put them into that to give them some summer employment, which were filled when they went back to school, with permanent positions. So really, we had about the same number. We had seven filling the same positions we got now, which got eight this year, and we had two that filled positions that were really permanent positions, but we used part time so they get some training before they went back to school, and we got five that sort of been . . . that we don't have that portion of the department any longer. That's now being done by private consultants.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, have you had representations made to you by small store owners in rural Saskatchewan concerning the whole Sunday opening issue in the cities, where they feel they're losing a large portion of their business because of larger centres remaining open on Sunday and people coming in on their day of rest or the Lord's day or whatever you want to refer to it as? They just aren't shopping in their home communities any more because of the superstores and whatever you have opening on Sunday.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — To answer the member's question, yes, I've had some, certainly, some letters in regards to the Sunday openings or Sunday closings. Most really small

towns and especially the ones, the smaller towns close to the city of Regina, were concerned about it. Even the city of Moose Jaw, I'm sure, had some concerns about it. It's an ongoing problem.

If you look in, and even in rural Saskatchewan — and I can think of the towns that I know — about half of the town has stayed open for quite a few years. In fact in the town I was thinking of, my own town where I come from, Hudson Bay, one of the grocery stores — in fact both of them for a while — up town stayed open; in fact all three did for a while, stayed open on Sunday. They had for quite a few years, and one still does.

It hasn't affected a great deal, I don't believe, in regards to whether they shop in town or out of town. People do travel further now; there's no doubt about it. Coming from Hudson Bay, I know many folks travel to Tisdale to shop — and that's 72 miles away — not because of necessarily . . . they don't even have Sunday opening. So it isn't because of that; they just travel. There's a little more service there; there's a mall there. They do travel. So I guess any time you have service available to those, they will travel to that.

But certainly rural Saskatchewan have some concern in regards to people shopping out of their towns, but they've been doing it for a long time. And as our services deteriorate, and certainly they have, the availability of a much wider variety of products — whether it's on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or if it's any other day of the week — they travel there to get them.

When you look at your medical centres now, in many ways, around Regina or Yorkton or Saskatoon, they travel in there for a lot of their medical needs. And even if you have a local family practitioner, usually you're referred to one of the other centres.

So yes, there's a concern. There's a concern all the way through the whole system, not only with the shopping but our services that we get. And I don't believe that, no matter whether we have Sunday shopping or don't, they will travel from out of your town; they have been in the past, and certainly they will in the future.

Our services that people need or look for, you usually find them in the bigger centres, and they've travelled to them. And like I said, they have for the last quite a few years. And I don't believe you can stop a trend, because the people of today look for that variety of things that they may not have available, even in their small town.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few questions, Mr. Minister, that I want to address to you. First of all, I wonder if you could provide me with information in respect to the 299 R.M.'s across the province. Would you have the, say, the 1987-88 annual amount of taxes that were collected by the . . . at a local level by the R.M.'s? Would you have that information?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Probably. As the member knows, we take it off of their financial statements, and we don't get their financial statements until well after the year end. So we just have . . . we have '85 put together; it's completed. We're working on . . . in 1986 you . . . I think you probably

know how that works, and it's '87 would be . . . we're just getting them in now as the year is completed so . . . And we have to pull it together; they don't give us any breakdown. We have to take it from their financial statements they file with us.

(1600)

Mr. Koskie: — Well, as you know, a good portion of the operating revenue for the R.M.'s is local taxation, and I'm surprised that you at least didn't give me the information that you had for '85. I would have thought you would have been a little more current than that.

But having not answered the question, I want to ask you whether or not you have done a survey of the R.M.'s across the province to determine the amount of tax . . . property tax arrears — cumulative amount for the past year.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well the member would have the 1986-87 annual report. I'll read off of there. But in regards to — and again, we only have 1985; we have nothing beyond 1985, in figures, but in 1985 there was, in municipal tax levies, \$241,000-plus. The arrears at that time was \$24,800. Wait a minute . . . I'm sorry, I'm reading it wrong to you, I apologize . . . \$241,102,000 in total levies; there was \$24,894,000 in tax arrears in 1985, which was about 10.3 per cent.

Go back to 1981. As you well know, in 1981 there was 5 per cent; in 1982 it was 5 per cent. So it gives you an idea of what there was.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, I would have thought that you would be up on it a little bit more, Mr. Minister, because, as you indicated, in '85 there's 10.3 per cent in arrears. And what I'm asking you today: are you aware of the magnitude of the concern of tax arrears throughout the R.M.'s, because certainly, in talking to many of the R.M. . They indicate that they have a very serious problem, that the tax arrears has increased significantly.

And I'm asking you: have you monitored and are you aware of the magnitude of it? And you say you go back to 1985. Surely you would be on top of it; surely you know the desperate situations of the R.M.'s; surely you know the desperate situation of the farmers. So I'm asking you: have you done a survey? Are you knowledgeable? Do you care?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — As the member is aware, we have advisers out there that stops at pretty well all the R.M. offices. There is a few that have, certainly, tax arrears. Most of the taxes this year, they're telling us, are paid up even in excess of what it has been in the previous years, and some R.M.'s are as much as 98 per cent collected. That was as of the year end. There is very few that was under 90 per cent.

So we probably will have an improvement in that 10 per cent in arrears status. So our best guess is that it's probably better now than it was even in 1985 in regards to paying of the taxes. The R.M. taxpayers are actually coming in to pay up their taxes, sort of making it as a preference maybe now. Anyway, whatever the trend is, it has been more to

paying it this year than it has in the past few years, and we believe that when the report gets in for 1987 it will probably be . . . the arrears will be less overall than they were in 1985.

Mr. Koskie: — Do you have anything other than a guess to substantiate that?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well the only thing that we'd have would be that our advisers have dropped in at just about every R.M. office in the province . . .

An Hon. Member: — Well I have, too.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — So have I. The member says he has, too. So have I. I have been to many, many R.M.'s . . . I've talked to just about . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . In regards to how many R.M.'s you talked to, I have talked to, I would literally say, just about every R.M. in this province since the first of the year — either a councillor or the administrator or the reeve of every R.M. in this province since the first of the year. And I have asked each one of them how their tax collection was.

So if you want to talk about just talking to them — but more than that we have advisers that go out there, they drop in all the R.M. offices where there may have been some arrears before, to talk to them. They say the state of most of the R.M.'s is good or better than it has been in the past few years, and we feel very optimistic about it.

Mr. Koskie: — Well you can feel very optimistic, but you didn't give me any categorical information. I mean, do you have statistics? Surely you come in here knowing your portfolio. But you can't do it because that's not the word that we get, is that there are substantial number of arrears, significant arrears.

I'd like to ask you whether or not you have any survey in respect to the — in the past year, of the land — the total acreage of land that was sold in fact for the tax arrears?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well I heard him say, the member say, give me a guess. I suppose I can do that. But we have a . . . First of all, the R.M.'s haven't raised it with us as a concern. I would, I guess, would say there's very, very few quarter sections of land or any acres of land that's been taken back because of tax arrears, certainly not that has been drawn to our attention. I would think there's very, very few out there.

Like I said, I've spoken to most of the R.M.'s in this province and their concern has not been the repossession of land through tax arrears. There may be the odd one out there, but that's pretty far and few between. I would think that the concern they would have was, some of the farmers who's had some trouble trying to pay their taxes, not necessarily going into the tax collection system.

Mr. Koskie: — Do you know how many farmers throughout the R.M.'s have received tax, not tax notices, but notices of tax arrears that proceedings have been commenced? Do you have any idea?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Mr. Chairman, we don't require them to report that to us, and so we wouldn't have any of that

information. I couldn't give the hon. Member any answer to that question.

Mr. Koskie: — Well I want to ask you . . . indicate in closing this up that you summed it up properly, that you have no knowledge of it. You don't know the state of the problem that exists out there; that's fairly obvious. At least the details you don't know, and I thought you would come prepared to indicate that, because it has been raised as a concern to our caucus.

I want to indicate that one of the things that has precipitated more arrears and difficulty for R.M.'s, and for urbans as well, is the property improvement grant, which your government saw fit to destroy, and which many rural people sat on their hands as it was extracted from the people of Saskatchewan — some \$83 million in tax rebate, and a very significant incentive to pay taxes early. That has gone.

I turn also to another area, and I know the R.M.'s have raised this as a resolution, Mr. Minister, and that is their concern in respect to the . . . as I think the resolution . . . I don't have it before me, but I'll paraphrase it: they raise some concerns into the expanding number of Hutterite colonies throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

I wanted to ask you whether you're aware of that resolution, and whether your department has in any way reviewed it with the R.M., and what disposition you made in respect to that?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — In answer to the member's question, there was no resolution at SARM this year in regards to Hutterites. Also, just to bring him up to date on what there is out there, there's been three new colonies established, to bring it to a total of 47 in the province.

We have had meetings with both the Hutterite colonies, with SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association) and with SARM. In fact, we had a meeting here just about less than a month ago, discussing with them and the Hutterite colonies how we could best work out, for both sides, to the benefit of both SARM, SSTA and the Hutterite colonies themselves. The decision at that time was to discuss each and every one that comes up and to work out a fair and equitable solution to the problem, if it is a problem in an area. And that's here it's been left at as of right now.

Mr. Koskie: — Well have you set up a committee to deal with this? Are you going to be bringing in a report, or are you just chatting again?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — well as the member probably knows, back in the early '60s there was a Hutterite liaison committee set up, and it's just a working committee that works with problems of the area.

We've even gone further than that on the last discussion, and with SARM. We've asked them to work at the local level to resolve it, and with SARM and the municipalities. We believe that's where it should be, and that's the people that have to live in the area who are friends and neighbours, and so we've asked them to work it out that way.

(1615)

And I believe that SARM and the Hutterite colonies have agreed in principle to that, and we'll have to see where it goes from here. But as far as the committee itself, it was established back under the former administration a long time ago, over 20 years ago, 25 years ago. It's been there and it's just a working committee. There's really no report on it, it just works; it meets if there's a problem, they discuss it. As you know, who is all on it, there's the Hutterite colony, SARM, SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), people from the department, R.M.'s involved. That's how it's worked. We've just extended it a little more, saying, let's work it right at a local level and see if we can resolve it first before it comes to this committee.

Mr. Koskie: — You had indicated that you had a committee in place and it's been in place since 1960, but then you have a resolution being raised, so obviously there's concern beyond the solution of the committee. There's no doubt that there was a resolution by the rural municipalities in respect to . . . indicating some problem in this area. Are you not aware of that?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — The member said there was a resolution. I spent the entire time at the SARM convention. There was no resolution in regards to the Hutterite colonies. At the same time . . . Three years ago there was a resolution at the SARM convention. It was defeated by the SARM delegates, so therefore it doesn't become a resolution any more. It's a defeated resolution.

I think the way we have it set up is a fair way to do it, it is the right way to do it. It is working with the local people and the Hutterite colonies themselves to establish what will benefit the area and how it's best for all concerned. If you take it beyond that and have government intervention and government pushing somebody, it never will work. It never has and never will. I believe it's got to go back to where the people themselves, who have to live there, who have to reside there, who have to work there make those decisions. And we're prepared to be the liaison to help facilitate that, and that's where we'd like to see it stay at.

Mr. Koskie: — Well is there any position that you take in respect that if you get an area that can't provide some solution to needed expansion by Hutterite colonies, that your government . . . Hands off! Is that the policy that you're saying, that it's solely and exclusively left up to the local R.M.'s to make the decisions. I want to be clear on this, because in some parts of the province they've had court actions, as you know, in respect to it, and just so I'm clear, I want to know the position of your department. Is that your position that you keep hands off; that there is no basic protection; that it's going to be left up primarily and exclusively to the whims of local R.M.'s?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, when you had that court case, with all due respect, was when your administration was in power, and that's when it happened.

I believe . . . As you probably know, I chair the committee, the Hutterite liaison committee, when we meet, so I sit at

all the meetings. We have said that we will work as a conciliator, that we will work to resolve an issue.

We believe, in this province and in this country, that the buyer has a right to buy, the seller has the right to sell, provided it meets the rules and criteria that is set out within either the province or the municipalities. And if they abide by the rules of this province and of this country, then those rights should be there, always should be there, so we're not going to impose somebody else's will on what is their right.

So we're saying, if you're the buyer you have the right to buy, and if you're the seller you have the right to sell, provided you abide by the laws of this province or the by-laws of the community.

Mr. Koskie: — Well you indicated that there is a set of criteria. Are those in place, those criteria? Are there guide-lines, and can you indicate the nature of the criteria that you're operating under at the present time?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we can pursue this as long as the member wants, but the development and planning by-laws of a community, or the by-laws of the R.M. when I say community I mean it could be a district planning and by-laws that's set up, or it could be an R.M. by-laws. That's what I meant by the criteria that's there. It's already set out. It applies to everybody in that R.M. and it applies to everybody in the province.

So those are the rules we have to abide by. There's no special rules for one or the other; it's the same for everybody. And that's what it has to be, and it always has been. It has been under your administration; it has to be under this administration; it will be under administrations to come.

Mr. Anguish: — Just before we close off, Mr. Minister, I would like to turn to an item in the Estimates, looking at subvote 19, payments to Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

I note that under all the program services that are listed, the fifth highest expenditure you have, under program services to the property management corporation . . . And we all know this is for rental payments for facilities to the property management corporation.

I would like for the minister to itemize for us today: what facilities and/or services are provided for the \$516,000 that your department has to pay each year — in this particular year, I should say — to the property management corporation?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, as the member knows, the rent that's charged is the rent it costs to . . . whatever it costs to operate the facilities. And it's for accommodation and mail and photographic services and anything else as it relates to the direct operation or the cost of that department.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, all I want to know is: what facilities do you rent for \$516,000 for the Department of Rural Development? Can you tell me honestly in this House that you authorized the expenditure of \$516,000

and don't know what facilities you're getting for that, or what services you may be getting for that?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well if the member likes, I could read off a whole list of offices. He's aware that we have six regional offices around the province. We have the head office . . . or the department located here in the Walter Scott Building. We have all the ferry houses and where the ferry operators live around the province. We have . . . Well that's basically what it entails.

We have, in Regina, the Walter Scott Building — you're aware of it — there's a big floor and a half over there. In Yorkton we have space in there for engineering staff. I believe there's about 10 or 12 people work out of Yorkton.

We have at Weyburn the same thing; we have at Swift Current the same thing; we have Saskatoon; we have Prince Albert; we have North Battleford; we have Riverhurst, Lemsford, Lancer, Estuary . . . (inaudible) . . . Cumberland House and Paynton. Those are all areas that we have rented space in, and that totals up to — I don't know how many thousands of square feet — but a great number.

Mr. Anguish: — Well that was my next question. Mr. Minister, is — how many square feet do you rent from the property management corporation, and what is the dollar cost per square foot for the payments that you make to the property management corporation?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well the office space that has existed over here in the Walter Scott Building for many years under one department or the . . . or under one government or the other — I believe they've been there for a large number of years — there's 1,550 square metres and I believe that would be about 15,500 square feet. Now I believe there's about 10 square feet to a square metre.

In Yorkton we have 148 square metres, so that's about 1,500 square feet — about the same in Weyburn, about 209 square metres in Swift Current, which is about 2,000 square feet, about 3,000 square feet in Saskatoon, 1,500 square feet in Prince Albert, and then another 300 square feet in another building. And in North Battleford we have about 2,000 square feet, and then the spaces for where the ferry . . . the house is and the . . . and all the ferry ones, most of them run around 1,000 square feet per house, and that's just . . . it says 92.9 square metres and 91 point something, but in that neighbourhood of square footage.

Mr. Anguish: — Well, could the minister tell us what the cost is per square foot? Is there a dollar amount on each facility that you rent from the property management corporation? If you have that, I would appreciate that information. Or is there just a blanket charge that's given to you on a square footage basis. And if it is a blanket charge, could you tell us what the cost is per square foot?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well I don't have a breakdown of the square footage charge. But the minister for property management will be up here in a little while and you can certainly ask him; he'll have the information that's necessary. We have . . . all I have with us today is the breakdown of the square metres or square feet.

Mr. Anguish: — Well what are — I ask you these questions — what are the total square feet that you rent? Question number one. Question number two is: what is the dollar amount per square foot? I can hardly believe that you as minister would authorize an expenditure of over half a million dollars and not know what the cost is per square foot. How do you expect the people of Saskatchewan to believe that they're getting good value for their money if you as minister in charge of this department are renting space and don't know yourself whether you're getting good value for your money because you don't know what the cost is per square foot?

Thirdly, could you table the documents you referred to in terms of the facilities you rent and the square footage in each of those facilities, and if it has it on the document, the dollar amount for each of those facilities? Then maybe we can figure out the cost per square foot, if you can't.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well just so the member understands, I don't think it's been a policy of this House over the many, many years to — or ever — to disclose — even under your administration, I believe it would be fair to say that you never once disclosed the dollar per square foot of rental space. You know a lot of that space was rented many years ago by the former administration. It continues on.

I'm not even prepared to give that kind of information. You're certainly . . . some of you that were involved at the time may be aware of what the rental cost was. The Walter Scott Building, as you know, is an older building; it's been there for a long time. You know the — you are aware probably of all the costs in a lot of those contracts long existing. We don't . . . It just isn't a policy, and we're just not going to disclose it; you can ask the minister responsible for property management.

In regards to the list of where all the rental space is located, we'll certainly get one made up and send it over to you.

Mr. Anguish: — Well if I'm not mistaken, I'm not even sure that property management comes before the Committee of Finance because it's a Crown corporation.

In any event, Mr. Minister, it's your expenditure. You're spending in excess of half a million dollars and can't tell us whether you're getting good value for your money invested — taxpayers' money that you're investing, taxpayers' money that you're paying out in rent — and you can't tell us what the cost is per square foot. You can't tell us what the cost is per building, so we could figure it out on a cost per square foot, and you can't give us the total overall figures.

I ask you, Mr. Minister: what is the total square footage rented from the property management corporation by the Department of Rural Development under your authority as minister?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well we can get it totalled up and send it to you. But in regards to whether we can, or whether we know how much it is, it's whether we want to give you the information, or intend to give the

information out, or whether we know the information. Those are two different questions altogether.

An Hon. Member: — You've got to know.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — The information . . . That's right. The member from Quill Lakes says, we got to know. Yes, we do know what the cost is, and many of those contracts were signed when their administration was in place.

They are, in fact, confidential, and they could distort the whole retail . . . or rental business in the province, and therefore . . . You well know that. It's been a tradition of this House not to disclose it, and we're not prepared to do so.

(1630)

Mr. Anguish: — I believe it's been a policy of previous governments and this government not to disclose if a private sector interest is involved, so that there's no confidentiality betrayed in terms of tipping the hand on what the competitive rate is, and so that the government gets a good deal.

Are you saying that the property management corporation doesn't own any of the buildings that are being leased to you or rented to you? Are you saying that the property management corporation goes out, with the inability of you to do it, to go out and rent all these facilities? Surely to goodness property management corporation owns some of the properties which you in turn lease or rent from them. If that's the case, it is the right of the people of Saskatchewan to know what the financial dealings are between government departments and Crown corporations.

Can you give us your assurance this afternoon that you will in fact give us a breakdown of all the properties that you rent, what the square footage is in those properties, and what the amount is that you pay per square foot for the facilities you rent or lease from property management corporation?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — What I said is: I'll send you a list of the places that are being leased by the Rural Development department. We'll send that over. We'll have one made up and sent to you. The square footage . . . or the price paid per square foot or how the rate is structured or set out by the property management corporation is not going to be disclosed. It hasn't been previously by other administrations, and we're not prepared to do it now.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I'm beginning to get a glimpse of what's happening to us with respect to your costs, your property costs. We know that they've gone up substantially. We know that they're half empty. We know that you're renting hotels which are neither finished nor used.

We know, Mr. Minister, that you're wasting enormous amounts of money, but I'm beginning to understand how these estimates are going to work. I understand the minister to say that you pay whatever they send you, that if they were to send you a bill for three times that size,

your department would have gleefully agreed to it.

Mr. Minister, in the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation there is one vote for \$6,762,700. My guess is that's all the minister's going to want to talk about is that one subvote.

Mr. Minister, the costs — the functions which used to be supplied by supply and services went up 21 per cent when you transferred it to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. Over the last year the amount paid by various departments has gone up by another 18 per cent.

Now you're going to sit there, Mr. Minister, and you're going to tell us you don't know, and what's more, it's none of your business. That's not an unfair summary of what you just finished saying: that I don't know, but if I did, it would be none of your business.

Mr. Minister, when the property costs go up as dramatically as they have — 21 per cent last year, 18 per cent this year — we have a right to know, and the public have a right to know how you're frittering away their money.

Mr. Minister, if I do legal work, which is not likely, but let's supposing I were to do legal work for your department. Is it your position that whatever bill I send you, you'll pay? If it were \$500, you'd sign on the bottom line; if it were \$1,500, you'd sign on the bottom line — you don't ask any detail about bills you're asked to pay? I don't believe that is your position. I hope it is not. Mind you, given the way this government's being run, I suppose it wouldn't be astounding.

But, Mr. Minister, your subvote is not in the vote to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation; it's here. It is you that has to give us the details. You have to tell us why the amount being spent has gone up by 20 per cent — and it has. It's a little better than that, about 22 per cent. Mr. Minister, you've got to tell us why it went up, and you've got to tell us what this \$500,000 is for. Because if you can't, we can think of other uses for it. That would just about, as I recall it, cover the cost of deprivatizing the dental plan.

So, Mr. Minister, if you can't justify the \$500, let's sent it over to the Minister of Health to get ourselves our dental plan back.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well first of all, Mr. Chairman, I heard him say that the spaces, rental spaces in . . . in government rental spaces are half empty. I think that's been discussed here many times in this House. You know, they were stating something like \$34,000 a day being wasted on rental space, and we found out that's seven times what the real figure was, and so we know that not to be true.

And saying, half empty — you know, that's pretty . . . I think a pretty rough statement to make in regards to anywheres close to being the truth. In regards to asking about, would he do any legal work for the department — I doubt very much if we would ask him to do that.

In regards to the property management Crown, the allocation of space, the leasing of space — as I've said earlier, that we're not prepared to disclose the amount of rent paid or lease paid on any of the spaces there. It hasn't been a custom of this House. We will send you over the list of all the spaces that are rented for your . . . so you'll know where they are and what they are. But if you have any further questions in regards to the property management Crown, I ask you to take it up either in Crown Corporations — or which you'll have two chances — and in this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, that's not true, and I'm surprised someone who has spent six years here, as you have, doesn't know that. That will not work. When we get to the property management corporation, he's going to — he or she; he, I guess — will want to talk about this one vote which they have for six million bucks. He's not going to . . . the minister is not going to give us information about your department.

Mr. Minister, the full \$500,000 does not relate to leased space. That's all of the services you get from the property management corporation, and we want to know (a) the breakdown for that; and we want to know why it's increased by 20 per cent. And you owe us that explanation, Mr. Minister.

I want to tell you that when I asked the Minister of Finance for that explanation in his estimates, I got it. I didn't get this nonsense about, well I don't know, and if I do I wouldn't tell you. Mr. Minister, you're not being paid the very generous salary that you are paid as a minister of the Crown to come here and say: I don't know, and if I do I wouldn't tell you. You are here to represent your department, to answer legitimate questions, and an expenditure of half a million dollars is a legitimate question.

If you do not want to disclose the leased rate on a per footage basis, that's traditional that we do not disclose the leased rate on a per foot basis. But that's not what we're asking. We're asking you for a breakdown . . . (a) a breakdown; and (b) why did it increase by 20 per cent? You owe us that, or you ought to take the subvote . . . or you ought to take the money out of your department. If you can't explain it, we'll take it out and we'll let this go.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well personally, in regards to — again, back to the leased rental space, he has . . . As the member well knows, most places in this, that government uses, is both owned by the property management Crown or is rented by the property management Crown in regards to re-leasing or allocating out to different departments and other Crowns — I don't know about other Crowns — other departments. So therefore it's a mixture of leases, and in most departments that's to be true.

If he has any questions in regards to that, I ask him to ask the minister responsible for the Crown management . . . the property management Crown, because he's the elected member who's responsible for the proper expenditure of the moneys, and I'm sure that's being carried out.

So if you ask him, that's the job of the property management Crown, to make sure that the money is well spent. There's capable, qualified people there. The minister in charge, without disclosing any particular details — because if you disclose details, as I said earlier — and it isn't the custom of this House to do that; we're just not prepared to.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, it's not been the custom of this government, Mr. Minister, but it has been the custom of all previous governments and every other government in Canada to attempt to make some passing semblance at justifying your expenditures.

Mr. Minister, when this used to come before the government, before the Assembly, as the estimates for the department of supply and services — and all you've done is to take the department of supply and services and make a Crown corporation out of it; it's nothing more than that — we used to get a breakdown and all of the detail we requested, with one exception, the portion which related to leased space — we did not get the rate per foot. But that's all that was denied to us up until two years ago.

An Hon. Member: — The situation's different now.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, the member from The Battlefords says that the situation's different. I'll tell you what's different. What's different is that you're wasting an enormous amount of money in here, and you want to sit there like a fence post and not talk about it. That's what's different.

Mr. Minister, we will not ask you the rate per foot; we won't ask you that. But you owe us everything else, and you certainly owe us an explanation as to why it increased by 20 per cent. As I say, I asked the Minister of Justice those questions and I got them, and I don't know what makes you think that you're some sort of an exception. You owe us that information, Mr. Minister.

An Hon. Member: — They don't know it.

Mr. Shillington: — Well if you don't know it, we'll adjourn the estimates. We'll go on to the Department of Science and Technology and, you never know, we just might strike a minister who knows something about their department. It likely won't happen, but there's always a chance that somewhere there is lurking within the treasury benches opposite, a minister who cares about the job they're supposed to be doing.

I ask you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member from Regina Wascana feels offended at that comment. Mr. Member, you haven't sat over here and tried to get information from these people, information which is legitimate, which we have a right to. And you haven't sat there and faced the minister who has said, I don't know, but if I do, I wouldn't tell you. And that's what he said. And that's not an adequate answer in the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well I can give him, you know, some breakdowns of, in general, of the expenses, and that's what I think he was asking for. It may be what he's been getting or what he requires: office accommodations,

janitorial services, lights, all the heating, all the stuff that goes there, is about \$460,000 a year; the mail, which is interoffice and Canada Post, is \$50,000; and photographic, whatever, pictures or whatever else they take for annual reports and all the other stuff is about \$6,000 a year. So that's the breakdown of the money you were asking me for.

Mr. Shillington: — Well you owe us a breakdown of that figure on office accommodation as well, Mr. Minister. Now I don't believe for a moment you haven't got it.

Now, Mr. Minister, I asked you to give us a breakdown of the figure for office accommodation, and we are not asking for the rate per foot, the per foot base rate for the leases. We're not asking for that, but you owe us a breakdown on the rest of it. And if there's not something that you're ashamed of, then why don't you give it to us and we'll get on to the next item.

You also, Mr. Minister, owe us an explanation for why there's a 20 per cent increase. There has been.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well I've given you a breakdown of office rental, accommodations, including janitorial services and your lights and the renovations. There's always some . . . you know, there's always upkeep on any office space; there's always an upkeep over year over year, no matter where you're at and all over the . . . scattered around the province.

I could send you a list. I'll send you over a list of the spaces and the square footage or square metres, which I said I would do for you. I'd get a new one made up. But I could send you this one; it's just tore a little.

But the overall . . . you know, but that's a breakdown of it so, you know, except for exact details, which I said we're not prepared to disclose, you've got . . . you know what the office accommodation and janitorial services and lights and repairs and general upkeep of office space, and there's a lot of it around the province. You also know what the mailing costs and that, and you also know what the rest, the photographic services and that is. So I'll send this over to you.

I don't know how much better I can break it down then for you.

Mr. Van Mulligen: Am I to understand then from the minister's remarks that he has budgeted \$6,000 for photos in the coming year? Could he give us some explanation of that?

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — As the member should know, it's a real variety of things. It's mostly in the engineering department, in the field. They take pictures of, say, bridges that's either washed out or need to be repaired. They take pictures of the topography so they know where they'd be building a road or how it looked like when they're designing it during the winter months. They take pictures of roads, and where there's maybe some controversy or where they're looking at designing a road through an area where there's hills or that. Most of that is . . .

some of it's aerial photos. There's even the odd aerial photo taken to give them a broader view of what it looks like.

That's where they would spend the money. It's also spent out within the field services, looking at and working with R.M.'s. They've got to have something to look at as they go back to design it during the winter months. And that's sort of a picture of what they're doing, and it sort of gives them a visual view of it. So that's what that money is for.

Mr. Koskie: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the minister a further question in respect to the space that is allocated to his department, or his department is renting through property management. Can you give us a breakdown as to the amount that is government-owned space and the amount which is private space?

Obviously you indicated the Walter Scott Building was government-owned, so what I want to do is the breakdown of the two classifications — that which is leased privately from the private sector and that which is owned by the government.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — As the member should well know, that's handled through the property management Crown, and they're all over the province . . . There's a lot . . . We wouldn't know which is privately owned, which is Crown-owned.

The only thing I can guess, we haven't moved space . . . I understand we've been in all those offices for a good number of years, so I would assume it's still owned . . . or whoever had it before, whether it was the government or whether it was a private sector, still owned by the same people. That's an assumption of mine, but I would think that's a fairly close analysis of the way it would be.

Mr. Koskie: — Well you don't know what you're getting then. That's what you're saying. You're trying to fudge it because you know what there is — there is a rip-off going in respect to property management. That's what's happening.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — There is a basic, I say a basic rip-off, because some of this is government-owned space. And what I want to know is: in respect to the privately rented, free enterprise space that you've rented, do you know as a fact whether property management is charging precisely what they are obtaining it for from the private sector?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — I would have no way of knowing, as the member well knows, that . . . Like I said, it's space that's been rented for years. I assume it's still owned by the same persons or persons or company that owned it before, probably at the time rented by the former administration.

How the property management Crown continues to rent from them, all we know is what we pay and how it's allocated to us. You know, that's all we'd have, all the information we'd have, and all we need. We don't need to really know. That's their job — the property management Crown — to know who they lease it from,

and the type of building that's needed to meet the required needs of our department. So we wouldn't have no idea who they are rented from now, nor do we want to know.

Mr. Koskie: — Well what additional space are you including, or renting, additional to the previous year? Can you give us the breakdown, at least the number of square feet that you're adding to the space that your department had the previous year?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — To the best of my knowledge, none. It's the same space as the previous year.

Mr. Koskie: — Well can you indicate to me why you're paying 20 per cent more?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well certainly, as I said earlier, there's office renovations that go on, there's been, you know . . . that's basically where most of it would come from. I don't know exactly what it is, except to say that probably some would be power, some would be extra in power; some may be extra in taxes in communities where the taxes went up; some may well be in regards to renovations of offices — that's where they would be.

And if you have any further questions, again I would ask you to . . .

Mr. Koskie: — Well you keep saying that, oh, there's renovations. Do you know the amount of renovations that your space knows . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You're paying, he's paying for it. You aren't answering. I mean, he can't answer, I know, but we don't need the Deputy Premier to interfere.

Because there's a rip-off here as clearly as we're standing here. What they have here is a slush fund that is being built up under the disguise of the property management corporation — clearly — and the minister is a part and parcel of the scam that's ripping the public off.

Now this is . . . just imagine, the minister stands up in this House and he says, ho, there is property that was rented before by the other administration — he knows all that. You ask him, well, how much of it is government space, owned by the government. Oh, he says, I don't know that. Well what about the Walter . . . let's go through the individual pieces of information. Do you know where your department is spread? Do you know where your department is housed?

And I'm asking you, Mr. Minister — you have to come clean here — what is the 20 per cent increase that you're charging the people of Saskatchewan? Give us a breakdown of the increase, because we have a right to know. He stands up in this House and says, it's exactly the same amount of space as previously. That's what he said. Now he stands up and says, well these are old leases, they were in place before. But here we have a 20 per cent increase this year, and a previous . . . How much was it the previous year? — 19 per cent?

An Hon. Member: — 23 per cent.

Mr. Koskie: — 23 per cent. An increase in the office rental

of over 43 per cent in two years, and this minister stands there and says, well it's renovations. Well I'll tell you, you must have them lined with gold bathtubs or something, because a 43 per cent increase — 43 per cent increase.

I wonder if the minister could indicate with any more detail why there has been that massive increase if in fact you are having exactly the same space. One explanation of it is that you're packing it away in the property management, putting a little sock aside so that when come along with election, you're going to have this here fund that you're going to be able to draw on. Well I'll tell you the people of Saskatchewan are going to be informed that there is a rip-off taking place here in respect to it, because if a minister can't in fact, answer a question that there is a 43 per cent increase on the cost of the same amount of space, I'll tell you that's a disgrace that a minister cannot stand in this House and clearly justify why there is a 43 per cent increase for exactly the same space.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — And so I ask you, Mr. Minister, I give you another chance to come clean. Don't take any information from the Deputy Premier, just stand up and be a decent man. Stand up and give the information. Tell them that you're taking it to the walls, that they can come along, the Deputy Premier and the property management, because they want to build up a fund there, a secret fund. That's what they're doing, and they're raping the public in paying 43 per cent increase in the same property.

I ask you, Mr. Minister . . . how much is it?

An Hon. Member: — \$39 million increase.

Mr. Koskie: — A \$39 million increase in the cost of the same space. That's what's happening here — 39 million, 43 per cent increase for exactly the same space. And the minister stands there and says, it has to be renovations. Can you believe it?

I ask you again, Mr. Minister: Mr. Minister, come clean. Don't be a party to this scam on the public, on the treasury, on the taxpayers of this province. I ask you, Mr. Minister, how do you account for a 43 per cent increase in light of the fact that you have exactly the same space rented?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, you know, just to clarify some of the points . . .

An Hon. Member: — It's a rip-off.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — And I heard the member from Quill Lake saying, it's a rip-off.

Do you know how they used to do it, Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman, when they had the departments over there, they never showed any charges for the cost of operating a building. They didn't show that; they didn't show it against a department. They showed it over some other

place. What we've done is taken and put it back where it honestly, really is. So that's number one, that's number one. So the honesty part is right there — they'd put it in another department.

Second of all, office space, even in this building, was never shown before. They never showed the office space for the minister in this building, which is shown. So there has been other things done that wasn't done before, and it is now being showed in a proper way. And the member can go on and say, come on and be honest — that's being honest — and sometimes maybe, ask the questions that aren't quite in that frame of mind.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, the single, I think the single most serious embarrassment you people have now is your empty office space; I think that's a fair statement.

Mr. Minister, along with such triumphs as the abolition of the dental plan and the abolition of the drug plan, along with those triumphs, standing with it, is the extra office space, Mr. Minister, which you're not using. The fact that you've rented a hotel, which is not completed, and there's nobody in it.

An Hon. Member: — Ask him if he has any space in it.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes. What portion of the hotel did you rent, and do you spend any time in anything but the bar of the hotel?

Mr. Minister, you owe us an explanation for your 21 per cent increase in your expenditures. I want to know, Mr. Minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . and if the member from Wascana is going to enlighten us, I'd be pleased to hear from him on his feet.

Mr. Minister, if the bridges are costing you 21 per cent more, if the office space which you hold in small communities is costing you 21 per cent more, Mr. Minister, then you owe us an explanation. You say, Mr. Minister, you've got exactly the same office space, the same bridges, the same everything. If that is the case, why is it costing us 21 per cent more?

Mr. Minister, I get the impression with you, as I get the impression with so many other ministers, that you came here ill-prepared, without the detail or the . . . without the detail to get and give us the answers . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Souris-Cannington wants to know who's doing our research. Mr. Minister, I'd like to know who's assisting you in getting ready for these estimates. You come here without the information which we richly deserve.

Mr. Minister, I just want to make . . . well I see I've offended the member from Maple Creek. Now isn't that a tragedy. When the member from Maple Creek, who happens to sit on the treasury benches, comes before the Legislative Assembly, I want to give her fair warning that we will ask you the same questions, and I hope you are a good deal readier for it than this minister is.

Mr. Minister, I want to, just for a moment, just talk about where the figure of 39 million or 43 per cent came from. Mr. Minister, the last estimates we had for the department

of supply and services were that they were going to spend 93 million. The figure now, if you add up all these figures is 132.

An Hon. Member: — Million.

Mr. Shillington: — Million. That's 39 million; that's 43 per cent, by my calculations. In two years, with the same space, you're spending 43 per cent more. It's \$41 million. It is a lot of money. That's a great deal of money, which you don't want us to . . . which you don't want to account for. You want to simply say, Mr. Minister, as you've been saying here: I don't know, but if I knew I wouldn't tell you.

Mr. Minister, you enjoy a very generous salary and some generous benefits from the taxpayer of Saskatchewan. They expect a little something in return. One of the things you're supposed to do in return, Mr. Minister, is to come here and give us information to which we're entitled. We're certainly entitled to know why these exorbitant increases have taken place.

Mr. Minister, I really get the feeling that you came here without the information. I'm going to, with permission, call it 5 o'clock. I'm going to give you a chance to go back and come back here at 7 o'clock with this information and give it to us. So I'm going to call it 5 o'clock, Mr. Minister, and I genuinely hope you come back at seven with some information and some answers because for 39 million bucks you owe us something.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — One minute to go, Mr. Chairman. I just want to say one thing. I take offence by the member from Regina Centre when he was insinuating that I would go down and be drinking in any parlour in this province. That is not a practice of mine, and that is a direct slur on me. I take tremendous offence to that, and I would ask that when you get up next time that you apologize for that, because I take offence to that.

Second, if you talk about how things go in the province — and I've got a little letter here I'd like to read, after supper, to you how Manitoba is handling

Mr. Shillington: — I do want to respond to your complaint that I said you were down in the bar. I merely said, Mr. Minister, the qualities of your answers here suggest that you spent all your time in the bar. I didn't actually say you were there. If you can do a little better than that, Mr. Minister, if you can give us some sober, reasonable answers and come back at seven with them.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.