

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, 22 grade 4 students from the W.H. Ford School, located in the east gallery. They're located . . . or they're accompanied, I should say, Mr. Speaker, by two teachers, Mrs. Aitkin and Ms. Luharsky, I believe is the name, as well as two chaperons, Mrs. Duggleby and Janice Brown.

I'm pleased to have you visit the Assembly this afternoon, and I look forward to meeting with you after question period for pictures and questions and some answers perhaps to some questions. I ask all members to join with me in welcoming the W.H. Ford grade 4 students this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sauder: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to introduce to you, and to the other members of the Assembly this afternoon on behalf of my colleague from Kelsey-Tisdale, 11 grade 9 students from Bjorkdale School in Bjorkdale in the Kelsey-Tisdale constituency. They're accompanied this afternoon by their teacher, Jeff Sukut, chaperons, Janice Ruether and Richard Ashdown.

I look forward to meeting them afterwards and having a discussion about the proceedings in the Assembly and for pictures and refreshments. And I'd just ask all members to help me welcome them here on behalf of our colleague.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Contract to California Company

Ms. Atkinson: — My question is to the minister responsible for SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), and it involves computer estimating of vehicle replacement costs. Will you confirm that your government, after a six-month trial, awarded a contract to Autotrak, a California-based firm, to do such estimations? And will you confirm that the price of this contract is between 500 and \$750,000, and that the contract was not tendered?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I do believe that there has been a contract with the company that the member indicates. The specifics of it I do not have at my disposal in the House today, but I would report back to the House on that.

Ms. Atkinson: — Supplementary. Mr. Minister, will you also confirm that while some jurisdictions have chosen to use figures generated by Autotrak as a negotiation point in determining valuation of cars which are written off, your

government has decided that the figure will be a non-negotiable offer to the client?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I indicate I will bring back the information is this regard.

Ms. Atkinson: — New question. Mr. Minister, I am somewhat surprised that as the minister responsible for SGI that you don't have this information. But I have new question. Mr. Minister, is it true that you've decided to go only with the Autotrak figures when determining write-off offers; and is that the reason that more Saskatchewan people have had to see expensive arbitration process on write-offs offers from SHI than in other jurisdictions; and isn't that why we in Saskatchewan are now seven times as many arbitrations as in other jurisdictions such as Manitoba?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said previously on this question of the Auto-Paks and so on, this Autotrak company, I will investigate it further and be more than pleased to supply the information to the members of this House.

Western Diversification Fund

Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll see if we can do a little better with a different minister.

My question is to the Minister of Trade and Investment and it concerns the federal Western Diversification Fund. You'll be aware, Mr. Minister, that Mr. Jack Scowen, who is the Conservative member of parliament for Mackenzie, has said that the way this fund is being handled will cost him his seat in the next general election. It's his contention that rural areas are being discriminated against in favour of the two main cities.

Mr. Minister, have you looked into Mr. Scowen's charges? Do you share his point of view, and what do you propose to do about it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I read the article attributed to MP (member of parliament) Jack Scowen, with regard to the federal program. I suppose what I would say is the same thing I indicated to the hon. member when we were dealing with estimates, is that we had the view, I think, in the province that the Western Diversification Fund tends to be somewhat bureaucratic in the way it is being run. I think if that's the gist of what he was saying . . .

An Hon. Member: — Political.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — No, I didn't say political, I said bureaucratic. It's not being political at all. It's being very, very bureaucratic and rather slow in being able to cut through some of the red tape to get some of these projects under way.

One would hope that this can be rectified, because

clearly the western diversification is something that we all look forward to, to see more and more industries being located in our province. To date it has been somewhat slow in getting the mechanism in place and somewhat bureaucratic, and I would hope to see that change in the very near future.

Mr. Mitchell: — New question to the same minister, Mr. Speaker, John Bulloch, who is the president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, has stated, and I quote:

The Western Diversification Fund is close to becoming nothing more than a political slush fund to feather the nests of provincial governments.

So it's not a judgement that we're making, but one that Mr. Bulloch makes. And in Saskatchewan there has only, as of mid-April, there have been only 31 projects approved out of a total of 471 applicants, such as the Huff and Puff Stitchery in Moose Jaw which got \$10,000 and created two jobs.

Now, Minister, we've discussed these questions before. But my question is: have you met with Mr. McKnight and told him that the people of Saskatchewan expect more, a lot more from the Western Diversification Fund?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I and other members of our government have met with Mr. McKnight with regard to the Western Diversification Fund. I think it would be improper for the member opposite to somehow suggest that no projects have been approved. For the hon. member, clearly the new project in Swift Current, of Spar industries. I would hope that the members do not laugh at that. That is an excellent further development in the area of Swift Current. I know nothing about the one that the hon. member refers to in Moose Jaw.

There are various projects, certainly that the province of Saskatchewan has put forward for consideration by the Western Diversification Fund. Clearly some of them have not been accepted. One would hope that in the future more and more would be accepted.

I think the hon. member though should not make light of assistance to diversify in this region of the country.

And I think if you were to pursue what John Bulloch was saying — if you are now a voice of John Bulloch — now he was suggesting somehow that there should be no incentives whatsoever, no incentives whatsoever to small business. While I agree with many things that John Bulloch says, on this one I think John Bulloch perhaps is a little too right wing.

Mr. Mitchell: — Last question, Mr. Minister. The problem has a further dimension, and that is the share of regional development money that's coming to western Canada. Are you aware that under the present system of funding regional development, western Canada, which has 29 per cent of the Canadian population, will get only 15.4 per cent of federal funds dedicated to regional development, and at the same time Ontario and Quebec,

with 62 per cent of the population, gets 66.8 per cent of the money? Have you drawn this to Mr. McKnight's attention, and have you made it clear to him that his Western Diversification Fund is inadequate and unfair to western Canada?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I was asked the same question in estimates and I will respond the same way. For a long time we in this province have believed that many of the federal initiatives are for the betterment of the province of Ontario, to the detriment of other provinces across this country. They rank first, usually Quebec, ranks second, and we come a distant, distant fourth or fifth or tenth.

Now we have seen at least some improvement in the current government in Ottawa from the previous government in Ottawa, but that improvement is far from being satisfactory. We believe there should be more dollars coming into western Canada, more dollars coming into the prairie region. We have been advocating that. That change seems to be coming slowly, and it's slower than we would like to see, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Mitchell: — A new question to the same minister on a directly related subject, and this involves federal funds also coming to the province of Saskatchewan. Were you aware, Mr. Minister, that Saskatchewan, with 4 per cent of the national population, gets only 1 per cent of federal government business? If we got just our fair share of federal contracts, it would bring in an extra \$381 million to the Saskatchewan economy and provide something like 7,600 new jobs.

Now you're the Minister of Trade and Investment, and your government says it has the ear of the federal government. My question is: what are you doing to correct the situation, and what are you doing to ensure that Saskatchewan receives its fair share of federal government business?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Let me make two responses to that. First of all, the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Management Corporation simply attended a meeting very recently in Saskatoon dealing with that exact question. And the point raised by the hon. member that in fact virtually all the supplying to the federal government tends to come out of central Canada . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, order. Order. The minister is attempting to answer the question but is having some competition, and I'd like to ask you to give him opportunity to finish.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Clearly, we have made the point over and over to the federal government that it's not fair that Ontario be the prime source of supplier base to the federal government, Ontario — and Quebec to a lesser degree than Ontario, quite frankly.

What we have suggested to them is that they should look at some of the models that have been employed in the

province of Saskatchewan, the Buy Saskatchewan policy. For example, Saskatchewan Power Corporation; when we came to office something like 85 to 90 per cent of all their supplies were being purchased outside of Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan Power Corporation has turned that around, turned that around significantly, so the reverse is now the case where virtually 80 per cent of what they buy, they buy from local people, local businesses, local suppliers in the province of Saskatchewan. We would suggest to the federal government that they should take that, look at that, copy that, and use that for the betterment of all Canada, not just the province of Ontario.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Drought Assistance for Southern Saskatchewan

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the Environment responsible for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation and it has to do with the minister's announcement earlier this week of a drought program. The minister will know that that announcement was quite late in coming and that some very urgent work had already been started by many of those in south-western Saskatchewan that were in desperate need of water. And I wonder if the minister can give us the specific rules which he will be applying under his program for the retroactivity of that program, to ensure development prior to the announcement of the program will be fully covered under the program, going back to the beginning of 1988?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, at the time of the announcement, I advised the public and that that particular program, for the most effect, will start on April 1, but for certain cases, if it can be justified, we would back it back into March. Now there isn't very much water exploration work done in January and February in Saskatchewan. I believe that the people will be basically satisfied with the decisions of the corporation in that regard.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Of course some engineering and other technical work might have well have been done during the winter, which I hope the minister in his flexibility will cover under his program.

Mr. Minister, a supplementary, having to do with the government's commitment to cover 50 per cent of the cost of some of these water development projects. I wonder if the minister can tell us if the government's 50 per cent will be paid directly by the government to whatever contractor might be doing the work to find and develop water supplies, or will municipalities and towns and farmers and others have to pay the full cost of any development project up front and then have to wait for the government's share to be reimbursed to them? Which method will the government be pursuing?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Mr. Speaker, for the most part, the payments by the Saskatchewan Water Corporation will not be made until the project is completed. But I believe with arrangements made by most farms or towns and

villages, there's no problem usually in having the cheque go to the town and just go on through to the contractor. Most contractors are very willing to wait for that service to occur.

Cost of Power from New Plants

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Deputy Premier, the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. It's regards to statements the minister's made concerning rate increases for SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation). Mr. Speaker, the minister has gone about the province telling people that the rate of increase for utility rates will not exceed the rate of inflation, and how he knows what the rate of inflation will be 10 years hence, I don't know.

But be that as it may, his own documentation through the environmental impact statement for the Shand power plant project projects a 10.5 cents per kilowatt-hour operating costs, almost twice that of what the minister has been telling people in this province.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, what kind of twisted mathematics has left you to tell the people of the province that the cost is half that of the real cost of power production?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy to, in some detail, respond to the question after I've checked with the officials, but my guess is — I don't know precisely what figure he's talking about — buy my guess is that that figure's dealing with project dollars for when the project comes on stream in 1992, as opposed to current dollars. And there would be a significant difference.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Mr. Minister, will you not admit that you went before the television cameras, tried to say that it was going to be 6 cents per kilowatt-hour, and when you were shown your own document of 10.5 cents per kilowatt-hours, levelized cost, that starts from the moment that Shand goes on stream, that you don't know what the cost of power is and that your twisted mathematics, no matter which way you try to twist it, is going to end up in a substantial rate increase for power users in this province? Won't you admit that today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, in an effort to untwist the mind of the member opposite, I'd be quite prepared to come back with the numbers, comparing apples to apples and oranges to oranges, in project dollars, current dollars, kilowatt-hours, numbers comparing 1988 to 1988, numbers comparing 1992 to 1992. And I'd be quite prepared to do that, Mr. Speaker, to sort out the hon. member's twisted mind.

Mr. Lyons: — New question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you don't have to concern yourself with apples or oranges or anything else. I suggest you concern yourself with the power rates and the cost for each hour for the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — My question, Mr. Minister, is this: when are you going to get a grip on the Saskatchewan Power Corporation's and the kinds of inefficiencies and mismanagement which will result in massive rate increases to the people of this province?

Mr. Minister, you've gone on record as opposing cross-subsidization. You've gone on record as supporting reorganization after reorganization after reorganization. You've gone on record as supporting a project, the Shand power plant project, which will double the cost of power production in this province. When are you going to get a grip? When are you going to fire the Porky Pig of perks, Mr. George Hill, and when are you going to start producing and doing something for the people of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Not even most members in the caucus opposite can get themselves to the depth of that particular hon. member, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will say this. If projected out over the next 10 years, rate increased on the electrical side will be at, or less, the rate of inflation. And when we're talking about cross-subsidization, I want to talk about subsidization that has been going on. From 19600 to 1987, SaskPower has bought 40 billion cubic feet of gas, natural gas from Alberta because of contracts that that government locked us into because they didn't believe there was any gas in Saskatchewan.

Now the cost of that gas, Mr. Speaker, was significant. Now let me tell you what it did for Saskatchewan. Not much. But for Alberta, we put \$2 billion into their economy, three-quarters of a billion dollars into their treasury, through royalties, Mr. Speaker, at a time when they had, Mr. Speaker, a moratorium on nursing homes, a moratorium on nursing homes — \$2 billion in our economy . . . \$2.5 billion into the Alberta economy. Had that been in ours, we could have had nursing homes, hospitals, jobs, Mr. Speaker, and a developed resource that we could be totally self-sufficient today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, don't you dare lecture anybody on this side of the House about inefficiency. I have here an order in council, an order in council which . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. The hon. member has a right to ask a question. Order. Order.

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I have here an order in council signed by the Premier of this province which commits SaskPower to purchase from Basin Electric power 50 megawatts of power, irrespective, irrespective of whether or not that power is need in the province.

Your government has gone forward, hooked us into a deal whether or not we need the power. Is that efficiency? Is

that the kind of efficiency you're talking about? And if it is, don't you think that the suggestion to fire Mr. Hill and perhaps for yourself to vacate that position as minister responsible for SPC is a reasonable position, is a reasonable suggestion in this case?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, on the first point, I didn't mean to lecture; I thought I was just pointing out the obvious.

Second, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the 50 megawatts from Basic Electric, we have a similar deal with Manitoba. We have a similar deal with Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, where we put Many Islands . . . not Many Islands, Island Falls hydro-electricity into the north of Manitoba and we take it out in the south on an exchange; and that's the way the grid works, you see.

In the case of the most recent Basic Electric deal, Mr. Speaker, we bought that 50 megawatts for the purposes of baseload supplementation because our baseload requirements are increasing on a daily basis. Shand is not going to be on in time to pick up those baseload increases, and water-flows right across the province, Mr. Speaker, are cutting the capacity of . . . of the hydro capacity of the province.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we have a 100 megawatt deal with Basin Electric that I think was signed in 1983 or '84 — I'm not quite sure of the date. And this deal, Mr. Speaker, is an exchange agreement that we have when our peak is down in the summer-time. We tend to use less energy for heat in the summer-time because it's warmer in the summer-time. But in the United States they have peak demands in the summer for air conditioners, so we swap 100 megawatts in the summer-time and take it back into our baseload in the winter-time.

And it's been an excellent arrangement, Mr. Speaker. We are currently building a tie-in to Alberta, where we're going to do another exchange, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Confidentiality Clause in Contract with NGOs

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services, and it deals with the secretive and tyrannical nature of the government in office today.

Mr. Minister, many non-government organizations which are now signing agreements with your department are being required by you to agree to a new clause in their funding contract which says, and I quote:

The non-government organization further agrees to treat as confidential any policy information of the Department of Social Services.

Mr. Minister, my question to you is: why have you tied a gag order to the non-government organizations in this province that you're entering into contractual agreements with, and why are you preventing them, Mr. Minister, by way of this clause, preventing them from criticizing the

policies of your government and making unfair policies of your department public?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite says one thing, reads something, and then tells us that we're doing something entirely different from what is in the contract.

I don't know if he can read or not, or if he can remember what he read. It says that the department has certain responsibilities to be confidential, and we can't give that confidential legality away when we're contracting with somebody to do work for us. So our contractors, NGOs (non-governmental organizations) have to honour the confidentiality that we have to honour in the department, and that seems self-explanatory.

Mr. Prebble: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, we on this side of the House have no problem with the principle of client confidentiality, but that's not what this new clause says.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, this new clause says that all policy information of the Department of Social Services is to be confidential. And would you not agree, Mr. Minister, that this will mean that non-government organizations are unable to do advocacy work to change unfair policies in your department; that they will be unable to tell a welfare recipient what his rights to an appeal are under the policies of your department which has to be kept confidential.

Mr. Minister, will you now do the reasonable thing and withdraw this provision — withdraw this clause — and tell every non-government organization in the province that this new clause will not be part of their contract.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite don't respect confidentiality; they bandy about people's private medical records; they phone departments and try to get information on people's private affairs — on their private medical records.

With respect to these contracts, if I could believe what the member opposite is saying about these contracts, I would certainly review them, but I do not believe that my department has a mandate to contract with advocacy groups to find people to do political work. We don't have that kind of contract. These are service contracts — contracts for them to serve the people of Saskatchewan, not to get involved in politics.

If his friends are not happy because the taxpayers are not funding them to be involved in politics, then he should go to his friends at the CLC (Canadian Labour Congress) and get them to fund him the way they always do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, I have recently

received a group of students that are in the gallery — a notice about it — and I would ask leave if we could go back and to do the introduction of them.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to announce to you, and to the members of the Assembly, that there are a group of 42 students, grade 4 and 5, from King George School in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

These students are not from my constituency but the constituency of the Leader of the Opposition, who is not able to be here today. And the Leader of the Opposition has asked me to pass on his welcome and the welcome of other members of the Assembly to these students from King George School. I intend to meet with them after 2:30 and have pictures and perhaps some discussion about the Assembly today.

These students are accompanied by Jacob Froese, Linda Kindrachuk, who are teachers; chaperons, Victor Thunderchild, Marie Ahenakeu, Dawn Morgan, Pauline Favel, and their bus driver is Mr. Walsh. I hope all members will join with me in welcoming the students from Saskatoon Riversdale, King George School, in the usual fashion.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Human Resources, Labour and Employment Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 20

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask the minister in respect to the employment development agency: could just give us a brief description as to what the mandate is of the employment development agency?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the term employment development agency is a historical term. For all intents and purposes, that agency does not exist, but its function has been rolled into the department as it now exists.

And that is, the aim to maximize participation of all Saskatchewan citizens in economic development and diversification while ensuring protection of citizens in the work place through appropriate legislative mechanism and for seniors through income supplements. Now that refers to the seniors' portion of the department.

That basically gives you an overview of where the employment aspects fit into the department. It is responsible . . . that branch is responsible for the

Opportunities '88 program for youth employment. It tries to equalize employment with respect to equal opportunity for disabled, for handicapped, for women in general, and for people in minority groups. And that is the general duties of that branch of the department.

And the employment development agency was formerly a fund that was used for employment development projects. That role has now been taken over by the economic departments of the government.

Mr. Anguish: — Could you tell us then, Mr. Minister, specifically what there is for funding in the narrow scope of the definition of the employment mandate that you have? We knew that there's the Opportunities '88 program. Could you list for us the other programs and the dollar amount that's been allocated for these programs for the current fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — The department's primary role is a co-ordinating function. The actual delivery of programs is through other departments, the economic development departments.

You will be familiar with some of the things that the employment development agency did in the past. You will be familiar also that the Saskatchewan employment development program, part of welfare reform, is delivered by Social Services. You will be familiar, as you've indicated, with Opportunities '88 for summer student employment. You are also familiar with the economic developments that have taken place in your constituency, in The Battlefords.

So formerly the employment development agency would assist in the funding of these economic development projects. Currently those are delivered by the departments, as I've given you examples — also the economic development departments.

Things like the upgrader project and those things have been rolled into other department are no longer part of the employment development agency, which does not exist other than there is a branch of employment in my department.

So that gives you a general overview of it. But you would have to look at the government as a whole, where the line departments are delivering. We're the co-ordinating function.

Mr. Anguish: — Under a branch of Employment, Mr. Minister — to be more specific, I see in your *Estimates* for the Saskatchewan Opportunities '88 summer employment program, you have an estimate of \$4 million.

Outside of your co-ordinating role and outside of this particular program, are there any other programs whereby you have direct funding for employment development? And I'm not interested, Mr. Minister in what's been transferred to other departments from what was previously the employment development agency's responsibility. I'd like to know now, today, what the other programs are where you provide direct funding for employment development within the province of

Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the answer to the question is no, there are no others.

Mr. Anguish: — Well, Mr. Minister, could you then tell me in regard to the only program that you fund jobs, the Saskatchewan Opportunities '88, the summer employment program, what the allocations have been for that program or the comparable program in the years 1982 until the current fiscal year? And of course I have the current fiscal year estimate of 4 million.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the funding history of summer student employment is as follows: '78-79, \$1 million; '79-80, \$1 million and that's . . . it's 1.015 million and it's 1.012 million — I'll round it off close to the nearest million — 1980-81, \$1.038 million, so it's quite constant there at \$1 million; 1981-82, and that, I might point out, was the last year that the members opposite were government, it was \$1 million; 1982-83, the first year of our administration, it was \$1.130 million; in 1983-84 it was nearly tripled to \$2.8 million; in 1984-85 it was \$3.3 million; in 1985-86 it was \$9.1 million; 1986-87 it was \$9 million; 1987-88 it was budgeted at \$4 million, and this year it's budgeted at \$4 million again.

Under the NDP, I might point out, it was \$1 million, that we tripled it to \$3 million, and then the criteria were a little loose and it ballooned to \$9 million in 1985-86 and '86-87 which was ninefold what the NDP had been doing in student employment. And so we felt the criteria had to be tightened up a bit to direct the money where it was needed most — in health care, education — and still provide some summer jobs.

(1445)

So last year we budgeted \$4 million, and as I indicated earlier, we had a record year for student employment in Saskatchewan. We have budgeted again \$4 million this year because the program was successful last year. We found that the tighter controls — on not being able to hire grade 9s, 10s and 11s under this program, but people who are directly going on with continuing education — have worked successfully last year, and we've left the program the same as last year in this year's budget.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, can you also tell me which of those years — going back, I guess you've reviewed about 10 years there of the summer employment program. How many of those years and what were the amount of supplementary budgets brought in for student summer employment?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well the two years that we put nine million into this . . . I don't have the exact figures because we're going into the history here. But I recall that they were budgeted at lesser sums and the controls weren't as tight. It was kind of an open-ended program and it mushroomed up to \$9 million. And now you're being critical that we've got it back under control. You can't have it both ways. You can't complain that it's not enough, and at the same time complain that it was too much. You'll have to make your choice.

But I want you to consider that whatever your choice is, I would like you to explain how the NDP's \$1 million was better.

Mr. Anguish: — I have to assume that you did not hear me, Mr. Minister. I wasn't being critical of anything up until this point in time. I don't know what you interpreted as being critical. All I've done in the few minutes — maybe 10 minutes we've been here — is to ask you some straightforward questions. I have not reacted positively nor negatively to them.

The estimates process is one of seeking information from the government, and I'm asking you to provide me with the years, going back to the years that you so generously pointed out even under the New Democrat's administration in the province; tell me which of these years there was a supplementary budget brought in for summer youth employment and what the dollar amount of the supplementary budget was. You have your employees and your department people with you today, and I respectfully ask you to provide that information.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, if I heard the member right he wasn't listening to my last answer. I would ask him to listen to this one.

The situation is thus: I don't have two years ago's information on whether a supplementary budget was brought in or not. However, we can find it for the member opposite. If his researchers or he can't go to the library and look it up, we can undertake to find it for him. So we will send him the information that is down the hall at the library, that is part of the history of Saskatchewan. We will find it for him and send it over to him because he doesn't seem to be able to find it for himself. So we'll do that.

In addition, I should point out, Mr. Chairman, that in addition to the \$4 million we have budgeted in our department, there is another budget item of \$4.3 million in the Public Service Commission for government hiring of summer students. So the total amount of money would be \$8.4 million spent on student hiring, and 4 of that is budgeted in my department for the farm and business sector and 4.3 for student hiring and the Public Service Commission. And I don't know if we've dealt with those estimates or not, but I thought that might have been available in those estimates.

Mr. Anguish: — What years has there been a supplementary budget for summer youth employment and what was the dollar amount of that supplementary budget for summer employment?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — I will send the information over as soon as my staff has got it available. It may be today; it may be a day or two. But, you know, I could probably ask somebody to go to the library and look it up, or maybe you could ask one of your colleagues here to go and look it up for you. We'll get it to you one way or another.

Mr. Anguish: — Would you acknowledge that in 1986 you brought in a supplementary budget for \$2 million on the summer youth employment program, Mr. Minister? Would you acknowledge that?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, no. The member opposite has the answer. I don't now why he's asking the question. I will not acknowledge it until we've looked it up.

Mr. Anguish: — I can't believe, I can't believe that you can't provide that information. The arrogance of people like you sitting in that government opposite is the reason you lost by-elections in Elphinstone and Saskatoon Eastview.

I came here with no thought of being critical of you. I came here with the thought of spending maybe about an hour this afternoon talking about employment development in the province of Saskatchewan. And you, in your arrogance, sit there and deal flippantly with what should be a very serious matter for the legislature in the province of Saskatchewan.

I ask you questions about supplementary budgets. You flip it back in saying we should go and research it, that you might send somebody — it could be a day; it could be two days; it could be some time in the future. And if it holds true to what your government does, you likely will never provide it — just like the *Public Accounts* in the province of Saskatchewan that you should be tabling in this legislature so people can hold you accountable for particularly your election year spending, which you haven't done.

Now are you aware or not aware, Mr. Minister . . . can we get back to just answering and asking questions in which this forum is supposed to be about, the Committee of Finance? Can you acknowledge that your government brought in a supplementary budget in the 1986 summer employment program of \$2 million?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I have to give the same answer to the same question. I can acknowledge . . . I recall that there was a supplementary budget. I do not know the specific amount.

I repeat that this is the 1986 budget the member opposite is asking the question on. He seems to have the answer, or he would be misleading us. And I can't understand why a member of this legislature would ask a question to which has had the answer, and expect public servants to spend the taxpayers' money looking up the answer to a question when he purports to have the answer in front of him.

If he says it's that sum, then I'll accept it. If he doesn't believe his own answer, then I will try to get him the information. But, I mean, if he wants to talk a lot of arrogance, he can. He can talk about arrogance or anything else he wishes, but the members opposite are only displaying their lack of capability of ever being able to govern this province. They're displaying their lack of knowledge which makes them unfit to govern at any time. And I hope that the members carry on in the manner possible because they're proving to the people of Saskatchewan who should be the government of this province.

Mr. Anguish: — Well, Mr. Minister, the reason we're asking for confirmation of that \$2 million supplementary

budget . . . excuse me, the \$2 million supplementary budget, is because your government hasn't tabled yet the *Public Accounts* for that particular fiscal year. So who knows for sure what you spent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — You're about a year behind.

I ask the minister: who over there amongst your employees in the department is responsible for the summer employment program this year? Who there is responsible for that program?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I know the member opposite's only been a member of this Assembly for a year and a half and is not maybe familiar with the ways of this Assembly. And I know that he has been a member of the House of Commons and should have some knowledge of the parliamentary procedure. He should know that the *Public Accounts* have nothing to do with the supplementary budgets which are passed by this Assembly.

The budget that he is asking the questions on is passed by this Assembly. I've asked one of my staff to go to the library where it is a public record and carry it back here, and then I will open it up and see what it says, and then I can confirm or deny the information that he has before him.

Mr. Anguish: — I asked you: who there amongst your employees — you have 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 — 8 employees that I can see sitting here this afternoon. Which one of those employees is responsible for the summer employment program in this current fiscal year? Which one?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the person in charge is Anne McFarlane, seated directly . . . not directly behind me, but one row behind me and one row back. And she is the person in charge of this particular program. And that's a simple question. No problem. There she is, right there.

Mr. Anguish: — Well, I'm very . . . nice to know that Anne McFarlane is sitting there right behind you. Would you just turn around and ask her whether or not your government has brought in a supplementary budget, since you've been government, for the summer employment program, just turn around and ask her.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes. And she was not in charge of the program in 1986, so you couldn't expect her to remember that — I don't recall you being in charge of it in 1986 — she confirms she was not in charge of the program in 1986, Mr. Chairman. And I confirm that there was a supplementary budget.

An Hon. Member: — Who is in charge?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — If the member opposite will have a little patience, or the library finds it, we will bring it. Maybe even the pages could go get it from the Clerk's office. I'm sure they have it there. But if you will be a little patient we will get it for you, and I encourage you to ask

other questions to get on with something relevant until they deliver it for us here.

Mr. Anguish: — It would seem to me, I would imagine even you, when you came into as minister of your different portfolios, would check as to what had happened in the past and would have some knowledge as to what had happened in the past in your particular cabinet responsibilities. And I'm sure that as a lawyer — I was going to say learned friend, but I don't want to go that far — that as a lawyer when you work on a case you check the past precedents. You go back into this history . . .

An Hon. Member: — Not him, he never won a case in his life.

Mr. Anguish: — Well only taking away farm land from people is the only case he's ever won. So it is important.

And going back to the item of *Public Accounts* not yet being tabled, don't mislead this legislature and the people who may be watching today by saying that the public accounts are irrelevant. We don't know how much has actually been spent until those *Public Accounts* are tabled.

Now you might have brought in a supplementary estimate, but in terms of knowing how much money was actually spent, we don't know that until the *Public Accounts* are tabled. We can only speculate from the amount that was appropriated as to whether or not that total amount was spent, or maybe it was overspent and there was other provisions put forward.

So I would ask the minister, then since you've acknowledged — and if you'd listen to this please — if you acknowledge, and you haven't acknowledged if there was a supplementary budget brought in, could you tell us the rationale, the reason, as to why there was a supplementary budget brought in, in the summer employment program for 1986, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I've already explained that the total expenditure in '86-87 was \$9.004 million. The reason it was expended at that sum was that the criteria were different and were a lot more loose; they were open-ended, and therefore the expenditure went up over the budgeted amount. I've already indicated that there was a supplementary budget item.

I've indicated that we are trying to get the sum of the original budget item. It's all we have to do, is as soon as we can get it from the library — and they're trying to look it up now — is look at the original amount budgeted, subtract that from \$9.004 million, and the member opposite will have his answer.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, the sum, I've already explained, was over the budgeted amount and therefore it was responsible to start coming in within budget in future years, and that's what we have been doing.

Mr. Anguish: — Well, Mr. Minister, what do you do now? Last year then, were the amounts that you had received applications for in excess of the amount that you had estimated?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the library for giving us the budget for 1985-86 and 1986-87. I can point out that for 1986-87 the blue book original budget figure was \$8.5 million, and the actual expenditure was 9.004 million, for an over-expenditure of \$504,000. That was a supplementary budget figure; that's the actual expenditure. Cabinet gave authority for an extra 2 point — what was it? — an extra 2 million, but the uptake was not there.

(1500)

Applications came in to cover that amount, but afterwards people didn't claim all of it in rebates or refunds, so that the actual expenditure was not as high as anticipated, based on the applications that came in.

So now, if the member opposite can process that, the original sum was 8.5 million in 1985-86; 9.004 million was spent. The total sum budgeted was 8.5 million plus 2 million supplementary for a total of 10.5 million. The uptake was 9.004 million.

Mr. Anguish: — And you're saying to this Assembly, Mr. Minister, that the only reason that there was the order in council to increase that amount was because of the fact that the criteria in the program was loose and there were more applications and you wanted to fund all the applications coming in without rejecting anyone. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the applications that came in went over the budgeted amount, and so therefore cabinet increased the allocation to match the amount of the applications. When the final year was completed, it turns out that some people either didn't follow up with the program and didn't hire, or some didn't make the claim, or some may have hired people that didn't qualify. As a result, when it was all calculated, finalized, \$9.004 million was the actual expenditure and so therefore the sum that cabinet had set aside was not necessary — 10.5 million was not necessary.

Mr. Anguish: — Could the minister now tell me what other years are you aware of — you were certainly aware of what the amount was, total amount, in the program going back into the 1970s, so could you at least tell me, if you can't go back to the 1970s, could you at least tell me, since 1982, how many other years did cabinet approval additional funding for summer employment programs in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I won't do that because I've gone back and looked up documents from two years ago to satisfy the member's curiosity. But we're not going to go back through all of . . . that information is readily available.

He has the *Public Accounts* for those years that he is insisting he doesn't have now. He has the *Public Accounts*; he has the budgets. Those are public documents. If he wants to look that up, he can look that up. But I do not see the relevancy of . . . The budgeted amounts are a public record; the actual expenditures are public record. I've read the actual expenditures.

He doesn't want to hear the \$1 million actual expenditure of the NDP. He has not yet told us whether the expenditure of \$3.3 million in '84-85, a tripling by this government, was adequate or not. He has not decided, in relevance to what the NDP did, whether that was important or not. He has not now told us whether the \$9 million, ninefold what the NDP spent, whether that was too much or not enough.

What I am simply saying is this year we have budgeted the same as last year — \$4 million — because we found that was adequate to cover the uptake, and that we had a record amount of student employment last year.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, do you think . . . it worked previously when I was asking you questions. Do you think you could turn around around and ask Anne McFarlane again if there's been a supplementary budget in any other year from 1982 till present.

And I know that it can go and be looked up in the library, but I'd like to hear it out of your mouth so people that are watching today, and people in this Assembly, can follow some logical flow. And you're certainly not providing logic. It's not a court room. You're supposed to be a cabinet minister answering to the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

So would you please tell me, between 1982 and present, was that that the only year — the '86-87 fiscal year — that there was a supplementary budget brought in for summer employment in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, there might have been. I wasn't the minister at the time.

Mr. Anguish: — I asked if you'd turn around and ask Ms. McFarlane, behind you, that very question. She's an expert in your department, and you'd think you would utilize her, not . . . I see her providing the information and you shaking your head.

What are you trying to hide from the people in the province? Did you ask her? Did you ask her what other years there was a supplementary budget?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — What I am trying to show is, I'm trying to show the people of Saskatchewan that the members opposite are either not bright enough or too lazy to go and look it up themselves.

Mr. Anguish: — What other years was there a supplementary budget brought in, other than the '86-87 fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, my staff is trying to look this up, but I mean, this is history that they're looking up. They're doing . . . researching history for the whims of the member opposite there, when that history is available, publicly available.

They advise that as far as they can gather the information, as fast as they are looking at this historical data, that in '84-85 they believe there was a \$1.1 million

supplementary, but I cannot vouch for the absolute accuracy of that.

They are trying to compare these figures going back to a time when I was not the minister. I'm not expected to recall what was done three or four years ago, when the members opposite can look it up in the book if — and I assume they are capable of looking it up and doing the calculation if they really want to know.

We are discussing here this year's budget. I'm prepared to talk about last year's budget. I'm prepared to talk about the year before's budget. I'm prepared to point out to them that they only spend a million dollars. But for them to have a whim that they want to know what the supplementary budget was three years ago or four years ago, now this historical data that is not relevant to today's budget.

Mr. Anguish: — I did not yet ask the minister what the amount was. I asked the minister: in what years, other than the '86-87 fiscal year, was there a supplementary budget brought in for the summer youth employment program?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I do not have that information available at this time.

Mr. Anguish: — Is the minister refusing to answer that particular question?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, yes.

Mr. Anguish: — Well I don't know how we can proceed with the process in this Assembly in the Committee of Finance. You're asked a very basic, straightforward question; you've got your officials here; you've noted the official that's responsible for that. I maintain you have the information and you're keeping it from people in the province. And it is relevant that comes from other years, because people need to know the pattern that's there. And if it's a good pattern, then you should be proud of it. So what are you trying to hide?

We want to know from you what years, between 1982 and the current fiscal year, was there a supplementary budget brought in for the summer youth employment program. Very simple. Your official should know that. She's in charge of the program. You acknowledge that. Surely to goodness someone who's in charge of a program that in some years has been as high as over \$10 million would know the history of how supplementary budgets were brought in, and for what reasons those supplementary budgets were brought in.

Will the minister now please tell us, because I know you have the information: which years, other than 1986-87, was there a supplementary budget brought in for the summer youth employment program in the province?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I have actual expenditures and I won't repeat them again. They are consistently at \$1 million a year for the NDP. They peaked, from '79 to 1982 they peaked at \$1,038,000. Our government raised the actual expenditure to \$2.8 million in '83-84 and 3.3 in '84-85. And in '84-85 I know

that there was a supplementary budget. In '85-86 there was, and in '86-87 there was. There was not in '87-88. We are now considering the year '88-89. I can't imagine what else the member opposite would want to know, and I can't imagine why he can't go look up his own history if he wishes to know what it is.

The year in question, Mr. Chairman, is this year's budget. That's what we're examining. I've gone back three years and given him the information he's wanted for three years. I will not go back any further than three years. I will not go back into the history of Saskatchewan. If he wants to know the history of Saskatchewan, he should learn it for himself.

Mr. Anguish: — You can't come in here and selectively pick and choose. You're the one who's accountable to the Legislative Assembly for taxpayers' dollars that are spent.

You conveniently have some figures going back to 1978. The question — I don't know how much simpler to put it to you. I can't believe someone who was the top of their law class, what I was told, would not know or come prepared with this information or to be able to understand the question. The question is: in what years was there a supplementary budget brought in for the summer employment program in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all I'd like to point out to the member that he is in error and he may be led by the media to be in error. I did not at any time finish at the top of my law class. I read such a statement in the *Star-Phoenix*. Not everything you read in the paper is true.

The fact is that I finished first in the bar admission course in my class, but I did not finish at the top of the law class, and I can't remember who did. But I believe that it was either the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg or one Constance Hunt. And I know that they finished first and second, and I don't recall who finished first or second. And if it was the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, I would not want to take that honour away from him.

The truth of the matter is, the absolute truth is, to the best of my knowledge I finished first in the bar admission course. I apologize for the *Star-Phoenix* misleading the member opposite. I know it bothers him a lot that I might have finished first in anything, but I apologize on behalf of the *Star-Phoenix* for them having mislead the member, and I also want to set that straight for my colleagues who know the truth.

The truth is, I finished about in the top third. The truth is that with that education, Mr. Chairman, I have the ability to go and add and subtract, look at the *Public Accounts*, obtain that information in the library, the same as the member opposite should have. And if he was not too lazy to look it up himself, he would have the information. He probably has it in front of him.

In some cases he has asked the question and then says he has the answer and want to know if that's correct. If he wants me to check his addition or subtraction, I will not do that. He should be able to add and subtract for himself.

He should be able to read. He should be to find out what the history of this province was four years ago or 40 years ago.

I'll go back a little bit to assist him. I've gone back to telling him how the NDP spent \$1 million. That has hurt him dearly. It has broken his political momentum here today to find out that the NDP spent \$1 million and we raised it to three and then to nine. And we've said, no, just a minute, if 1 million was good enough when the NDP were government, then probably four should be reasonable now. It worked well last year; we've put it at four again. If the member opposite continues this way, we may never pass the four because he is not on anything relevant.

So I would ask the member opposite, if he has any relevant questions, to ask them, and if he wants to know the history of Saskatchewan, he should go and study it for himself.

Mr. Anguish: — Well I guess a couple of points before I put the question to you again. One is that I certainly wouldn't want to go to you to have my mathematics checked, because I've seen you counting your fingers in the House before, and you're wrong.

The second thing is that in term of your standing as an academic, I think that you're absolute living proof that just because you have high academic skills doesn't necessarily mean that you would have any social skills whatsoever. There's certainly a separation there, and you're living proof of that . . .

An Hon. Member: — Get off that garbage, for crying out loud.

Mr. Anguish: — The garbage call over there has asked me to get back to the question. The question is: in what years between 1982 and 1988-89 fiscal year was there a supplementary budget brought in by your government other than the year you've already given me, in 1986-87? And the only reason you admitted that is because I knew it. So what other years was there a supplementary budget brought in by your government?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the level of the member opposite's questions have hit the gutter; they have got so low they have hit the gutter. I refuse to answer any questions that are that low. I told him he could look it up for himself. He already has in some cases. If he's too lazy to do it, that's his own problem. If he isn't knowledgeable enough to do it, that's his own problem. But when the questions get to the gutter level that they have gotten to now, I will not answer them.

(1515)

Mr. Anguish: — It seems that you're the one who seems to drag it down to that level. The basic question is: what years did you have a supplementary budget for the summer youth employment program other than the fiscal year '86-87?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite is repeating himself; I will not.

Mr. Anguish: — Do you refuse to give that information that's relevant to this estimates process?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I don't have it. It's not relevant. That's not this year's budget or last year's budget of the year before's budget. I refuse to look up that information because the member opposite is too lazy to look it up himself.

Mr. Anguish: — You said, Mr. Minister, that you spent \$9 million in 1985-86 on the summer employment program. Is that correct, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — This sum in 1986-87 was \$9.004 million. That is correct.

Mr. Anguish: — How much did you estimate in that year, Mr. Minister, that would be spent in the summer employment program?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I'm going to give him his answer for the last time. It was \$8.4 million; the supplement was \$2 million, for a total of 10.5. For the last time, 8.5 plus 2 — 10.5.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, I'd try and ask this for last time if you give the answer, I've got that year. Eighty-five, eighty-six fiscal year. You're talking about one year into the future, Mr. Minister, one year beyond what I was asking about. Eighty-five, eighty-six — did you spend \$9 million in the summer employment program in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the expenditure for '85-86 was \$9.1 million. The records of this Assembly show that 8.4 million was originally budgeted. I do not know how much was allocated in supplementary. I can only tell you that, in addition to the 8.4, a total of 9.1 was spent, so that should be 1.5 — and I haven't calculated that quickly; I'm just looking at it — should be an additional 1.5 was spent over the original budget amount in 1985-86.

Mr. Anguish: — So then in the 1985-86 . . . It seems like we're really getting somewhere actually, Mr. Minister. And in '85-86 there was a supplementary budget brought in. Is that correct, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, yes. I answered that question about 10 minutes ago.

Mr. Anguish: — Well why do we have to ask it one year at a time? Why can't you just tell me the fiscal years that there was a supplementary budget brought in for the summer employment program?

We've now got, after taking about half an hour of asking you the same question, we've finally got the information I requested for the '86-87 fiscal year. We've got the information I requested for the '85-86 fiscal year. Now could you give us the rest of the years in one sweeping movement.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I answered that question about 15 minutes ago. The member opposite

simply can't remember the answer. He should look it up in *Hansard* tomorrow.

Mr. Anguish: — Well I maintain to you and to people who are watching, while they're unemployed out there in the province of Saskatchewan today, that the only reason you brought in supplementary budgets in those years is to buy more votes at election time, no other reason other than that — absolutely no other reason.

You bring in a \$2 supplementary budget. You bring in a \$1.1 million supplementary budget. One was for the year where you should have called the election but were scared to, and the next one was for the year where you decided the only way you could get re-elected was to buy the election. And so you put that money into the budgets in order to entice people to vote for you. No question about that — buying votes with the summer employment program.

It would seem that the criteria should be, for you to put money into the program, should be the unemployment levels in the province of Saskatchewan. And it seems strange that you would allow \$10.5 million to be in the program in an election year, and when it's 1988 and unemployment rates are higher than they were during election year, you've cut the program back by \$6.5 million.

My question is to you, Mr. Minister: will you make a commitment here today to have a supplementary budget brought in for the summer employment program to allow those thousands of students out there, that aren't able to find jobs, to get those summer jobs they require; and secondly, to relax your requirements, or to relax the criteria for the program and stop the exclusion of non-profit corporations and municipal levels of government so they're able to qualify for this particular program.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't believe anybody's watching this this afternoon. I can't imagine who would watch this. You know, sometimes my mother watches, and if she's watching now I don't believe she would be any more. She's probably turned it off because this kind of a debate makes her ill. And I'm serious, and probably does that to other people as well.

It's hard to believe, also, that the party opposite who would buy memberships in a nomination in Regina Elphinstone would then stand up, holier than thou, and accuse someone of buying votes. How can you buy a vote? You don't know if these people that you think you are helping . . . you have no proof in a secret ballot that you have bought that vote? But you have in a nomination. You have their card; you write it out; they put their name on it; you know they're a member of the NDP.

So they are experts in buying memberships, but in a democracy it is not possible to buy votes because we still have a secret ballot, Mr. Chairman. So the members opposite who have bought votes and have receipts to show for it — a red receipt or a pink receipt to show that they've bought that vote from that person in Elphinstone — cannot say that it's possible for a government to buy votes when there is no proof of it. They have proof — they

have pink and red receipts that they bought votes in Elphinstone for the nomination. But in a democracy, in a secret ballot, there is no buying of votes. There's the provision of services, and that's what governments do.

Mr. Anguish: — Would the minister consider bringing in a supplementary budget to increase the \$4 million amount in the *Estimates*, and will you look at changing the criteria to allow municipalities and non-profit corporations to qualify for the summer employment program?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, if necessary we'll bring in a supplementary budget, but we'll have to see what the uptake is on the program this year.

Mr. Anguish: — What would the basis be on bringing in a supplementary budget?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, if the number of applications far exceed the budgetary sum, then cabinet would have to consider whether additional sums can be found this year to honour all of those applications. But last year we were within budget and we will see how things go this year. The economy is somewhat better, the price of grain has gone up a little bit. The manufacturing plants in Battlefords are rolling better than ever, and so I know that in Battlefords there should be a lot of jobs despite all the action or inaction of the member opposite in trying to stop bacon plants and trailer manufacturing plans.

But we expect that in most places, including Battlefords, that employment will be better than ever this year and that it should not be necessary to bring in a supplementary budget, but if necessary we will do that.

Mr. Anguish: — Do I gather of all that the minister has basically said that the only way you'll bring in a supplementary budget is if under the current criteria there are more applications that what there are funds that have been estimated for the program? Is that correct, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, that's more or less what I said. I said if there are many applications, then we would have to consider whether the budget should be raised. But you can't simply raise the budget. I can't pluck money from the air. That would have to come from somewhere. It'd have to either come from deficit financing, or it would have to come from a tax increase, or it would have to come from another department. And you know, if the member opposite would want us to take it from important programs in other departments, I don't think that's wise.

So we will examine the situation and see what happens during the course of this spring and summer, and if necessary, we will increase the budget. But that has to be balanced with having to obtain the funds from somewhere.

Mr. Anguish: — How many people between the age of 15 and 25 are unemployed in the province today, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, April 1988, the labour force in that age group is 100,000 of which 85,000 are employed, and approximately 15,000 are listed as unemployed.

Mr. Anguish: — Out of the \$4 million that you're putting into the program — or asking the approval to go into the program this year — out of that \$4 million, how many jobs do you expect to create as a direct result of the Opportunities '88 program in the province, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the government's portion of job creation this summer, from the provincial point of view would, if the budgetary sum is spent, would create about 4,000 jobs this summer, plus the summer jobs that the government hires directly. And since those wages are considerably higher in the government positions, I would expect that that might run in a range of 2,000, but I'd have to check that. So that would be about 6,000.

Then the federal government has a program that will create several thousand more jobs. Plus business and industry, which does the bulk of the hiring in summer, is also benefitting from some improvement in the economy, and we saw that last year when there were a record number of students hired last year.

All the students in north-eastern Saskatchewan that were registered at Manpower had . . . I checked with them and they said that all of those that had registered for the summer had jobs now. There may have been some that registered late, or there might be one or two that didn't get jobs that they wanted, but the . . . when I checked last year in that area, north-east Saskatchewan, which is one of the lowest income areas of Saskatchewan, all the students had jobs as far as Canada Manpower was concerned.

So we had record employment last year, and we anticipate that this year should be as good or better.

Mr. Anguish: — I think your statistics are questionable in terms of your record employment. I do not believe that you had record employment created in the province of Saskatchewan. In fact, some would say that you have one of the worst job creation records across the country.

Now the minister has just gone through a list of Opportunities '88 jobs — the jobs that come as a result of the Public Service Commission funding allocation, jobs under the federal program. In fact, if you could add all together what you were just saying, is that we'd have to import people in that age group of 15 to 25 into the province to fill all these jobs you created, which is totally false.

So how many jobs, Mr. Minister, are you saying will be created for young people in the province of Saskatchewan this year? Because if I took for fact as to what you had just said, they would exceed the 15,000 that you acknowledge by your own statistics are unemployed in the province of Saskatchewan. So how many jobs are there going to be created this year and what do you expect the summer population of student unemployment to be?

(1530)

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I don't think that we'll be importing students into Saskatchewan this year. However, I note that in the province of Manitoba in the past few years they have been importing Mexican labourers to pick vegetables in Manitoba and that they get a special permit. At least one plane load of Mexican workers comes into Manitoba to pick vegetables in that province for the last few years. Hopefully they won't be needed this year.

Now that is the kind of mentality you have under an NDP government where Manitoba's unemployment rate is as high as Saskatchewan. Under the NDP government in Manitoba they would bring in Mexican labourers to do the work, and the government would pay the people in Manitoba to do nothing. So that's the mentality of the NDP. So I don't think we'll be bringing in any out-of-province workers this summer.

But I wanted to give you an example of the NDP thinking that in Canada, when we had the last NDP province, we were importing workers from Mexico to pick our food because in Manitoba they couldn't get their own citizens to pick their own food.

Mr. Anguish: — Well I'm glad you told us about the peon policy in other places in the country. I though we were in particular talking about this . . . I don't appreciate your flippant answers, and I don't think the people who follow this process appreciate it either. If you've got respect for anything, you would think that you would have respect for this institution here. But I don't even think you have respect for that.

What do you think the unemployment figure will be for students this summer in the province of Saskatchewan? That's the question. Could you answer that?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, that's a guess. We're projecting that it should be about the same as last year.

Mr. Anguish: — What do you feel the unemployment percentage will be for young people in the province of Saskatchewan this year? If you can't project that — you say it's about the same as last year — what was last year's? Could you tell us, Mr. Minister? Ask one of your officials instead of getting up and being flippant and arrogant about your answers.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, as far as I know, StatsCanada doesn't differentiate between students and youth out in the market. You're either out in the market or you're not out in the market in that age category.

The figures I have for the last few years, on a yearly basis, for youth unemployment is: 1984, 15 per cent; 1985, 13.9 per cent; 1986, 13.2 per cent; 1987, 12.9 per cent. You can see that the trend shows that youth unemployment is coming down, that if you will go back to the days of the oil and potash boom in Saskatchewan in the mid-'70s, late '70s, that even when unemployment was at 4 per cent, youth unemployment was always double. So it's traditional, and I'm not saying that it is

desirable, that youth unemployment runs at about double of the regular unemployment rate.

There may be many explanations why that is the situation. I would expect over the years, as our society ages and there is a greater demand of young workers as more and more people retire, that the youth unemployment rate should come down over the next 10 years or so. Last year it was 12.7 per cent.

Mr. Anguish: — Well it also comes down to that group because we have an ageing population, Mr. Minister. Regardless from that, in the age group between 15 and 24, the unemployment rate in 1987 was 13.4 per cent. February of '88, this is increased to 15.2 per cent, so I'm not sure where you get these figures from.

Could the Minister tell me: the figures that you just read off, are they a yearly average or are they for a particular month that you had laid out? You started with 15 per cent, 13.9, 13.2, 12.9. What years were those for, and what months were they?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I'll give you an annual average just so people get a picture of the trend and how youth unemployment tracks the regular unemployment rate: 1977, unemployment 4.5 per cent, youth 8.8; 1978 it's 4.9 for youth, 9.2 general — or 9.2 youth, 4.9 general; 1979, general rate 4.2 per cent, the youth 7.8; 1980, youth 4.4, regular 8.5; 1981, youth 4.7, general rate, 8.9; 1982, youth 6.2, general rate 11.4; 1983, youth 7.4, general 14.1 — or, sorry, general 7.4, youth 14.1; 1984 the youth rate was 15 per cent, and the general rate was 8 per cent; 1985 the youth rate was 13.9, the general rate was 8.1; 1986 the rate for youth was 13.2 per cent, and the general rate was 7.7 per cent; 1987 the youth rate was 12.9, and the general rate was 7.3.

You can see that in the boom times of high oil prices, high uranium and potash prices, that the youth unemployment rate was always approximately double of the regular unemployment rate. You can see that recently in the last two years the youth employment rate has been coming down, and it is no longer double the general unemployment rate in the province.

So proportionately, youth unemployment is doing much better in the last few years than it did under the boom times of high energy prices and high uranium and potash prices, and grain price were pretty good in those years as well. So this would give you a clear picture that overall youth unemployment is coming down.

Mr. Anguish: — This is one of the most exasperating experiences I ever had. My colleagues are laughing about it. I have a hard time keeping a train of thought with you, Mr. Minister, because you don't answer any of the questions.

Mr. Minister, the provincial government really has a lack of commitment to job creation in this province. And you're absolutely accurate in one of the statements you made that the youth unemployment does not necessarily mean that they're students. But you put on a program in the summer to employ students, but you do absolutely nothing for the youth unemployed, the unemployed

people in the province of Saskatchewan.

The Access youth employment program, cut, at a cost of 1,145 jobs. The summer employment program for the student, you cut that between '86 and currently by some 62 per cent — a loss of 6,400 student jobs in the province of Saskatchewan.

There's been no winter works program for the last two years. Saskatchewan skills development program received zero per cent increased in the last two years. Saskatchewan employment development program has been cuts by \$4.1 million in the last two years at a cost of some 660 jobs. And you have the audacity to stand up here in this legislature and say you're doing a good job in creating employment for people in the province of Saskatchewan.

It's absolutely not at your initiative; that if there is anything positive to say about the employment picture the stimulus for that certainly does not come from you or the employment development agency in the province of Saskatchewan.

You say in your government that one of the greatest emphasis that we have to place on would be the tourism in the province of Saskatchewan. You know very well that chambers of commerce throughout the province of Saskatchewan rely on the employment program in the summer to staff the tourist booths. The city of North Battleford, I know, has two tourist booths; they can only get one person this year. And that's not from your program, that's from another source. You won't allow the non-profits and the municipal levels of government to qualify for many of your programs.

I'm asking the minister again, if you will change the criteria just as an initial step to show something positive towards employment development in this province, if you will change the criteria for the Opportunities '88 program so that you will allow non-profit organizations in municipal governments to qualify for a meaningful summer employment program, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, with respect to youth unemployment, first of all, the province of Saskatchewan does not stand alone on the area of employment. Unemployment insurance is paid out by the federal government. Federal employment and manpower department has training programs throughout Saskatchewan and Canada that assist youth in locating employment.

We have in our department welfare reform, something the NDP are opposed to. And now they stand up in the House and say, you didn't put more money into welfare reform; you didn't put more money into the Saskatchewan skills development program. They're saying, you reduced the money on welfare reform; you reduced the money in the Saskatchewan employment development program.

The members opposite are opposed to welfare reform and then come here and accuse us of not putting enough money into welfare reform. These are welfare reform programs primarily for unemployed youth. That's

primarily who benefits from these programs.

There are 2,300 people now getting an education and further training under welfare reform. Annually we try to have about two and a half thousand people getting experience and working. These are primarily youth, primarily people under the age of 30.

The NDP believe that we should have job creation but they are opposed to the Saskatchewan home improvement program. They believe we should have job creation but they are opposed to the upgrader in Regina and the Husky upgrader. They are opposed to bacon plants in The Battlefords. They are opposed to Weyerhaeuser projects for a paper mill.

They are against everything that creates any jobs except giving away money. They are in favour of giving away money. Take the taxpayers' money. Here, pay that salary. There is a job for somebody.

Where's this money supposed to come from, Mr. Chairman? That money has to come from taxpayers. But the NDP are opposed to increasing taxes. They're opposed to economic development. They are only for spending money, but have no explanation where the money should come from, except get it from the oil companies. Our royalties are higher than Alberta — quite a lot higher than Alberta.

The NDP had a policy of leaving the oil in the ground, and that's where it was, producing nothing. You can't tax nothing. We are pumping it out and we are taxing it.

In natural gas, Mr. Chairman, the NDP had production royalties of \$1 million a year. That's what they taxed the oil companies on natural gas production. We had revenues of \$16 million per year, sixteenfold. They say, go get it from the resource companies.

We have got gas revenues sixteenfold of what the NDP had for several reasons, the first reason being the NDP wouldn't allow any gas development. The NDP believe in spending money. They talk about not raising taxes, but in Manitoba they showed exactly the opposite. They talk about not having a deficit. In Manitoba they have a gigantic deficit. They say they never had a deficit, and yet they took dividends out of the Sask Power Corporation rather than paying off its debt, so that the people of Saskatchewan would think they bought and paid for a power corporation; had all of that corporation's money sent over to the NDP government to have it spent.

Mr. Chairman, we have almost wasted an entire afternoon trying to educate the members opposite to at least ask an intelligent question. And they believe that they could govern this province? Mr. Chairman, I say to you and to the people of Saskatchewan, what you have seen from the NDP this afternoon scares people. I don't have to scare them the way the NDP go around the scaring them about what we would do. The very fact that the NDP are what they are, scares people, and they have shown us a prime example this afternoon.

I hope they get up and ask another nonsensical question. I hope they get up and show people how they are in the

gutter, Mr. Chairman, I await the NDP to get up and show another example of their incompetence and whey they should never be the government of this province.

(1545)

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to conclude by making a few observations which we're allowed to do in estimates in the Committee of Finance, going through this budgetary process.

And I must say that in my political career this has been the most exasperating experience I've ever had, is being in estimates with this minister this afternoon. Even defeat, electoral defeat at the hands of a Conservative member in a federal election, did not exasperate me to the degree that I am this afternoon by the minister opposite.

He doesn't answer questions. He's not prepared for estimates. He refuses to ask his employees. When he does ask the employees of the department, he doesn't give the answers that they tell him. What have you go to hide, Mr. Minister?

You say you don't scare people, you don't have to scare people around the province. All kinds of people are scared by that individual minister opposite — people who have to work in service industries, women. Anyone in the province that hasn't been touched by you is because you haven't talked to them.

And they're scared of the reaction that comes from the minister opposite. It's just uncaring, unwarranted attacks on individual groups, right from churches to employees. I notice in this article, it says:

We're trying to encourage women not only to be managers, but owners of a business. Bosses, not mere employees.

Well not everybody can be a boss. There always has to be workers. And workers are irrelevant and unmeaningful to you. You don't care about working people, a mere employee.

I would think that you would recognize, as some government that says that business is so important, that you can't have business without employees. Because the employees run the business for you, and it's also those employees that spend money to make the business operate.

We don't export everything from the province. There has to be consumer dollars within the province. And you're not putting that money into the hands of consumers. All you're doing is driving wedges in, trying to separate people all over the province. You're eliminating the middle class by such things as your flat tax. So you have two groups in the province — you'll have those that have and those that don't; you'll have the wealthy and the poor.

And that's increasing every day, every month, every year that passes under your administration. You're making that separation between people in the province of Saskatchewan. You drive wedges between the rural

communities and the urban communities. You try and be divisive — divide and conquer. Very good line for your government, and you've done nothing to dispel that here this afternoon.

In the hypocrisy of the statements that you make in this legislature, you care not for this institution, you care not for government, you care not for the people of Saskatchewan. You put out information that's contrary to the facts. You talk about bacon plants in North Battleford. And yes, they're great, they employ people. Peter Pocklington's great because he brought in new industry.

What's bad is your economic management of the province and the policies that you lack. You talk about not having money to do the programs. Where would the money come from? You've got decent revenues. During most years of your administration since 1982, oil prices were higher than they'd every been in the history of the country. Grain prices might not have been any better, but they certainly weren't any worse. And yet every single year you spend far more money than what you bring into the provincial coffers.

You spend money on your political friends, you spend money on patronage, and you drive the province so far into the hole that generations into the future will have to pay for the debts that you've created in this province. Even when you project a deficit budget, which you've done every single year since you came into office, you don't meet the projections. The debt has always, in every single year, been worse than what you've projected.

And that's why you don't want to bring in the *Public Accounts* for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1986. That's why you don't want to provide information to people in the province. But it's backfiring on you. You saw that in the by-elections and you listened not to what people were saying to you.

I'm anxious to go into a general election with this government pulling the reins and dragging down the province of Saskatchewan. It will be the same as it was in 1934 where your government was decimated then, and it will be again.

Mr. Minister, I'm absolutely shocked at your conduct here this afternoon and the administration of your government.

I'd like to thank your employees for coming out. For the life of me, I don't know why you came. How many are there here today? There's 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 employees of your department here today, and you haven't provided hardly any concrete answers to anything that's been asked of you. We had to drag the information out. For about half an hour I had to place the same question to you to get the answer for two particular years in which I was interested to try and show people the continued incompetence that the policies of your government have created.

So I do thank the employees for coming out this afternoon and the time that you spent here, even though you've wasted your time, because you have a minister that doesn't care what you do. You've got a minister that you

should likely be afraid of. He doesn't care about your jobs; he doesn't care about the program that you administer for the taxpayers in the province of Saskatchewan, but I thank you for coming anyway. I'd like to thank the minister for his time, but it was so unproductive that I hope never to have to appear in estimates again before the minister opposite. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 9 inclusive agreed to.

Item 10

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, when we were discussing information related to item 10 a couple of days ago, you were less than co-operative in providing information to explain the rationale for the increase.

Item 10 indicates that the payments to the property management corporation for your department increased from a budget last year of \$1,292,300 to \$1,477,500 this year, an increase of \$185,200, and 14.3 per cent in percentage terms. I ask you, Mr. Minister, to please justify to the Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan why it is that you're paying 14.3 per cent more to the property management corporation this year than last?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I answered that question a prior day, but primarily there's extra services, including postage on the Saskatchewan income plan, renovations and printing services.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, then will you please specify what the changes in postage have been, first of all?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — No, I will not.

The total of those expenditures is \$185,000. The Saskatchewan income plan had an increase in postage costs spending out information to senior citizens. The money goes to the property management corporation, as I explained a day or two ago. That money then is used by them to provide the services and, once the services have been provided, if they have any profit left over they return it to the consolidated fund.

So what they charge us is not relevant to the taxpayers' cost. They try to charge us market value in order that we budget carefully and accordingly. But what they charge us is charged back to the taxpayer, and we get out budget from the taxpayer, so there's no net cost to the taxpayer.

If they raised our rent and fees by 14.3 per cent, which they did, that is not necessarily a cost to the taxpayer, but will reflect in the estimates on the property management corporation, and you can ask them those questions.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, that's one of the most ridiculous statements I've ever heard. The costs have gone up 14.3 per cent — \$185,000 — and that's not an increased cost to the taxpayer? And you refuse to substantiate the rationale for that in this House.

Now let me repeat the question again: would you please advise the Assembly of the rationale, by category, of those increases in costs to the property management corporation. This whole creation has been a frustrating bit of financial subterfuge on the part of you and other ministers of the Crown. It's impossible to get information about the cost of operations related to what's currently being delivered now by the property management corporation.

Let me ask you one more time: would you please provide some very simple information to explain the cost of services, and the difference between last year and this year, that are assigned to you by the property management corporation?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the property management corporation has got a policy of charging us market prices for the rent, and market prices for their services, and that's what they did last year. That caused an increase because we were paying the market prices. And the members opposite might have a hard time understanding the concept of market prices. I know they don't believe in markets. But that's the reason that our costs were increased by the property management corporation — we were paying fair market value for the services received.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister. And I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you can break the \$185,200 down into the different components, the different main components, of expenditure that you've estimated here, and send it over later; it's not necessary to have it right at this moment.

And while you're at it, could the minister break the \$429,000 that's shown in the *Supplementary Estimates* ending March 31, 1988, for Human Resources, Labour, Employment, under item 20 — \$429,000. If the minister could provide a breakdown on that figure as well, according to main components.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I won't be giving a further breakdown on the question asked by the member for Moose Jaw North, repeated by the member for, I believe, Saskatoon Westmount. But I would like a further clarification of the \$400,000 figure that he was referring to. Could he refer again to which vote he was referring to, so we can look it up and try to get him the answer?

Mr. Brockelbank: — Yes, I will refer to the *Supplementary Estimates* ending March 31, 1988, page 13, vote 20, item 20. Payments to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation is the heading, and it's \$429,000. And I would like that broken down as to main components of the figure.

With regard to the minister's first comment, Mr. Chairman, could the minister specify why he will not break the 185,200 increase to the property management corporation down into the main components? I'd like to know the reason why he says he won't do that.

(1600)

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, that question would more appropriately be asked of the property management corporation. The provision for payments to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation is for accommodation, mail, photographic services, records management services. These are all contracted together. The subvote includes a cost of departmental mail service, postage, use of the corporation's photographic services agency, management of records, storage and retrieval service, and all accommodation costs for facilities under the property management corporation's mandate. The accommodation services provided include such items as rent, operating and maintenance charges, office furniture rentals, space improvements, telephone co-ordination, and management program equipment, and any taxes allocated to the properties that the corporation may have paid taxes on.

So it's a rather complicated calculation. You could ask those questions to the property management corporation. I can't break it down any further than that.

Mr. Brockelbank: — I want to, Mr. Chairman, ask the minister a question with regard to the manner in which he is billed for these services by the property management corporation. It's under his department name, and he ... it's listed as an expenditure of \$429,900.

Does he get a bill from the property management corporation which says, you owe us \$429,000, pay it? Or is there something else on the bill that says what it's for? Or does the property management corporation just list all the things the minister said and say, that's what it's for? And if so, how does the minister determine whether he is being charged an economic, a competitive price for the service he's buying from the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation? How does he satisfy himself? How do his officials, his administrative officials, satisfy themselves that they're getting the best possible price on the service that they're purchasing?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, they invoice us monthly for the standard charges. These are negotiated between Finance, my department, and the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

If I had my choice, I may not deal with the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, but I know the members opposite are opposed to privatization and contracting out of services, so I do deal with them. And I have to accept that they are running that part of government, that Crown corporation, efficiently and are charging me reasonable prices. But I would be perfectly prepared to tender and contract out to the business community in general. If the members opposite could advocate that policy, I certainly would look at it carefully.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, I accept with a certain hesitation the minister's blind faith in the property management corporation. It's his corporation. He set it up; he established it. He has now lost control of what it costs him to run that segment of his operations. He has a blind faith in the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

I don't understand how a minister can operate his

department and negotiate with the property management corporation. He said he's one of the partners in the negotiations; he, Finance and the minister in charge of the property management corporation. So their officials must get together and determine what these costs are.

All I want is a simple explanation of how the minister determines that he's getting value for his dollar that he's spending — not his dollar, our dollar that he's spending. And that seems to me relatively simple that the minister should be able to produce that. Because I've read in the property management ... Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation report that this is going to be a very new and efficient operation. And I want to know what the efficiencies are that the minister is a witness to and how determines that.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — It's virtually impossible for any minister to come in and to answer details on a subvote related to the car or the government services argument. Ever since I've been around politics, government services have been renting space and buying the buildings for departments.

If the member opposite thinks that the rent is too much, or somehow is building too many buildings, or there are not enough buildings, you ask government services. You don't ask the minister. That has been a long-standing policy in this Assembly. And I quote from the Leader of the Opposition in *Hansard*, March 21, 1979, page 904 to 907.

So that was a policy of the Leader of the Opposition when he was in estimates, and I think it's only fair that if he was accurate at that time, I will accept that same policy.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the minister neglects to say one thing. The rather obvious conclusion here is that when the department of government services was doing these functions for the government departments, they didn't charge them for it. And if they did charge them, they knew what the bill was.

But the government department ... property management corporation is charging this department. That was the whole theory behind the creation of the property management corporation, that there would be an accounting, and departments would be charged what they expended for rent, for postage, for whatever. And the minister has failed to show us that. So therefore, the objective of the property management corporation is not being met by the relationship to this particular department. And the minister is not able to say what each of these items cost his department.

Responsible efficiency, that's what the minister of the property management corporation said when the property management corporation was set up. And I intend to talk to him about that later, and I'm not lecturing the minister about that. I'm just saying that as a minister who is subject to that kind of a mandate from the minister in charge of the property management corporation, he should know; he should know.

This has got nothing to do with privatization. They set up the property management corporation as an alternative to

the system that was there. And the minister should be able to assure this House, with figures, that the objectives are being met by that agency for his department.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, if the Leader of the Opposition was correct in what he said in 1979, then I'm correct in what I'm doing today. And if the Leader of the Opposition was wrong in what he said in 1979, then I am wrong today. If the member opposite is saying that his leader is wrong and didn't know what he was doing in 1979, then I am wrong. If he's saying his leader was correct in 1979, then I am correct in what I am doing today. I leave it up to him to decide, Mr. Chairman.

Item 10 agreed to.

Items 11 to 13 inclusive agreed to.

Item 14 — Statutory.

Item 15 — Statutory

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chairman, item no. 15, Members of Executive Council, shows that the department charged an expenditure of \$28,300 per year. I ask, Mr. Minister, if that full amount is moneys that are received by you as minister responsible for this department. I note as well, Mr. Minister, that there is no equivalent expenditure for the Department of Social Services for which you are also the minister responsible.

Would you please explain, Mr. Minister, first of all, if you personally receive the full amount of \$28,300 for minister responsible for this department, and why you don't receive anything for minister responsible for the Department of Social Services.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, that's probably the best question I've heard today. I believe I get \$28,300 for holding two portfolios. And if \$28,300 shows up in the Social Services *Estimates*, then I believe that I am owed another \$28,300. And I can assure you that I received only one \$28,300. And it really makes me think, is why do I do this for \$28,300? It really makes you wonder, and it's because I remember what it was like living under an NDP government, and I fear what it would be like living under a future NDP government. And so, that's why I do that. I certainly don't do it for the money.

But if you want to give me another \$28,300 for each portfolio — right now you're getting a bargain; you're getting a minister for \$14,150 in each department, and I think the taxpayers are getting their money at \$14,300 for a minister of a department.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, if you want to remove the beans from your ears, I pointed out that there is no equivalent line in the Department of Social Services. And I simply ask, Mr. Minister: are you of the view that by the taxpayers paying you \$28,300, in addition to your other MLA benefits, to be minister responsible for Human Resources, Labour and Employment, that they're getting full value for their dollar? And are you also of the view that when you receive absolutely nothing for Minister of

Social Services, that once again you're getting what you're worth in that department as well?

Item 16 agreed to.

Vote 20 agreed to.

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

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, at this stage I would like to thank the management people in my department who have been here with me today, who have not only been extremely helpful today, but have done a very efficient and competent job in managing this department with me in the past year. And I also want to thank my colleagues who have given me a lot of support in the past year in the efficient management of this department.

I want the members opposite and the public to note that this department practises what it preaches, and that around me there are managers, both male and female, and I'm pleased to say that within reach here I have more female managers than I have male managers. This is a government that practises equal opportunity at the management level.

And I would say that these people are not here because they are male or female; they are here because they are competent, and I appreciate very much the competence they have shown. They have been a credit to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan for the past year, and I thank them very much, very sincerely, for what they have done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1615)

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I note that maybe you don't practise entirely what you preach, because as I survey the officials here, that not all minorities are represented, and you may want to work on that in the years to come.

I want to, on behalf of the opposition, thank the officials who have attended through this review of the expenditures of the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment.

The task that you have in serving the people of Saskatchewan is a very important one and a very challenging one, particularly in these times. And I want to thank the officials for the work that they put in in preparing for these estimates and for doing their best to provide the minister with information to respond to the questions of the opposition on behalf of the interests of the people of Saskatchewan.

**Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditures
Social Services
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 36**

Item 1

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

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, I want to start by introducing the officials in my department. There are several of them present. I'll just introduce the ones that are near me that might be on camera at this time. I have with me on my left, and your right, Stan Sojonky, the deputy minister of Social Services. I have on my right, your left, Henry Kutarna, the assistant deputy minister of Social Services; and directly behind me, Dr. Allan Hansen, assistant deputy minister of Social Services.

I know that it is traditional for ministers, on occasion, to give a review of the department's activities in the past year and the successes in the department. And I will do that, but very, very briefly, Mr. Chairman, because most of what my department has done is already public knowledge and has been scrutinized by the opposition and their friends and their coalitions for the last year or two. And so everybody knows exactly what's been going on in my department. We have no secrets. My department has people that tell everybody everything, so that everything is usually public in my department.

I want to say, though, that we have continued on the process of welfare reform in the last year, and that has been quite successful. There are at present, Mr. Deputy Chairman, 5 per cent fewer people on welfare than there were a year ago, and they are receiving, on average . . . the average sum paid out at a record amount per case this year as compared to other years. So we have fewer people on welfare receiving more money per person than they ever have in the history of Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman.

So we believe that while welfare reform has been fair, it has also put more money in the hands of the people that are truly needy. And we're rather proud of the progress that's been made in welfare reform.

On the family services side of the department, we are pleased with the progress that has been made with respect to the mentally retarded and community living in that division. We have made considerable improvements in foster care. Overall, the department is providing more and better services to people on the family services side of the department.

We will continue to make improvements in that area and we will continue with welfare reform, but so far I'm very pleased, and I might say that the public as a whole that I meet is very pleased, with the improvements at the Department of Social Services.

We will try our best to continue to make improvements and provide the best service available to the people of Saskatchewan through this department. And with that, I'm ready to answer any questions that may be relevant.

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I want to welcome your officials here to the legislature today. We look forward, on this side of the House, to debating Social Services policy with you.

We have some fundamental disagreements with you, and we don't share your view, Mr. Minister, that the people of Saskatchewan support the initiatives that you've taken,

either in the family services area or the work-for-welfare area. And we may as well get right to the central issues, Mr. Minister.

We on this side of the Assembly are shocked, Mr. Minister. First of all, we do not share the view, that you have espoused, that your policies have supported families and enhanced the life of families in the province of Saskatchewan.

On the contrary, Mr. Minister, we are of the view — and we will demonstrate that during these estimates — that your policies have increased the stress on families in this province; that you have systematically eroded the support services that are available to families in the province in Saskatchewan; that the result of that, Mr. Minister, has been that we now have the second highest poverty rate among families in Canada, in the province of Saskatchewan. Now only the province of Newfoundland has a higher rate of poverty among its families than the province of Saskatchewan, and that's a record that no government can be proud of.

Mr. Minister, we've seen under . . . as a result of the policies of the Department of Social Services, the cuts in social assistance, the freeze in the minimum wage — with the exception of one 25 cent increase in the past six years — we've seen, as a result of that, record number of persons at food banks in the province of Saskatchewan. And in effect, Mr. Minister, we are witnessing in this province, the crumbling of the social safety net that residents of Saskatchewan had long come to appreciate.

Now, Mr. Minister, my first specific question to you relates to the issue of incentives, or disincentives, for people who are on social assistance to work in the province of Saskatchewan. And you have tried — we would argue, falsely — to suggest that you are creating incentives and assistance for people who are on social welfare to get jobs. And we fundamentally disagree that your policies have proved to be any sort of an incentive or any sort of help for people on social welfare to get jobs. On the contrary, Mr. Minister, we argue on this side of the House that your policies have, in effect, created obstacles to people obtaining employment in this province.

And I want to just briefly give you three examples. First of all, Mr. Minister, you cut the travel allowance for social assistance recipients in the province of Saskatchewan. You, in effect, eliminated it for most people right now who live on social welfare in this province. So, Mr. Minister, someone who is attempting to seek work in this province and who is on social welfare, now has no money for travelling about to do a job search or to go to job interviews.

In the same way, Mr. Minister, if someone on social assistance now, as a result of your new regulations, obtains part-time employment effective at the beginning of the year, you have changed the policies of the department so that people are able to save less of their part-time earnings than they previously were.

I just give the example of a single mother who's working, who's on social assistance and who get a part-time job in which she earns \$500 a month. If that single mother has

two children, before the changes that you made to your recent regulations, Mr. Minister, she was able to earn \$223.50 a month and keep that, of the \$500 of original earnings. She was able to add \$223.50 a month to her monthly earnings. Now that single mother and two children can only keep \$160.

And the third example, Mr. Minister, that I want to give you is that people who are working now and who get part-time or full-time jobs in an attempt to get off social welfare are able to save less as a result of having to pay more for day care.

Mr. Minister, as a result of your policies — again, and I'll stay with the single mother with two children — that single mother with two children, Mr. Minister, five or six years ago would have had a day-care bill, per child, of about \$30 a month.

For the last six years, Mr. Minister, you've frozen day-care subsidies and they've remained at a maximum of \$235 a month while the average cost of day care in the province of Saskatchewan has risen from about \$250 to \$260 a month, per child, to about \$340 to \$350 a month per child. The subsidy of \$235 a month has remained unchanged.

So, Mr. Minister, that single mother with two children now, instead of paying \$25 to \$30 a child for day care, is paying over \$100 a month per child for day care. If she's on minimum wage, Mr. Minister, instead of paying \$60 a month for day care for her two children, she's now paying \$200.

Now, Mr. Minister, those are three examples of the kinds of disincentives for people to get off social assistance and to go out into the work place that you have very consciously created as a result of your government policies.

And my first question to you is simply this: will you remove those three disincentives to work that I have just mentioned — will you restore travel allowances for social assistance recipients; will you allow social assistance recipients to keep more of their part-time earnings when they do get work so that they can get financially ahead; and will you raise day-care subsidies so that a working mother can . . . doesn't have to offset day-care fees when she's only making 8 to \$900 a month on minimum wage?

(1630)

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all, with reference to poverty, the opposition quotes statistics. I mean, people know when they are poor or they are not poor, and they judge that in Canada not be a question of whether they are in need of food or whether they are in need of shelter or whether they are in need of clothing, but they compare themselves to their neighbours to say, I am poorer than my neighbour, or I'm lucky I'm richer than my neighbour. That's how they compare things.

These things are relevant to each other and how other people in the country are living. And when you calculate the poverty line as calculated by the members opposite as

they would like to accept it, you are looking not at what a person needs to live on, but the average of what everyone has to live on. And then you say those people that under this average are poor, and those people that are over that average are not poor.

And so they get calculations like a family of four living under 19,900-and-some dollars per year is in poverty. Yes, I will agree that that family is poor compared to people making 40,000 or 50,000 per family, and I would agree that it's difficult to live on \$20,000 with a family of four, but I will not accept that that family is living in absolute poverty.

I mean, they are in a different situation that a family that's living on \$12,000 per year. There's quite a difference between living on 12,000 and living on 20,000, yet their figure goes up to just about that \$20,000 level.

And they like to throw around statistics, you know, statistics on how many people are poor. There has to be a different way of calculating it. There has to be a calculation based on your basic needs. And I can get statistics that will show that 20 years ago if you take statistics as a percentage of family income spent on food, that now families are spending half as much on food as they were 20 years ago.

And so you start comparing those kind of statistics and where do you draw the line? What is poverty? I agree that it varies from different region of the country to different region. But you can go into parts of Canada and people making \$20,000 a year with a family of four do not consider themselves poor. And you can go into parts of my constituency, most of the rural part of my constituency, and you will find farm families that have less cash to live on farming than they would receive if they were on welfare. And yet, they know they are poor, but they don't consider themselves to be living in poverty.

So we want to raise the income of everyone as much as possible, but I don't think the members opposite should throw around statistics simply for political purposes, trying to categorize people as poor or not poor.

Now that is the kind of thing that the NDP try to do. And if you allowed the NDP to make their judgements on what is poor, everybody who made less than \$95,000 a year would be poor, and compare it to people that make more than \$95,000 per year.

And then, you know, you have to compare it to family incomes. There are members of the opposition over there have family incomes in excess of \$100,000 a year and yet they rail on about the poor. Do they know what poverty is? They would consider themselves poor with incomes in excess of \$100,000 a year because the president of CPR might make \$240,000 a year. Therefore their \$109,000 per family income, as the member for Lakeview would have, she would consider herself poor.

Now I do not consider myself poor. I was once poor; I'm no longer poor. I would hope that we could get many more people with higher incomes. But what is really disappointing is that even when people get their incomes up to \$40,000 a year, the NDP still try to convince them

that they are poor. And even when they get their incomes up to \$60,000 a year, the NDP still try to convince them that they are poor.

So what the NDP have here is such a negative attitude that fosters poverty. And people have to have a positive attitude and then they can escape the cycle of poverty. And what the NDP have is a poverty mentality. They have a negative mentality. You have to have a positive mentality. You have to believe that you can better yourself, and you will be able to.

Now we will help in every way possible. For example, we have welfare reform — which the NDP are opposed to — and under welfare reform since 1984, 8,500 people have been able to get training and education through the skills development program of welfare reform. The members opposite are opposed to welfare reform, but they don't acknowledge that 8,500 people have been able to get jobs. And I get letters every day from people who have taken these programs, and write and thank me. And it's grateful to see that these people now have a positive attitude.

An Hon. Member: — Can you table the letters?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Now if the NDP had their way . . . They say, can I table the letters? Yes, with the names taken off of them, I could table the letters. I'll gather them up for you, and one of these days I'll table them all for you *en masse* so that you can see these letters of thank-you from people who are grateful because they do not have negative attitudes like the NDP — people who once had negative attitudes and have now taken the programs are thankful, thankful that they have been able to participate in welfare reform and are now independent.

But the NDP's policy is: no, keep these people dependent. If they're dependent on government, then they are dependent on us, and we will have them dependent and they will have to vote for us. Because they can't possibly get out from under the socialist theory of being independent, because independence is inconsistent with socialism. That's the problem that the NDP have.

So we have really a disagreement in principle and we will continue to have a disagreement in principle, because we believe in independence and they believe in dependence. That's the difference between socialism and free enterprise.

We also believe that you should help the needy in a system that is based on a competitive system. Not everyone will be able to compete fully, and so therefore you have to help those people who cannot compete in such a competitive system. But certainly you don't discourage those people who can compete from competing.

And so we believe that everyone should be given an opportunity with welfare reform. We've given 8,500 people an opportunity to become independent. In addition, the Canadian Jobs Strategy in two years has added another 1,900 people to that independence category. In addition, the New Careers Corporation has

provided job training, on-the-job training, building in parks, building roads, operating heavy equipment, building marinas, improving the environment of Saskatoon along the river.

And the members opposite called me a slaver for having people going out and cleaning up the parks in Saskatoon. Somehow there is something wrong when a Conservation puts people to work improving the environment. He is called a slaver. If an NDP improves the environment, that is a surprise, because how would they do it if they don't have anybody working at the project? So those are the kinds of inconsistencies we have.

In addition, we have complaining that there's no incentive for people to work under our welfare reform, and the NDP asked for travel money. They want an incentive for people to travel, not an incentive for people to work. We still do have travel for those people who are in the greatest need of travel, for those people who actually need it. We have travel for medical reasons. We have travel to school. We have travel for the handicapped. We have travel for special needs. If you need travel money to go to a job interview, and it's a legitimate job interview and it's out of the city, we consider that a special need.

Now we don't give it in all cases, because in some cases people simply want to travel to another city, but if there is a job there for them to get an interview at, we've paid it. I know personally of instances in my constituency where it's been paid to people to travel as far as Edmonton for a job interview and back, I might say. So we have those kind of travel allowances.

In addition, when we made out latest welfare reform we raised the fee to people who were taking training by \$30 to assist with their travel. We raised it to \$30 per month. They make a big noise about a bus pass at \$29. We have a travel allowance of \$30 in addition to the regular welfare. We're paying people to go to school. We're paying people to go to training. We're paying them travel to get there. In addition, we raised the rates for families — \$13 for individuals, \$13 for children, per child, \$17 per adult.

That was an increase in rates. Saskatchewan now has the highest welfare rate for children of any province in Canada. The NDP tried to come up and say: oh, they are starving children. Yes, there may be hungry children in Saskatchewan, but when we have the highest welfare rates for children, I defy the NDP to explain how the highest rates for children on welfare cause hunger for children.

We have to co-operate, the NDP and I have to co-operate, in finding a way to have that money turned into food that ends up in the stomachs of those hungry children. And the NDP would propose a school lunch program to feed all children. Well it's not the responsibility of my department to feed children twice. We pay the highest rates in Canada for food for children. I do not see why we should then in addition have another program.

Yes, I have compassion and we would like to work out programs to make sure that all children in Saskatchewan

are getting proper food. But simply paying more money to all parents does not guarantee that all children will get proper food. And some of that is not related to income, but related to parental responsibilities.

Now the members opposite are the party of rights. They always talk about rights, but they never talk about responsibilities. Somebody has to have the responsibility of making sure that that money becomes food that ends up in the tummies of little children. I also am concerned that in some cases that is not happening, and I'm looking at ways to make sure that that money goes to the children.

I have met with the Regina school boards. We are working on pilot projects in order to come up with systems in the school so that not only will these children receive food, but we can be certain that they are safe at home, that they are not dangerously out on the street at all hours, so that we can be certain that there is no abuse. Because it seems to me someone who would not feed their children is neglecting their children, and I have to make sure that children are not neglected. It goes beyond the actual feeding of children.

I can close my eyes. We can afford to go out, set up a truck in any location in Saskatchewan and have guaranteed food for all children that come along, but that does not guarantee that they are not being neglected after they are fed. It does not guarantee that they are receiving the kind of guidance they need to encourage them to have a positive outlook so that they can escape the poverty cycle and become full participating members of our society.

And we are looking at new ways of doing that. We are constantly thinking of ways of assisting people to escape the welfare cycle, escape the poverty cycle, because we believe that those children who are born equal should try to have an equal break in trying to become self-sufficient in the future.

But it's quite a problem, Mr. Speaker. It's quite a problem because not all of these children have had the guidance that some of us have been fortunate enough to have had. I personally had the assistance of grandparents and parents, and learned a value system that served me very well. And I'm not trying to impose my value system on all of the people of all of the parents of Saskatchewan, of all of the children. However, everyone has to learn some value system. And at the very minimum it has to be a system of values that says I will be self-sufficient if possible. And you have to be educated that way; you have to be raised that way.

We have to try to help parents do better with their children to break this cycle that is becoming a blight on our society — that our crime rates are going up, that we have all kinds of social problems. And the social problems cannot purely be cured by money alone. My department realizes that and has taken measures to try to assist.

With respect to day care, Mr. Chairman. Since our government came to office, we have increased the expenditure on day care by 113 per cent. We have not changed the qualification rates, so that they have

remained the same as under the NDP. We still have a system where it's possible to make over \$30,000 per year and still receive day care subsidy. What we're trying to do is gear the day care subsidies to the neediest people, and we've been doing that quite a lot in the last while.

(1645)

We are now at the stage where 80 per cent of the subsidies are paid to single-parent families. We feel that single-income family, that single-parent family is the family that needs the help the most. In the other 20 per cent of cases, we are talking about families that in most cases are single-income families, but two-parent families.

We are trying to target that assistance to where it's needed the most. And in addition, while we are reviewing the day care system totally in conjunction with the agreements that have been signed with the federal government — and they're being finalized right now — we will try to develop a system that provides accessibility for all people.

Right now the NDP have given us in this province a system that provides for accessibility only for those people who have low incomes. If you have higher incomes, you can't get accessibility to day care centres, because the NDP had a system of keeping the costs of day care down by restricting the licences they would issue. So every space they would allow and allocate was subject to subsidy. And so in order to keep the subsidy costs down, the NDP wouldn't license more spaces.

So even if you could pay the full cost of day care, you couldn't get into a licensed space because the NDP had a policy — which I am now going to re-examine — of allowing those people who can afford day care, allowing them to get into licensed spaces and pay for their day care, and assisting those people who can't afford day care with subsidies so that they can have day care as well. Now that was the NDP's tricky little scheme, that they would pay subsidies but they wouldn't allow accessibility to those people who could afford it.

Now, with a federal Conservative government, we are allowing people choices and we are allowing them accessibility, and I have to adjust our day care laws to suit that purpose. And what we will be doing is taking into account, taking into recognition, the fact that the federal government has raised the amount that you can deduct per child off of income tax for child care from \$2,000 to \$4,000, I believe, to a maximum of 8. Is that right? Maximum of 8. Is that correct? Yes. Four per child, a maximum of 8 per family, is it? If I'm not correct, I will correct myself. But my recollection is that it's a maximum of 8,000 per family or 4,000 per child.

So that has to be taken into account, because the average day care rates in Saskatchewan are now \$300 per month, which is \$3,600 per year. If you are a family that can afford to pay your day care fees fully without subsidy, you can deduct them entirely from your income tax. If you bring someone into your home to provide this service, you can deduct that from your income tax up to \$4,000 per child. If you send your child out to a neighbour, you can deduct that, up to \$4,000, per child. That is giving accessibility to those people who can afford to pay their

own way.

In addition, we will look at more spaces so that not only will people be able to have access to day care, they will be able to have access to day care closer to their own homes so that they don't drive all over cities looking for a day care space that's licensed. So you will see many changes, Mr. Deputy Chairman, in day care in the near future. I would say they will be improvements, and they will be popular because they will give to the people what they haven't had before — accessibility to day care. And that is part of the policy of this government.

So over all, Mr. Chairman, I advise the members opposite that they will see many continuous improvements in day care; they will see continuous welfare reform; they will see continuous emphasis on job training, or re-education because we believe people have to be given an opportunity to become self-sufficient where possible.

And they will also see, Mr. Chairman, improvement in the care for those people who can't help themselves. The members opposite will also see initiatives and employment for the handicapped, real employment. To use the socialist buzz-word, meaningful employment — they will see that in the very near future.

So I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the future for people who need assistance will be very good, and the future for those people who want to become self-sufficient will also be very good. Thank you.

Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Chairman, in that long diatribe from the Minister of Social Services, I note, Mr. Chairman, that first of all the minister did nothing to rebut the argument that the loss in the travel allowance is making it very difficult for people to travel about to do a job search in a urban centre — very, very difficult. How are people supposed to look for work, Mr. Chairman, when they can't even get a bus pass through social assistance any more to go out to job interviews or to do a regular job search within the city?

And what sort of financial opportunity is left for people, Mr. Chairman, who are on social assistance, to go out and get part-time work when three-quarters of what they earn on a part-time basis is deducted from their social assistance cheque before — you know, from their monthly income, so that really all they have is enough money to cover baby-sitting costs and additional travel costs, Mr. Chairman.

What kind of help is there for working mothers who try to get either part-time or full-time work, or for working families when, if they're making 8 or \$900 a month, as a result of the freeze in day care subsidies for the last six years, Mr. Chairman, they're losing more than \$200 a month that they're having to pay out in child care, when six years ago they wouldn't have been paying out more than 50 to \$60 a month if you had a single mother and two children in the home.

And I note that the minister very intentionally ignored each of those points. The point that I want to make, Mr. Chairman, is that this government, contrary to what it claims, is trying to victimize the poor; is trying to, instead

of assisting people in becoming independent, which we strongly support, is doing everything possible to create obstacles to people who want to get off welfare and who want to be in the work place and who can't because of the policies of this government.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I also want to comment briefly on the point that the minister made with respect to the question of poverty. Obviously this minister rejects the poverty line as established by his own Conservative counterparts in Ottawa and as established by organizations such as Statistics Canada or the Canadian Council on Social Development.

The minister's claim that somehow poverty is relative, Mr. Speaker, is a ludicrous claim. The reality, Mr. Minister, is that people are poor in this province in large part because the minimum wage has not been increased, because social assistance rates have been frozen by your government, contrary to your claim.

Mr. Minister, we're not talking about people being poor because they make 25 to \$30,000 a year as you tried to claim. We talking about people, Mr. Chairman, who — single employables on social assistance — are making, at a maximum, \$372 a month. Many of them, Mr. Chairman, are only making 150 to \$200 a month under the policies of this government. And we're talking about people, Mr. Minister, who when they work full time on minimum wage are not making more than 8 to \$9,000 a year, and in many cases supporting one, two, or three dependants on that. That's the kind of poverty, Mr. Minister, that we're talking about, and there's nothing relative about that. That just leaves people with not enough to live on.

Now, Mr. Minister, I want to get into asking some very specific questions of you, and the first one relates to your work-for-welfare program. And specifically, Mr. Minister, I want to say that I, as Social Services critic, do not have a problem with the Saskatchewan skills development program, which I think has some merit to it.

My problem, Mr. Minister, is with your work-for-welfare program, and my first question to you is this. I want to ask you, sir, how many people who are on your work-for-welfare program now are single employables who, under your work-for-welfare program, are working for two weeks and then have two weeks off, with the result that their salary in the course of a month is only \$360?

Can you tell me, Mr. Minister, how many single employables are now engaged in work-for-welfare programs, either through the New Careers Corporation or through the Saskatchewan Employment Development Agency, and are being limited to two weeks on, two weeks off — \$360 a month?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Chairman, the bulk of the jobs in welfare reform are full-time jobs rather than part-time. On the Meewasin project and the Par Industries, we've had about 350 people on those projects, plus there are a few smaller ones. We don't have the details on the smaller ones. I know that the Meadow Lake workshop for the mentally retarded — and they don't like to use the

word mentally handicapped, but they use the terminology, the association for the mentally retarded. That workshop has got people assisting there on a two weeks on, two weeks off, and I toured it recently and they were very happy with the program and asked us to continue it.

And so it would be probably 350 to a maximum of about 400, but I'd only be guessing at the figures on how many the total would be when you added up the small ones, but we don't have the small ones — the two larger ones at 350. You do, on those projects, earn more working those two weeks than you would be paid if you were strictly on welfare, and you still have two weeks to yourself which you can spend looking for other employment.

So I don't think that is very harsh to ask somebody to put in two weeks of community service, and my colleagues point out that people like it. Yes, one of the complaints we have is that people would like to work full time, that they were a little bored in those other two weeks. But we feel that they should be out looking for other employment during those two weeks and still doing community service work during the two weeks that they are on the part-time job.

With respect to some of the other issues that you raise — single employables. I'll give you an example in your city of Saskatoon that we have to also track down the statistics, as you would call them, that the numbers that we are paying out there, we have to track them down from time to time and encourage them to look for work and assist them as well in looking for work.

And what we've got now is a job-search training program. And in the first pilot project that we started in Saskatoon — this is very new, but it's been in the paper and you've criticized it in the past — but I want you to know that in the first pilot project we telephone 50 people, because we had a class of 20 starting.

And when we telephoned 50 people, we were able to locate 34 of those people. the other 16 we could not find. So what would you expect us to do with 16 people we cannot find at all? And so we held their cheques until they came for them, and we're doing a calculation on which of those came for the cheques. We can certainly not send the cheque out of the person does not live at the address.

So then we had 34 people that we found. And out of the 34, 20 were interested in learning how to get a job, and the other 14 had various reasons why they were not interested or could not take a job training course. So out of 50 we had 20 people who said they would come on Monday morning to start the job-search training course which starts at 8 a.m. in the morning, includes a lunch for you at the expense of the department, and concludes at 5 p.m. in a normal working day for three weeks, for a total of 15 days.

So in the city of Saskatoon 20 people agreed they would show up on Monday morning; however, only 13 arrived. And so we started with 13 and we filled in; we phoned some more people and finally got the course going.

And they have stringent rules just like you'd have to learn

on any job. If you miss more than twice without excuse, you are terminated from the course. And we find that the course has been very positive. And now we've had another pilot project in Regina, and out of the first 89 people, when I last checked, 39 had already received full-time jobs under this program.

So people who are taking it are benefitting. And we had one girl who hasn't found a job yet but would like to take the course again, because for the first time in her life she has had some purpose and she has had some direction. She asked if she could take it again. And I won't discourage my people from letting her take it again because, you know, some of these people now feel that they have a purpose; they're useful; they feel good about themselves; they know how to do resumes.

(1700)

There was one gentleman who graduated after three days because on the second day he cut his hair and washed his clothes and found a job as a welder at a very good wage that he could live on. And so we've had some very good success stories. We've had people that have gone over to Ipsco and are making . . . two of them are now making, I believe, in the range of \$13 per hour. And so we've had some very good success stories out of these kind of welfare reform programs.

And I just want to point that out to the members opposite that you have to make an effort as a government to give people these kind of opportunities to show them there is a different way.

And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I await the next question.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.