

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the Assembly and to the members, some 19 grade 10 students from the Muenster High School. They are accompanied by their teach, Paul Reist, student teacher Jacquie Ackerman, and chaperon, Audrey Maier.

I want to extend a welcome to the students for attending. I will be meeting with you a little later in the afternoon about 3 o'clock. I would ask all members to join in extending a welcome to the students.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to introduce to this Assembly a delegation representing the College Mathieu at Gravelbourg. They are seated in the public gallery behind me. Include in the delegation are Madam Irene Chabot, president of College Mathieu; Monsieur Armand Dion, vice-president, and Monsieur Florent Bilodeau, the director-general of the college, together with a number of students from the college, Mr. Speaker.

Members of this Assembly will know of the tragedy that struck the college this weekend in the devastating fire that reduced to rubble this venerable institution of some 70 years of history in the educational and cultural fabric of Saskatchewan. I know we would all want to wish the College Mathieu every success in their drive to rebuild their institution. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming this delegation from College Mathieu to the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Monsieur le Président, l'opposition officielle voudrait dir aux étudiants du Collège Mathieu, bienvenue à Regina, et nous sommes désolés de leur feu terrible. Bienvenue.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with real pleasure that I introduce to the Assembly 22 students. These are a little different than the ordinary student which come to the Assembly. These are students who are learning English as a second language. As the name implies, almost all of these people were born in a country other than Canada, and most have come here fairly recently. In many cases this is their first exposure of any sort to parliamentary democracy.

I always find their comments afterwards interesting and enlightening. I look forward to meeting with you following this question period. I know all members will want to join with me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you, and to members of the Assembly, some guests from the province of Ontario. The delegation is headed by Mr. Richard Paton, the Minister of Government Services of the province of Ontario.

They are in Saskatchewan today to announce the signing of a contract with SaskTel International. The contract for nearly \$200,000 is as a result of a public call for proposals by the Ontario ministry. And in that study SaskTel will produce a feasibility study that analyses the technical capabilities and cost-effectiveness of adding fibre optics technology to the large multi-vendor data and voice network system operated by the Ontario ministry.

I am greatly pleased, as I'm sure all hon. members are, Mr. Speaker, that the province of Ontario has selected SaskTel International and its expertise to help design and develop a new system for the government in the province of Ontario.

I might add as well, Mr. Speaker, that in the province of Ontario, SaskTel International is actively pursuing the major telecommunications contract to both own and operate the communications system in the new terminal 3 at the Pearson International Airport, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. minister is accompanied by the deputy minister of Government Services, Mr. Caplice. I hope the hon. member is listening to this because I think it's good for the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, and it would be good for him to listen.

And as well, Mr. Paton is accompanied by Mr. McNaughton, assistant deputy minister of Government Services — Computer and Telecommunications Services of the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all hon. members to give a warm welcome to our guests from the province of Ontario.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Assistance to College Mathieu

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education, Mr. Minister, it deals with the tragic weekend that the residents of Gravelbourg experienced this past weekend.

Mr. Minister, in light of the devastating fire that occurred at College Mathieu, I'd like to ask you: what will your department do in order to ensure that the students will get all necessary assistance that they need in order that they will be able to complete their academic year on schedule?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well relative to the displacement of the students and them completing their academic year, we'll be co-operating with the College Mathieu officials in any way we can, and to that end I'll be meeting with them this afternoon. Indeed it was fortunate that no one

was hurt in this fire. As has been pointed out in the Assembly earlier, this is an historic institution. I think everybody wants to see it back and up and running, and we'll be meeting with the officials to that end.

Mr. Rolfes: — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, in your meeting with the people from Gravelbourg, would you give this House the assurance, since this college was a landmark in Saskatchewan and a vital part of the community of Gravelbourg, will you give us the assurances today that you will do whatever you can to make sure that this institution, this most valuable institution, will be able to be rebuilt at the earliest possible time limit? Would you give the House that assurance today and the people of Gravelbourg?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, we'll be doing what we can and we'll be fully co-operating. Indeed, there's already been some discussions between my officials and officials in Ottawa. As I said earlier, there's meetings planned for yet this afternoon. We want to see College Mathieu rebuilt. We want to see those students who are displaced today finish their academic year and their exams and continue on with their careers as well.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the same minister on the same subject, having to do with the devastation at College Mathieu. Mr. Minister, you will know that the college has had certain financial proposals before your government for some length of time, and one of the difficulties, I understand, in the government making a response to those proposals has to do with the fact that the government has not established a position in terms of general policy in dealing with the funding or with capital construction projects at private schools.

In view of the very unique circumstances respecting College Mathieu, not only the most recent fire but the unique place which that institution plays in the cultural and educational fabric of Saskatchewan, I wonder if you could give us your assurance that any ongoing policy decisions with respect to a general policy covering the funding of private schools will not be allowed to interfere with a speedy decision in respect of College Mathieu in these most serious of circumstances.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, I too wouldn't want to see bureaucratic delay or that kind of thing stand in the way of rebuilding College Mathieu. There has been a proposal before us. I think now with the fire, all that may well be substantially changed in so far as what the new proposal might look like, and I can't say much more until I meet with the people from College Mathieu. But I think it's in everyone's best interest — students, the community, the province of Saskatchewan — to see College Mathieu rebuilt as soon as possible.

Mr. Goodale: — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I'm very grateful for the minister's reassurance in his answer. Mr. Speaker, could I ask the minister if he is in a position at this moment to indicate to us the nature of the discussions which he says he has already had, and thankfully so, with his federal counterparts. The Government of Canada, of course, has always had a

substantial financial interest in College Mathieu, and I wonder if the minister could share with us the nature of the discussions that he, or any other members of his government, have had with the Government of Canada to ensure their active and full participation in the necessary solution?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I don't think I can just say much about the discussions that have gone on to this point, except to say that they were exploratory and informational and sharing of information, to some degree. And when something more can be said, we will. But at this point in time, I haven't yet had a chance to meet with College Mathieu officials to indeed get a full assessment of the situation right from how are they going to handle the student classes between now and the end of the year; and as well, what the insurance implications might be, what the new project might look like, the costs, so and so forth.

But it'll be handled as expeditiously as possible, I'll give you that assurance.

Lease-back of Library Books at U of R

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education, and it concerns the reports that the University of Regina has plans to see off its library collection and then lease back the books.

Mr. Minister, have you expressed concern to the university that it would even consider such a plan, giving up ownership and control of its books which are absolutely vital to university life?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the university has not raised this with me, although I understand there's been at least some examination of that possibility. I will give the university credit for this in that they have been very innovative over at the University of Regina when it comes to equipping their library.

I think most recently of the Sask What Pool University of Regina co-operative initiative called "Bushels for Books." I think a year or two back to the joint venture with UMI (University Microfilms International) to put in several millions of dollars worth of material in a different format, other than books.

As it relates to this latest press report, at least, and cursory examination by the university, I am somewhat reluctant to take a position until I have some greater understanding because, as I said, the board has not raised it with me.

Your question also raises the question of university autonomy and interference by the government, and I know you have been very quick to criticize our government for interfering with autonomy, and yet you ask the question.

On the surface, I suppose there are some who would say it has some merits; it makes better use of their cash. On the other hand, there are some who would say on the surface it strikes them as unusual that a university would be

selling its books and leasing them back. I suspect if one was to examine it in some detail, which I have not, you would find that they probably, if they were to pursue this, would want to have some pretty ironclad guarantees. But to this date no one has raised it with me. It's something that I'll be monitoring.

Ms. Smart: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, it's because of your government's chronic underfunding of the universities that they've become in this state. And tax credits for the sale of books now does nothing to provide money for the purchase of books in the future. And I ask you to assure us today that the University of Regina will be adequately funded immediately so that it doesn't have to see off its library resources which are so precious and vital to it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, we've been through this debate before in the legislature in terms of funding for universities. And our record, relative to any other university in western Canada, is one that we can be proud of, and certainly when it comes to the libraries where we have put substantial amounts of money into both university libraries, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Smart: — Another supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, the Ontario government has voiced strong opposition to the universities selling off their resources. The Ontario government has threatened to cut the grants to the universities which are following this program. The reports that the University of Regina is considering this plan is absolutely true. And does your government intend to take a similar, tough stand with the University of Regina to prevent this travesty?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, we'll be monitoring the situation. No one has raised it with me, and I'm reluctant to make any decision at this point based on some news reports, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Smart: — Final supplementary. Mr. Minister, I have raised it with you. The CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) radio has raised it in the province. The tax credits that go from these kinds of schemes do not provide resources in the future. I want assurances that the university is going to be adequately funded so that the library resources can stay in the public domain.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I too, Mr. Speaker, am very much of the view that a good strong library is very important in universities. I think the initiatives that the university themselves have undertaken, as well as the funding that has come from government, have all been to that end, Mr. Speaker, and I think we can be proud of what's been done in the past, and as well, I think you'll see them continue to be supported, and supported soundly, in the future.

Commencement of Shand Power Plant Project

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My

question today is to the Premier, in the absence of the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Power Corporation. Mr. Premier, my question is this. Yesterday you had the official opening of the Shand power plant.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — An opening, Mr. Premier, an opening which ignored the wishes and the massive opposition of the people of Saskatchewan to this project we don't need.

Mr. Premier, my question is this: will you today in this House table the studies which show the economic justification for the Shand power plant, or is it true, as we've been saying, Mr. Premier, that you don't have them and it's nothing more than your own political boondoggle?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman . . . Mr. Speaker . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I could just say to the hon. member that the demand for electricity has been going up substantially in the province of Saskatchewan as a result of a fair amount of diversification, and we need more electricity. We can either get it from Manitoba, or get it from Alberta or North Dakota, or build out own projects here in the province.

We've just completed the Nipawin hydro project. We have been blessed with coal supplies in southern Saskatchewan, and to manage and get the most out of those resources you should develop them. so we can have another coal-fired generator with the best technology, manufacturing the turbines here by Marubeni-Hitachi in the province of Saskatchewan, so that in fact we can build our own, save a great deal of money as opposed to buying it from another jurisdiction, and provide electricity at low cost, with about 7,500 man-years of work here in the province of Saskatchewan so that local people can use local resources to provide electricity for decades to come.

Now our research and our analysis that we have provided to the public has shown it saves over \$100 million to do it ourselves as opposed to doing it outside the province.

Now I will not take the hon. member's point that people in Saskatchewan don't think we should make our own electricity. We have been building electrical plants for some time, and we will continue, Mr. Speaker, because it's a good idea to build them in Saskatchewan if you have the resources.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — A new question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, in light of your remarks, and in light of the question which I originally asked, which was, if it is true what you are saying, will you produce the documentation which proves it? — when your own engineers from SaskPower tells us that your \$10 million per job project is something that we don't need and you have constantly refused to

produce the documentation which says we need more power, will you put it on the table and show the people of Saskatchewan that what you're saying is right and that what we're saying is wrong? Will you produce the documentation, Mr. Premiere?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry I missed the first question from the hon. member. I was busy trying to get some information on the question that he asked last week, but I understand it was similar to the one that he asked this morning. During Crown Corporations Committee of the last session, a lot of these questions were dealt with and the information was given to the member at that time.

He talked about the levelized . . . or he talked about the 10.5 cost per kilowatt-hour that showed up in the EIS (environmental impact study) report. And it's true, it's true that it's there, Mr. Speaker. This, I'm told, is an engineering formula to get levelized costs to do comparisons between hydro, which might have a 50-year life, and thermal, which must have a 25- or 30-year life, and so they have a formula that they go through to get a levelized cost to do the comparison. And the levelized cost, Mr. Speaker, of Shand shows up as 10.5 cents, as indicated by the member opposite the other day.

Grainland was 12.56 of public . . . the Coronach plants I and II, that was their option, Mr. Speaker, with 10.71, Wintego was the best at 7.91 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

I'm trying to answer the question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lyons: — New question. And the welcome return of the Deputy Premier, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Premier, we've just heard you . . . Mr. Deputy Premier, we've heard you go on and on with your usual bafflegab.

My question is this: will you and can you stand here in this House and unequivocally tell the people of Saskatchewan that Shand is the cheapest power option available for our province, all other facts included; will you and do you have that kind of documentation to stand here and tell them that? Because what I heard you say was exactly the opposite, that it's not the cheapest.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Wintego would have been better, Mr. Speaker, but it was a non-starter for all kinds of environmental and social reasons.

Incentive Program for Cattle Feeding

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as I was asking the Premier when I left off, I want to ask you a question about the severe drought that is occurring in southern Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta; and I want to ask you a very important question as it relates to the cattle producer. It's my understanding that you've announced a program to give incentives to drill deep wells and to pump water.

The ranchers I was talking with this morning are saying there's no water to pump, and in many cases drilling deep

wells is simply not an option. And what they're asking for is a grant or a subsidy to move the cattle to the grass, where it's available, or to move hay to the cattle, or just a direct grant per head for the cattle in south-west and southern Saskatchewan. I'm wondering if you've had time now to contemplate over the last couple of weeks and whether you have an announcement to make today on that issue?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Kelvington-Wadena chaired a meeting with the cattlemen's association and farmers and ranchers from south-western Saskatchewan on Thursday and Friday, and they continue to provide him with the kind of advice that they think is necessary and the information necessary to come up with a program.

They advised him, at that time, that payment should be made directly to cattlemen; that is, to farmers and ranchers as opposed to truckers or other people. and they suggested that the amount of money is in a range, and we're now trying to establish what would be the most appropriate to provide directly to the farmer and the rancher so that they could either move cattle or move feed or move water, or any combination. If we provide the money, according to the ranchers and the farmers, to the individual, then they can manage their own situation to the best of their ability. So we don't want to provide incentives for feed or incentives for moving cattle, but just money to the individual and they can move accordingly. So yes, we are certainly on top of it, and we meet with them every week to get the latest information.

In some areas, as you know, in the constituency of Estevan and the constituencies going through the south-east part of the province, it's been a dramatic change in the last eight or nine days, in the last 10 days, two to three inches of rain as a matter of fact. We were all hoping for more rain this weekend when we saw it raining in Melville, but not so much in the south-west corner. So we are watching it very carefully, and for many people in the south-west we're prepared to respond as quickly as we can.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — A new question to the Minister. I know that you've been talking about getting a program going to subsidize the beef producer, but there's been nothing coming, and literally thousands of cattle are going to market, over the last few weeks, from people who can't get feed for their cattle because it's costing over \$100 a tonne to bring it in from Alberta or northern Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier, while you're at the western premiers' conference — and I have a quote here from the Toronto *Globe and Mail* that in fact says that you are going to be attending a conference:

William (Bill) Vander Zalm of British Columbia, Donald (Don) Getty of Alberta, Grant Devine of Saskatchewan and Gary Filmon of Manitoba will do their . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order.

Order. I realize that the hon. member has been away for a short period of time, but we don't use the names of members in the Chamber, even in quotes.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I will refrain from using the name of the member, but I would like to just repeat the preamble to the question, and I'll exclude the name of the Premier and the minister. But it says:

William (Bill) Vander Zalm of British Columbia, Donald (Don) Getty of Alberta, (the member of Estevan from) Saskatchewan and Gary Filmon from Manitoba will be doing their talking on board an opulent 35-metre yacht that is complete with a hot tub and three bars.

I wonder, while you're out there in the bay floating around talking about the drought in south-west Saskatchewan, if you'd have time to consider that there are thousands of cattle going to market while you doddle along getting a program together.

Can you make an announcement today that would help those beef producers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can say to the hon. member that while he has, I'm sure, legitimate concerns for the south-west, that he no longer represents the south-west, as obviously the people of Saskatchewan know. I will say to the hon. member that it's not my information . . . it's not my information that literally thousands of cattle are being sold today, as we speak, as a result of the drought.

And farmers and ranchers know, and they've advised us and we've told them, if they have to make decisions now, this spring, as a result of dry weather, we're going to have a program in place that will provide assistance for them, even though they've made some decisions with respect to feed and cattle. They know that, and they're comfortable with that.

So this program, while it will be initiated in the very near future, it applies to the management decisions that have taken place this spring. So I want to make it very clear that individuals are not panicking — there's no panic. They've met with us and they've talked with us, and they said this is the kind of thing that we should be initiating.

And I don't think it's accurate at all for you to say that there's a panic in south-western Saskatchewan. We've met with them as late as Friday, and they said yes, you should have the program; yes, you should have some money to the farmer. The farmers now are making the decisions, and we will provide assistance to the farmer. And if we continue to provide money to them, as we have in the past, they may be marketing some cattle anyway. And you know that. They may be hauling some feed, which they are.

University Hospital Cardiology Department

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my member is to the Minister of Health, the minister who

ducked my question last Friday. Mr. Minister, on May 6 in this House I brought to your attention the complaints raised by the head of the cardiology unit at the Saskatoon University Hospital. And in your arrogant and offhanded manner, you chose to respond by implying that doctors always complain if they don't have enough equipment.

Are you aware, Mr. Minister, that a month ago a 10-year-old monitoring unit in the coronary care unit broke down, and patients being admitted with heart attacks had to make do with makeshift equipment put together by the staff? Are you aware of that, Mr. Minister, and does that sound to you like the doctors on that ward are complaining frivolously for new equipment?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Speaker, a couple of things. First of all, I certainly did not duck the question, any question, from the hon. member. She knows, as I know, that health care is the most important thing. And if it isn't lead-off question, well then how can she consider it be important?

Anyway I would say that, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the cardiac unit at the University Hospital, Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of things I would like to report to the House because it's important that this stuff be laid out here. And it was raised, as the member has said, it was raised here once before.

Mr. Speaker, last year, about a year ago, University Hospital and our department reviewed the equipment needs of the department of cardiology. Through these co-operative discussions it was agreed that government would provide funds to assist to purchase hemodynamic lab equipment — hemodynamic lab equipment worth \$1.5 million, Mr. Speaker, which is to be placed in that hospital.

The member refers to Dr. Lopez's comments, and so on. I'm sure, at least I believe very strongly, that Dr. Lopez knows this equipment is coming in — state of the art equipment for that type of facility.

The space within which this hemodynamic equipment is going into is now under construction. Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of circumstance that's there; that's not the circumstance that was portrayed by that member over there.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, the facts are as I've outlined them. The executive director of the University Hospital says it is absolutely without foundation that patients are at risk in any way, and it is absolutely without foundation that there is a lack of equipment. Obviously there's a need for new equipment. And, Mr. Speaker, we, and the University Hospital, are responding by putting new equipment into that hospital.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 22 — An Act to amend the Wakamow Valley Authority Act

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Wakamow Valley Authority Act.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 23 — An Act to amend The Wascana Centre Act

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Wascana Centre Act.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 24 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Agricultural Returns Stabilization Act

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Saskatchewan Agricultural Returns Stabilization Act.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 25 — An Act to amend The Occupational Health and Safety Act

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 26 — An Act to amend The Oil and Gas Conservation Act

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of an Act to amend the Oil and (Gas) Conservation Act 1988 be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 27 — An Act to adopt the Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to adopt the Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 28 — An Act to amend the Matrimonial Property Act

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move the first reading of a Bill to amend The Matrimonial Property Act.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 29 — An Act respecting the Convention Between Canada and the United Kingdom of Great

Britain and Northern Ireland providing for the Reciprocal Recognition and Enforcement of Judgements in Civil and Commercial Matters

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting the Convention Between Canada and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland providing for the Reciprocal Recognition and Enforcement of Judgements in Civil and Commercial Matters.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 30 — An Act to amend The Research Council Act

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Research Council Act.

Motion agreed to and the Bill read a first time.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to refer the said Bill to the Non-Controversial Bills Committee.

Mr. Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Can I ask whether the Bill has been . . . I'm not sure that our critic has had an opportunity to see this. And I think that's probably the case. If he's agreed to it then it'll go non-controversial . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . We can refer it back, Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill ordered to be referred to the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, just before moving the first resolution, as I've passed a note to the opposition Finance critic, the Appropriation Bill is for two-twelfths, which is the traditional request of the second . . . two-twelfths of the second Appropriation Bill in a session. The first one is one-twelfth; the second one, two-twelfths; the third one, one-twelfth, and it goes back to 1973.

Secondly, all of the items are two-twelfths except for the following, and I have given a note to the hon. member from the Quill Lakes: Education receives two-twelfths in this appropriation — that simply maintains the traditional payment schedule to school boards; legislation is receiving an additional \$130,700, that's Legislative Assembly Office, primarily translation services, and some other expenditures of the office; and finally, Urban Affairs is receiving \$2.8 million over and above the two-twelfths. That again is in meeting the established payment schedule for grants to local governments.

So I have advised the hon. member to that effect. If the hon. member wishes, I can give him a rather lengthy list of

the interim supply. But I'm advised all interim supply since at least '72-73, the second motion for . . . Bill for interim supply in every session that has had a second one, it has been for two-twelfths.

So I put forward the following motion:

Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$644,270,200 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 1989.

Mr. Koskie: — Just a point of information, I propose to let the minister move the four motions, and then I want to make a few comments and to ask a few questions, if that is in order, or whether you rule that I have to ask the questions on the specific resolutions.

(1445)

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. The member can make . . . Order. The member can make comments any time prior to the moving of the last resolution.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lane: —

Resolve that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1989, the sum of \$644,270,200 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lane: —

Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$84,062,000 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 1989.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lane: —

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1989, the sum of \$84,062,000 be granted out of the Saskatchewan Heritage Fund.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to make a few comments, and I have a few questions that I want to direct to the minister in respect to the appropriation.

First of all, I want to extend an appreciation to the minister for sending an advanced copy of the Bill to my office which helps to expedite the matter.

Mr. Chairman, what I want to indicate is that the procedure that we are doing here is a procedure that is not unusual and certainly there is appropriation until the budget has been finalized and approved. And this procedure has been followed in the past, Mr. Chairman, and we are prepared, I think, to co-operate with the

minister, as the precedent, as he has indicated, has been established.

But I think I want to indicate also, Mr. Chairman, that we have some basic concerns because what we are dealing with here is the operation of a democratic process, and in order to operate within the framework of a democratic system there are certain procedures and rules and legislation which should in fact be adhered to in helping the democratic process.

I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that whether we're in government or whether we're in opposition, it seems to me that it is our duty to respect the democratic process; whether they are beneficial to the government at the time, or indeed to the opposition, is not the question. For in a democratic society the interests of the people of this province must take precedence over the interests of the government, indeed, the opposition.

I think it's rather regrettable that we come to the House here and the Minister of Finance is asking this House to appropriate a little over two-twelfths of the entire budget for the carrying out of the purposes of the government and making payments. But at the same time we're sitting here, at about the 40th day that the legislature has reconvened, and to date we have not received from the Minister of Finance who comes to this House and asks for an appropriation, we have not received the courtesy of him filing the *Public Accounts* with the legislature.

It's our intention to co-operate with the Minister of Finance, but it seems to me it's incumbent upon also the Minister of Finance to also co-operate with the opposition, indeed to protect the interests of the public, to have an accountability of his expenditures. For certainly it's not only our duty to agree with the appropriation and to scrutinize that, but it's our duty on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan to take a look at what expenditures were made and how they were spent in the previous years.

I think the record of the Minister of Finance in respect to previous budgets, and the extent of the overexpenditures and the direction as to where expenditures were in fact made, is of interest to the people of this province, is an interest to the opposition.

As I indicated, that there are precedents for the filing of the *Public Accounts*. And I want to refer the minister to the record as he has indicated . . . he has referred to the procedure that is followed in respect to the appropriation.

But ever since 1974-75, Mr. Speaker, the government had always filed, as soon as possible the *Public Accounts*. I take in 1974-75, the date of the Provincial Auditor's report was filed on March 16, 1976, but if you look and see when the date the *Public Accounts* were filed, it was January 28, 1976. So the *Public Accounts* were filed prior to the receiving of the Provincial Auditor's, but both were filed by March.

In '75-76 we find the same established principle, that the date the *Public Accounts* were tabled is March 7, and the auditor's report on March 14. They do not, in fact, according to precedence, have to be simultaneously filed.

In 1976-77, March 28, the *Public Accounts* were filed, and March 28, '78, the auditor's report was filed with the legislature.

In '78-79, December 14, '79, the *Public Accounts* were filed, and March 24 for the auditor's report.

And the list goes on, Mr. Chairman, indicating that it's not necessary to file the *Public Accounts* at the same date that you file the Provincial Auditor's report. And that is the practice that has been followed in this House. And I indicate to the chairman and to the members of this legislature that the people of this province are entitled to look at the expenditures in detail. And we would be only looking at the '86-87 expenditures in detail.

I want to indicate also that more than that, Mr. Speaker, not only is there a precedent that should be followed, but I want to indicate to you, Mr. Chairman, that there is authority set out in the (Department of) Finance Act which clearly indicates that the *Public Accounts* should be filed in this legislature as soon as is practical.

It says, notwithstanding The Tabling of Documents Act, the minister shall, as soon as practicable after the *Public Accounts* are prepared, lay the *Public Accounts* before the Legislative Assembly.

And what I'm talking about here, is the minister comes forward here wanting an appropriation of over two-twelfths of the budget in the Consolidated Fund and the Heritage Fund. And at the same time he has shown disregard, it seems to me, both to the opposition, in carrying out their duties, and he has scorned the public their right to know how expenditures have been made.

And I say to the minister that it's difficult for the opposition to totally co-operate with you if it is your intent to stifle the opposition. And in so doing, I want to indicate that you're trampling on the rights of the people of Saskatchewan, the right to know.

I would not raise this, Mr. Chairman, but it seems to me that in operating the House, in proceeding in an orderly manner, then it's incumbent also upon the Minister of Finance to bring forward the *Public Accounts*.

And this is not the sole, isolated incident, the lack of filing the *Public Accounts*. There are some worrisome other legislation and practices that had been followed that are a concern to us. We recall back in . . . a year ago the Minister of Finance did not bring down the budget until some time in June, and operated on special warrants up until the time that the opposition sought legal advice in respect to it. And this is wrong, Mr. Chairman.

But if you look at other aspects of it, you find this government has attacked some of the other traditions that we have here. Well I think that they have — putting forward the most vicious gerrymander Bill in the history of this province — we have seen ministers attack the independence of the Legislative Counsel; we have seen the delay in the bringing forward of the by-election when one of their members resigned, and now we find the failure to file the *Public Accounts*.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that this is a major transgression of the democratic principles and procedures that we have adopted, and only can we operate in a proper manner if each of us have respect for the traditions that have been established. Each of us here have a moral obligation to protect the rights of the people. and this is not a mere political sparring by the opposition. It seems to me that this is a very significant principle that is at stake — the right of information to prevent any cover-up, to have a full and total disclosure of the expenditures.

So I want to say to the Minister of Finance, while we are prepared to operate, it seems to me that it's incumbent upon him to explain to this House, in light of the practices that had been followed previously in so far as the Appropriation Bill — and he's depending upon that as a precedent — I ask him directly: why will he not indeed follow the precedent of filing the *Public Accounts* at the earliest possible date?

And all of us know, as a result of *Public Accounts*, that he had the *Public Accounts* in his possession as early as April 4, and today we still have not seen the *Public Accounts*. And so I'd like to ask the Minister, when does he intend to table the *Public Accounts*? It's part and parcel of the right of the people of this province to know.

He has brought forward an Appropriation Bill here for the review of the legislature. Similarly, the *Public Accounts* are an integral part of it, and I think the people of Saskatchewan, particularly during the election year, when the Minister of Finance went on a spending rampage and underestimated his deficit by \$800 million — and it seems to me that the people of Saskatchewan have a right to know, would like to know how much they spent on self-advertising during that election year. We'd like to know what the specific overexpenditures were.

And so I ask the Minister to stick to the precedence, if he's going to use the practices of the previous administration in previous years, in so far as bringing in the Appropriation Bill and asking for two-twelfths. Why will he not follow the practices and procedures that have been followed and that are documented for the filing of the *Public Accounts*. I'd like him to indicate to the House when we can expect him to table the *Public Accounts* in this legislature.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well, Mr. Chairman, let me first of all clear up some of the statements made by the hon. member. First of all, the practice in the past was more often to table the *Public Accounts* on the last day of a session.

An Hon. Member: — That's not true.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I'm telling the hon. member that that was very, very common to table the *Public Accounts* on the last day of the session, and I believe during an earlier debate on this matter that that information was put forward.

Secondly, with regard to the court matter, the courts have ruled that; I think we've discussed it. I can assure the hon. member that not only will he have the *Public*

Accounts in the very near future, he will have ample time to debate them during this session.

(1500)

Mr. Koskie: — Well I want a clarification from the minister because he indicates that in a previous precedent was that the *Public Accounts* were filed at the end of the session; 1974-75, *Public Accounts* tabled January 28, '76. I'd suggest that the session went beyond that, and the Provincial Auditor's report was filed when it was prepared, March 16; '75-76, March; '76-77, March 28; '77-78, March 15; '78-79, December 14; '79-80, they were filed in December 10.

Mr. Minister, could you explain what you meant by indicating that in the past the precedent was to file them at the last day of the sittings, in light of the facts of the record that I have just read to you?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well the hon. member is right, I should clarify. The December 14 and December 10 filings, I think if you go back and check you'll find are the last day of the fall session of the legislature and they were filed. Obviously the opposition in those days did not get a chance to debate them during the Assembly when they were filed on the 10th and the 14th. I've just given you the assurance that you will have ample time to debate them during this session.

Mr. Koskie: — I'd like you facts to be straight then, and not try to deceive the public. I mean, what better opportunity, for instance, could you have with a fall session which lasts 10 to 12 days, having those report tabled during that period of time. You had up until the spring session then to review them.

So I'm asking the minister, you indicated in a very unsatisfactory manner that they'll be filed as soon as possible. What is stopping you from filing them forthwith?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I've indicated to the hon. member that he would be getting them very soon and would have ample time to not only peruse them, review them, debate them, do whatever else he wanted to with the *Public Accounts*. He will have ample opportunity to ask questions in question period during this session, and I've indicated to him that he'll get them very, very soon.

Mr. Koskie: — I wonder if the minister could indicate when he came . . . when the *Public Accounts* were made available to him?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Sorry, what was the question?

Mr. Koskie: — When were the *Public Accounts* made available to you for filing?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I would have to go back and check that. I do believe that when the matter came up in question period that my predecessor had indicated to the hon. member that in at least some occasions they were filed along with the Provincial Auditor's report. I can simply reiterate to the hon. member that he will have some reading. I don't think it'll be quite as enjoyable as he thought it was going to be, but he will have ample time to

review the *Public Accounts* in the very, very near future.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, Mr. Minister, let's be a little more specific. Surely you know when you had the *Public Accounts* provided to you for filing. And I'm going to ask you specifically, according to the Public Accounts (Committee) they indicated April 4. Is that in fact a correct date?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I can't indicate to the member whether that's correct or not. I did not look up that information. But again, I can give the hon. member the assurance that he will have the *Public Accounts* in the not too distance future and ample time to review them, peruse them, and question the government, although I don't think the government will be seriously questioned when the hon. members have the opportunity to review them in some detail.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, Mr. Minister, I don't think it's up to you to make a decision whether we're going to have good reading or not good reading. And I don't think it should be up to your decision as to withhold it from this House, because obviously you're afraid of disclosure of the facts.

And all I indicate to you is that you're flaunting the institution here. You are refusing to follow the precedent, and you're begging here today that you're following the precedent that has been followed previously in respect to the appropriation. And I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, is it your intention to wait until the auditor's report is finalized before filing the *Public Accounts*? Is that your intention?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I can't comment on the latter because I don't know what the Provincial Auditor's position is. I've given the hon. member that he will get the *Public Accounts* very, very soon.

And I know that it's speculation on my part when I say that it won't be as enjoyable reading as the hon. member might expect. I think it will be reading that the hon. members opposite will be somewhat disappointed in, but I have given you the assurance that you'll get it very soon.

Secondly, you will have ample time to both peruse, read, study and consider the *Public Accounts* in this session, as well as ample time to question the government. I've indicated now, I think on five occasions, it will be very, very soon.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, you indicate "very soon." Could you indicate what is stopping you from doing it forthwith, tomorrow. What is stopping you from filing the *Public Accounts* forthwith?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well they will be tabled very, very soon. We can define "forthwith" and "very, very soon" as perhaps reasonably close to each other. I suppose we could get into a dictionary debate, but I have indicated to you that they'll be very soon.

Mr. Koskie: — is it true then that it's not contingent upon the auditor completing his report that you will be filing the *Public Accounts* in this House?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I have indicated that I don't know when the Provincial Auditor will be tabling his report; that that could come very soon as well.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, I think it's incumbent upon you to file the *Public Accounts* with us, with the opposition, in the Assembly. I want to, just in closing indicate that the precedent has been set, has been honoured in the past by the Blakeney government, and only has there been a departure under your administration.

One can only conclude, if you have nothing to hide, if it's not as much good reading as what you think we are entitled to, than I don't know why you want to delay. And as has been indicated, if you're waiting for the auditor's report, it can't be completed some time till the middle of June. And if you're hanging your hat on that, you're hoping that we'll be out of the legislature and use that for a reason. And that's the reason that has been used by your counterpart, the former minister of Finance, but you had to file the two together.

I'm going to ask you again: will you give us an undertaking that you will file the *Public Accounts* prior to receiving the auditor's report?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well, I don't think you really expect me to give you that assurance. I don't know when it's coming down . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, that was a guesstimate on his part. I think he made that abundantly clear.

I've indicated to the hon. member that you will not only have ample time to read it, study it, review it, consider it, do whatever you wish with it, and have ample time to debate the matter in the legislature, as well as have ample time to question the treasury benches on *Public Accounts*. So that will be very soon.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that it's just absolutely ludicrous that the Legislative Assembly, the members here, are being asked to approve a Bill to spend money out of the current year's budget before we know how the government has spent to taxpayer's money in the past. The people of Saskatchewan might well ask the minister: how are the people of Saskatchewan and the opposition to be able to make a sound judgement on proposed expenditures when we don't have a clue about past expenditures?

Now I know, Mr. Chairman, that it's standard practice and tradition to consider these appropriation measures, these interim supply measures, pending completion of the budget process. But it's also been standard practice and tradition to table the *Public Accounts* so that the public can know how their money has been spent; to table these *Public Accounts* before or at about the same time that the public is first presented with the budget for the coming year.

I would point out that parliament in every legislature in Canada the *Public Accounts* have been tabled with the sole exception of the Government of Saskatchewan which hitherto has failed to table those *Public Accounts*.

And I know, Mr. Chairman, that's it traditional for the opposition to ensure passage of the appropriation measures to make sure that the government can meet all of its spending commitments; to make sure that there's money for education; to make sure that there's money for urban affairs; to make sure that the government can pay its bills. But there will come a day when the opposition can no longer acquiesce to the government's agency and rules if the government continues to make rules every day when it comes to tabled the *Public Accounts* and when it comes to the release of public information that the public has a right to.

I want to make it clear that we are prepared to co-operate with the government to ensure passage of the measures that are before us today. We have done this; we have co-operated in the past. Although we may have debated the various Appropriation Bills, these have always been passed the day that they were presented. And we will co-operate again today.

But I think co-operation needs to be a two-way exercise if it is to be strengthened. For example, there are discussions between our House Leader and their House Leader about setting aside time on the private member's day, Tuesday, for government business, and we are prepared to do that. And in return, the government says, we'll move to the motions for return, which the opposition is interested in. there we see co-operation on both sides to make parliament, the legislature, work more effectively. Co-operation in that context is a two-way street.

But the government cannot expect co-operation on the one hand from the opposition, while giving the back of their hand when co-operation is being asked for from the government.

My colleagues and I will vote for this Bill. We will not be filibuster or otherwise use the rules of this House to frustrate the government. We will help the government to expedite the public's business.

But we are not happy about the arrogance and the abuse of power that the government displays when it comes to other traditions, such as tabling of the *Public Accounts*.

We will vote for the Bill, but we do so with great reluctance, and not without having registered our protest about the government's lack of even-handedness, their lack of concern for traditions of the House, and their arrogance and absolute abuse of power.

Mr. Chairman, I think that's it's just absolutely regrettable that the government would ask us, on the one hand, for our co-operation and the support of all the members of the Assembly to help them to expedite their business. Yet when it comes to something that they have control over, and will all due respect to the traditions of this House, they say, well we're going to establish new rules; we don't want to co-operate with the House; we don't want to co-operate with the people of Saskatchewan — that we should somehow accept that and accept that gladly.

I say to the minister that a time will come that our co-operation will simply not be there; that we will not

acquiesce to their agenda if he continues to flaunt his power, to abuse the traditions of this House and say, we're not prepared to table the *Public Accounts*.

And to stand here and to try and twist the facts, he's a bigger twister than any Texas tornado, Mr. Chairman. When he stands here and says, well in the past these things have only been tabled on the last day of the session, but when he's pressed he admits, well it was the last day of the fall session, and ignores the facts that these *Public Accounts* have in the past been tabled some six months prior to this time; that it's his government and it's him that's setting new records every year for the lateness of the tabling of the *Public Accounts*, and trying to avoid tabling those *Public Accounts* to give the public some idea of how their money is being spent.

(1515)

Mr. Chairman, we're prepared to vote for this Bill, to vote for this measure, as I indicated. But I want to make it very clear to the government members that we on this side of the House cannot be expected to continue to co-operate with them if we get no co-operation from them when it comes to something as elementary as the *Public Accounts*, something that he's had in his possession now for a month, month and a half.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I thank the hon. member for his willing endorsement of the legislation. And in the interests of co-operation I won't get into any discussion about the hon. member's past practices and the secretiveness of Regina city council on budget. That was a great public debate, which I know the hon. member participated in. And I won't comment on the court case and the frivolity of the court application and the judges on it.

I do raise a concern because I know it would be shared by all hon. members — and I put it in a positive manner as I possibly can — but I had always been of the view that discussions between House leaders and caucus chairmen between parties have always been treated in a confidential measure and have not been brought to the floor of the Assembly unless both parties agree.

So I just throw out as a general caution that we do have an informal process that has worked well in the democratic system, that it has worked well in the British parliamentary system. I take the hon. member's statements as not being aware of that and simply let it go. And I know that all hon. members will assume that the practice will continue as it has in the past, and I thank the hon. member for his support.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, to get a lecture from that particular member about traditions of the House is the height of hypocrisy; it simply is . . . that minister to stand in his place and to lecture someone else about tradition and secrecy is simple poppycock for him to say those kinds of things, to borrow a phrase from the Minister of Justice.

For him to talk about secrecy and traditions is just simply ludicrous, Mr. Chairman. There's the Minister of Finance

who set a new record last year, a record for all of Saskatchewan when it comes to the late tabling of *Public Accounts*. There's the minister who's heading for a new record when it comes to the tabling of *Public Accounts*. There's the only Minister of Finance in all of Canada, with no exception, the only Minister of Finance who has not yet tabled the *Public Accounts*.

The Minister of Finance in Ottawa in parliament has tabled the *Public Accounts*. Every other Minister of Finance in every other legislature in this country has tabled the *Public Accounts*, yet this man stands there without any regard for his hypocrisy and starts to lecture us and other members of this House about secrecy and tradition. I just think that it's absolutely ludicrous, Mr. Speaker, absolutely ludicrous.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I accept the hon. member's statement as to tradition and his avoidance of his position with regard to the secrecy of the city of Regina budgetary process.

I do remind the hon. member that I believe the extreme in Canada was the refusal of, I believe, a former prime minister, Mr. Trudeau, who I think went a couple of years without a budget, as a matter of fact, so that your selection of precedent is not really accurate, so it's not really a precedent. But I gave my views, I thought, in a rather constrained manner, and again I thank the hon. member for his support of the legislation.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, I want to ask a few questions of the Minister of Finance. Mr. Minister, you indicated to members on this side of the House that you did receive the *Public Accounts* and, as the Provincial Comptroller indicated to the Public Accounts Committee, that the *Public Accounts* were ready on April 4, and a few days later they were in your possession.

Mr. Minister, could you tell us why it is taking this long to table the *Public Accounts*? I just want to know why we can't have access to them so that the Public Accounts Committee can go on with its business of analysing and examining the expenditures of the government during this session, and not have to wait until the session is over and get at that between sessions. Could you tell me why you can't table those accounts? We know you've got them. I think you've examined them. why won't you table them now?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I can't agree with the hon. member's assumptions, but I have given the assurance to the opposition and to the opposition critic that — and I do believe you were here — that you would have them very, very soon; that you would have them in ample time to not only debate but to consider, to review, to question, whatever you wish, during this session. And I've given that assurance to the hon. member so the Public Accounts Committee will not be prejudiced.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, we heard this three weeks ago from either the member who has just spoken, or his colleague, that the *Public Accounts* would be tabled soon. Now that was three weeks ago. Now if that means soon again, another three weeks, that means we would be close to the end of the session. Mr. Chairman, you, as a

member of the Public Accounts, know full well that we need a lot more time than that to amply analyse and examine the expenditures, not for last year but for 1986-87.

It will already be 15 months at the end of that fiscal year, and I'm simply asking the member: why can't you table them? why won't you table them tomorrow? Why can't you simply stand up in the House and say to the people of Saskatchewan: yes, I know I have an obligation to table it; you have a right to examine our expenditures, and I've had them now for over a month, I will table them tomorrow. Why can't you give me that assurance? Not soon, but tomorrow. Why won't you do it?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I have indicated that you will have them soon, and I think I used the descriptive phrase, very soon. It will not certainly be three weeks. I can give the hon. member that assurance. You will have it very soon, and you will have ample time to, as I say, to not only read them, study them, take them home with you, whatever you wish.

An Hon. Member: — Memorize them.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — And memorize them, as has been suggested by some . . .

An Hon. Member: — How about Wes Robbins? He'll memorize them too.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I can give you the assurance, as well, that Wes Robbins can have your copy, and will have ample opportunity . . . That's a political bit of advice that I wouldn't hesitate to give the hon. members, to have Wes Robbins take a look at them. and I'm sure that the detail with which you will have questions for orders . . . question period will be of interest to all hon. members, and probably particularly Mr. Speaker, should you go that route.

But you will have ample time to review them and give them to Mr. Wes Robbins, if that's the objective behind the questioning. He will have ample time to read them as well, and if from time to time he doesn't understand them, due to the passage of time, I can give you the assurance that he can feel free to give me a call and I'll take him through the *Public Accounts* when that situation arises.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, the flippant attitude of the minister opposite, and making light of the public's right to *Public Accounts*. A man that was out . . . the man that was out over 200 per cent on his estimate, he is the one that is going to tell a former minister of Finance how to run this province.

The former minister of Finance that you're alluding to, Mr. Minister, did not have consecutive deficits and run up a cumulated deficit of \$3.7 billion. The former minister of Finance knew finances much more than you will ever understand, even if you live to be 140.

Mr. Minister, I regret the attitude that you have taken. I regret the attitude that you say to the public, you have no right of how I expended your money in the year 1986-87; I will sit on these *Public Accounts*; I will not make them

public; I will make them public when I feel like it.

And, Mr. Minister, as my colleagues have pointed out, up until 1982 when your party formed the government, *Public Accounts* have always been tabled before the end of March of that particular year — always. Last year they were tabled in June, and it looks very much again that they will be tabled very close to June again — full 15 months after the end of the fiscal year.

I think the public have a right, and I think we, as the Public Accounts Committee, have a right to get those *Public Accounts*, not when you feel that we should have them, but when they are ready and they are offered to you, you should table them into the House. I don't think you have the right to sit on those *Public Accounts* and not let us have access to them.

Mr. Minister, the argument that your colleague made was that you couldn't table them because you wanted to table them when the auditor's report was done, that they should be tabled simultaneously. Now you've departed from that assumption and you said, no. I will table them soon. And I assume that that will mean within the next week.

I want to say to you, Mr. Minister, if the attitude that you have is that, look, I'm not going to let the Public Accounts do their job because they can do them when the session is over, so we can do them during the summer months of July and August, that is a betrayal of your responsibility, and that is abusing the privileges of your office. Maybe, Mr. Chairman, what we need in this House is some legislation which forces the minister, which forces the minister . . . and I hope that some government in the . . . we've never had to have this. In the past, governments have always respected the traditions of this House — always.

Maybe what we need . . . we've seen this in the by-elections where the Premier simply ignored the people of Saskatoon East. The minister now ignores the right of the people to the *Public Accounts*. Maybe the time has passed and we need to have legislation which says, for example, the budget must be presented before a certain date; the *Public Accounts* must be presented before a certain date; the auditor's report must be presented before a certain date. Maybe we need that.

In the past, we haven't had to because we respected the traditions. But this minister and this government have totally ignored those traditions, and maybe it's time that we have some legislation brought forth which simply says, you have no choice. On such and such a date, you must table the *Public Accounts*; and by such and such a date, the Provincial Auditor's report must be tabled in this House.

I think it's time that we do that; I think the public has a right. And if this government is attempting to withhold from the public the expenditures of 1986-87 — full 15 months ago — then maybe it's time that we do something like that.

Mr. Minister, it seems like it's . . . or, Mr. Chairman, it seems like it's impossible to get any answers from this

minister, so I have no further questions. Turn it over to my colleague.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if I can ask the minister whether he agrees with the statement of his colleague, the Minister of Finance . . . or the Minister of justice, who was the acting minister of Finance at one point. And on April 14, in discussing the last interim supply measure, the Minister of Justice said with regard to the *Public Accounts*, Mr. Chairman, and I quote here:

. . . the *Public Accounts* of this province have traditionally been filed when the Provincial Auditor files his report. That has been the case for at least 25 years in this province, 25 years in this province.

He goes on to say:

The *Public Accounts* will be filed in the traditional way of parliament, and that is when the Provincial Auditor files his report.

Do you agree with those statements; does he purport to speak for you when he says those things, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I think the hon. member knows by now the rules as to who is speaking on those behalf. I haven't read the comments the hon. member referred to; I will take a look at them if he wishes.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well, Mr. Chairman, what the Acting Minister of Finance, the Minister of Justice said on that day is something that he repeated over and over again. I think it's reasonable to assume that you would have been briefed by your Acting Minister of Finance as to what he is saying when it comes to Finance.

(1530)

Are you trying to tell this house that you're not aware of the comments made by your colleague, that you're not of the same view that these *Public Accounts* will be tabled when the Provincial Auditor provides his report? Is that your view?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I indicated to the hon. member that I haven't read *Hansard* or the remarks of the member to whom you're referring. And until such time as I do that, I wouldn't comment. But I certainly, if you wish, will at my convenience take a look at those remarks.

I do wish that the member from Nutana had have been here when he talked about a date for the filing of . . . Saskatoon Nutana. I do note that that has not been a policy stated by the preceding governments of this province.

And secondly, I note that, with ample opportunity — I see the hon. member is back there — to put motions before the Assembly, that he didn't do that and take that opportunity. So it's all right perhaps to get caught up in the passion of the moment, as the hon. member from Saskatoon is wont to do. But I suggest that it's perhaps a bit of grandstanding, but hasn't taken the opportunities to

the traditional rules of the House to move a little further.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Minister, I'm not surprised that you don't know what a colleague of yours said on a particular day in the House, and what specifically he might have said.

But are you trying to tell this house that when you were away for your two-week jaunt to Japan and points east, and he was the Acting Minister of Finance and he was asked about the tabling of the *Public Accounts*, and again publicly he stated that the *Public Accounts* could be tabled in a traditional way when the Provincial Auditor provides his report, that when you returned, that you were not briefed on his comments, that you were not told that these are the things that I had to say in your absence, that you're not familiar with the position that he took, both within this House and publicly outside this House? Is that what you're trying to tell us?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I must say that I have not been briefed nor have I ever asked on, frankly, any questions that the hon. member has asked, nor would I expect to be. I think that that quite frankly is a foolish question to ask, and I indicated that I haven't read it and I did not go back and look at *Hansard*.

We of course have the practice of no longer taking at face value necessarily the questions asked by some of the members of the opposition. And I've indicated now on three occasions that if you wish, I would take the time at my convenience to read over the record of what happened in my absence.

Mr. Koskie: — Yes, I just want to go through here and get a couple of specific answers. And the first one, I want to ask the minister whether or not the *Public Accounts* are available to him at this date to be filed?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I suggest to the hon. member that the real question, of course the Minister of Finance does get them, and as the courts have ruled we can file them at the government's discretion. And I suggest to the hon. member that I've given the assurance now on numerous occasions this afternoon that they will be filed soon.

You asked me earlier, and I said that I had not perused them. but the advice that I have is that you will be sadly disappointed. So all I can do is repeat, as I have several times this afternoon, is I have undertaken to give them to you very soon so that you would have ample time to discuss, review, consider, peruse, give them to Wes Robbins, whatever your practice is.

I would hope you not fall into the trap of the hon. member from Saskatoon South in that you look at them yourself as opposed to delegating, as he proposes to do, but you will have ample time to debate and consider them.

Mr. Koskie: — I note that you indicate that you would file them very soon, that — maybe the minister didn't hear the question.

The question was, specifically: are the *Public Accounts* available to you at this time, and could you, by that very nature of them being available, be in a position to file

them today? In other words: have the *Public Accounts* been prepared, and are they in your possession, and could they be filed today?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I indicated my position to the hon. member three or four times this afternoon. You will have them very soon. You will have ample time to read them and peruse them and study them, and you will also — I'm giving you the assurance, because I think that that is fundamental to your position that you want ample time during this particular session to be able to question the government on the expenditures. That was certainly the thrust of the questions of the members . . . member from Saskatoon South.

And you will have ample opportunity and Public Accounts will have ample opportunity. I'm sure that you will find the reading of *Public Accounts*, although politically depressing, certainly interesting.

Mr. Koskie: — Could the minister indicate to the House, to the people of the province, why you are not prepared, or have not filed them up till this date? What particular reasons do you have for not having filed them by this time?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I've indicated the position. I think you've taken the court case — the court has ruled, the judge has ruled. And the fundamental question, will you have time to read them and study them and peruse them . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No. but that's fundamental; that's what you want. *Public Accounts* are to allow governments to be held up to public scrutiny, and you will have ample time to do that.

And I think as well that not only will you have ample time during this session to question the government and to review *Public Accounts*, you will have ample opportunity over the course of the next year as well to raise *Public Accounts*.

So I just simply suggest to the hon. member that you won't be prejudiced, Public Accounts Committee won't be prejudiced during this session to be able to go through them and have the time, have the time after perusal to question the government. And I've given you that assurance.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I want to just read to you from the excerpt from the Public Accounts record, and a question asked by the member from Saskatoon South. He indicates:

Mr. Chairman, just a very short question to Mr. Kraus. Mr. Kraus, can you tell me on what date your *Public Accounts* was completed (and) — printed and all?

Mr. Kraus: The final . . . There's three volumes, and the middle volume, (was) volume 2, was the last set that was completed, and it was Easter Monday. Is that April 4? I believe April 4 was the . . . Yes, April 4.

And then the member went on to ask Mr. Kraus:

When (do) you submit it to your minister?

And Mr. Kraus indicated:

Shortly thereafter.

(Mr. Rolfes): Do you know the exact day?

(Mr. Kraus): I can't give you the exact date, but it would be within a few days of that (date).

Now the facts, from that excerpt from one of your officials, a comptroller, indicates that shortly after April 4 you were presented with the *Public Accounts*. Do you deny that that is reasonably accurate? That you did in fact, shortly after April 4, come into possession of the completed *Public Accounts*, and now, it being May 16 and you still have not seen fit to file the *Public Accounts*? I ask you, Mr. Minister, what are you trying to hide? What is your basic reason for not having filed the *Public Accounts* when you got them shortly after April 4? That's the simple question — come clean. Is there a reason? Give us the reason for not having filed them.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — as I've indicated to the hon. member now, I think on 7, 8, 9, or 10 occasions this afternoon, that you will be getting the *Public Accounts* very, very soon. You will have ample opportunity to peruse them, study them, review them, whatever. You'll be getting them very soon. You will decide then what we've had to hide, if anything. I think, from the advice I have, that you won't get much. But having said that, you'll get them very, very soon. I said that much earlier.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, it's not up to you to decide whether or not there's information that we can use or not. That's not the question. The question is the record of the expenditures of the government, and the public is entitled to receive that information, and you stand before this House and stonewall the committee here today.

You were asked for a reason why you haven't filed them, you had them since April 4 or shortly thereafter, and you can't stand up and give one legitimate reason, other than that you want to cover up. And I don't expect you to say that, but you are ashamed of the expenditures, obviously, that you have made, because 1986-87 was not the greatest year of any Finance minister's records, I'll tell you that.

But, Mr. Minister, I take it that you absolutely refuse to answer why you will not table the report. And I think the public therefore can assume from that, that you want to give the least possible time available for the public scrutiny of it, and that can be the only reason for not filing them. Because certainly the precedent indicates that the *Public Accounts* in many, many occasions have been filed prior to the auditor's report. And if you are following the precedent, they would have been filed by now.

Mr. Minister, I want to go on and ask you in respect to the Appropriation Bill and the resolutions that you have put forward.

An. Hon. Member: — Well he won't answer those.

Mr. Koskie: — Well the resolutions then. You indicate the expenditures, and approximately two-twelfths in each instance, in looking at the Heritage Fund, there's no doubt that in respect to the previous appropriation that it's twice that amount of what we had the previous year when you indicated that it was one-twelfth.

This time you indicated that for the Heritage Fund, it's for a two-month period, or two-twelfths, and that is indeed double the amount that you had appropriated for Heritage Fund last Appropriation Bill, last month.

In respect to the Consolidated Funds, there you indicate to me that it's approximately two-twelfths, with some special expenditures over and beyond the two-twelfths. And the three areas that you have indicated to me, Mr. Minister, is the Education, where it's the two-twelfths, the usual, and then you have added on the operating grants, cash-flow requirements of the boards.

Legislation is the other item that you mention. There's \$130,700 additional sessional costs, translation services, and Legislative Library. And Urban Affairs, you indicate 2.8 million, in addition to the funding for revenue sharing for established schedule for grant payments.

What I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, what is the total amount over and above the two-twelfths, in respect to the Consolidated Fund. What is the total amount over and above the two-twelfths appropriation that is being asked for in respect to Education, legislation, and Urban Affairs?

(1545)

Hon. Mr. Lane: — My quick calculations of the three amounts are \$31 million made up as follows: of 28 thousand . . . for Education — 28,069,300; \$130,700 for legislation; and 2.8 million for Urban Affairs. Now I've quickly added those up to 31 — subject to my inherent weaknesses — I think that's accurate.

Mr. Koskie: — Yes, that was the figure that I had come up with is 31 million over and above the two-twelfths.

Now in respect to education, the 28,069,300 that you indicate, can you indicate why the need for pulling that amount of . . . over and above the two-twelfths?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — To be candid with the member, no, I can't. the advice I have from my officials is that it's simply to assist in maintaining the established payment schedule to school boards. I gather that some time in May or June they bump up payments, so I assume that that's the case, to put them on a schedule track.

I can't answer more than that. I can undertake to get that answer for the hon. member.

Mr. Koskie: — At the same time file the *Public Accounts*.

This is a fairly substantial amount of money, and I would appreciate an indication as to specifically, if you would, provide me with the reason for the 28 million over and above the two-twelfths in respect to that, Urban Affairs . . .

An Hon. Member: — That's one-twelfth, 28.

Mr. Koskie: — Yes, I want, in respect to that . . . and perhaps you could explain also, in respect to Urban Affairs, the 2.8 million.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Again I am advised by officials that it's simply to assist in meeting the established schedule for revenue sharing grant payments to local governments. Again I can undertake to advise the hon. member why three-twelfths would be needed at this particular time.

Mr. Koskie: — Yes, I'd appreciate that as soon as possible. I don't have many more questions in respect to it, but I just want to indicate to the minister that *Public Accounts*, and the filing of it, is an important matter, and we deal with it in an important way. We ask you for your co-operation and respect for the institution and the practices that we have followed in the past.

I can only indicate to you that *Public Accounts* has been a very important issue in the two by-elections. I want to indicate to the minister that in Eastview the NDP received 6,685, the PCs, 3,330, and the Liberals, 2,473 — the official count. Both lost their deposits.

And I'll tell you that you better start listening to the people of this province or the results are going to be throughout this province similar to Eastview. So I ask you, Mr. Minister, to take seriously the demands of the public that they want an open government, they want entitlement to information.

And I ask you then to consider those — losing your deposit in a seat that you held, by the refusal to provide the public with the information that they deserve. So I'm prepared, Mr. Chairman, on those comments, to proceed.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I appreciate the advice from the hon. member. He gave us the same advice after the Regina North West by-election. We followed his advice and much to our success in the future. So I take the recommendation of the hon. member to heart.

I have been advised that the Urban Affairs, the reason for the three-twelfths is that they are paid quarterly in June. And I assume that that's probably the case with Education, but again I will check that out and advise the hon. member.

Motion agreed to.

The committee reported progress.

FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I move that the resolutions be now read the first and second time.

Motion agreed to and the resolutions read a first and second time.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move:

That Bill No. 31, An Act for Granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Year Ending on March 31, 1989, be now introduced and read the first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill read a first time.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — By leave of the Assembly, and under rule 48(2), I move that the Bill be now read a second and third time.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill read a second and third time and passed under its title.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Highways and Transportation Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 16

Mr. Chairman: — Would the Minister of Highways please introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to introduce to you the following officials from the department. To my immediate right is the deputy minister, Mr. Jack Sutherland, a man who's been with the department some 20 . . . 34 years, some 34 years; and right behind Mr. Sutherland is Mr. Myron Herasymuk, assistant deputy minister; directly behind me is Paul Fitzel, executive director of support services division; to Mr. Herasymuk's right is Mr. Bob Cocks, director of operation services branch; and to my left is Dave Stewart, acting director of the legislation and safety branch representing the Highway Traffic Board.

In addition we have Mr. Phil Pearson, executive director of transportation, planning and research division; and Mr. Bernie Churko, the director of transportation systems branch, seated in the back to provide additional support.

We also have other departmental officials in the gallery and, I'm sure, some watching the proceedings on television. And it's my pleasure to introduce to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the members of the Legislative Assembly, these officials who provide very, very good work for the Department of Highways and are for the most part long-standing employees.

Item 1

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister. Welcome to your officials and, indeed, welcome to Highways' estimates. We've waited awhile to get on with this, not quite as long as we have waited for *Public Accounts* which have been printed now for six weeks. They are safely collecting dust on them, assuming they're in a new warm, dry place. Failing that, if they're in a damp place, they're collecting mould and will probably have to be reprinted before we can get them.

I want to ask you to get the Minister of Finance to come loose, spring loose with the *Public Accounts* because it makes our job that much easier if we can see what

spending you did last year. I think you can appreciate we're going through this year's estimates with very little knowledge of what you and your department did last year.

And just so you don't feel left out, it's not just the Minister of Finance that I'm concerned with. While you're pressing the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden for the *Public Accounts*, I would ask that you check with your office and have a request for information that was sent to you in April. And we still have not received any word, despite having called your office on Thursday afternoon, that's May 12, to which the response was, well, we'll check with the department and send that information to us and would confirm that with a telephone call later that day — presumably. We are still waiting for that telephone call. Do you have that information available, and would you send it across if you do?

I guess one more item before I take my place and let you respond. Is Mr. Katzman, the former MLA from Rosthern, still working as you special assistant?

(1600)

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, hon. critic. I would agree with you that your office has asked of our department a long list of questions, very detailed-type questions in written form. And it was in the month of April; it was as of April 29 was the date of your letter. I believe we received it something like May 4 or thereabouts.

And the departmental officials have been busy looking at your request, and I am very pleased to be able to provide to you right now. They just finished putting the finishing touches on it only moments ago, and we do have the information for you. I'm sorry I could not have got it to you a little bit earlier, but your request did come in the very last few days in April.

Respecting Mr. Katzman, Mr. Katzman is on contract with the Department of Highways at the present time.

Mr. Trew: — In what projects have you Mr. Katzman involved with right now?

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Katzman is presently involved in a number of projects, and the one that comes to mind, that I am most proud of, is Mr. Katzman's involvement with the community signing program. I do know that Mr. Katzman spent some time recently at the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) convention and dealt with a number of rural municipalities regarding the question of signing in their communities; has gone out and met with city officials and chamber of commerces in promoting and advising and trouble-shooting on a very popular program called our community signing program.

In addition to that, Mr. Katzman is what I would call a trouble-shooter. And in certain cases where there are disputes as to between landowners, or if there are differences of opinion with respect to such things as gravel purchases or land purchases or accesses, Mr. Katzman does work on those types of problems of us,

and in fact does a very good job.

Mr. Trew: — It's just great you've got him working on the community signing project, a project that was started, I believe, in 1984. It's kind of rehashing old news.

Mr. Minister, we are, in Saskatchewan, witnessing a return of our highways system to that of the Roman cobble-stone highways. Those highways were state of the art highways when they were built more than two millennium ago — more than two millennium ago. In Saskatchewan, when the people of Saskatchewan are looking and longing for a return to the good old days, they're not longing for a return to two millennium ago when they could bounce from one cobble-stone to the next. Instead, the people of Saskatchewan are looking and longing for the day when they can again travel their highways with some degree of safety.

We used to see signs advertising, "Join Us," promoting seat-belt use. Now we see signs saying, "Lights On For Life." It is clearly the signs of the future that are going to — at the rate we're going — the signs of the future are going to say, "Hang on for life," not "Lights On For Life," but "Hang on for life."

I want to review the '87-88 *Supplementary Estimates*. Your total departmental expenditures for the past fiscal year are \$222 million, broken down as follows: administration, 32.4 million; maintenance, 87.5 million, and capital construction, 103 million. This year the department's estimates include . . . pardon me, indicate that a total of 231 million will be allocated. That's going to result, on the surface, of an increase of 3.9 per cent, Mr. Minister, or an increase of just over eight and a half million dollars.

But the allocations for 1988-89 are: for administration, 32.7 million; maintenance, 87.4 million; and capital, \$111 million. But these figures are somewhat deceiving. The reason that I say that is they include your infamous payments to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. This year, payments to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation have increased by nine and one-half per cent, from 8.2 million to over \$9 million.

If you take this bookkeeping transfer of money from one pocket to the other, take that out, you can see that your total expenditure for the department is significantly below the expenditures of your department of even two years ago when the total budget for Highways and Transportation was over \$224 million.

How can you claim that this is an increasing spending on roads and highways in this province when what you're really doing is transferring money from one pocket to the other? And can you explain in detail what the estimated expenditure to Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation is for? What services and what facilities are being provided to the department for that huge amount of money. Because you see, Mr. Minister, this over \$9 million is virtually the same amount of money as you have announced for your new highway rehabilitation program. So can you give us a breakdown of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation

pay-out?

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to point out to the member opposite that in fact we are spending an additional 10 or \$11 million on roads and transportation. And your point respecting the property management corporation is, in this instance, it is not relevant.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, that there is a new program that was announced in the budget, of which tenders have already gone out on a good number of the properties or a good number of the contracts. And we are spending an additional \$10-point million in the enhanced highway resurfacing program. It is \$10 million that I believe is needed out there on the ageing system, and it's a \$10 million that I feel very proud, as Minister of Highways and Transportation, that we have been able to achieve and spend directly on our highway system.

So in total, Mr. Chairman, you will see that our capital budget is indeed \$111 million. Last year it was \$100.9 million. It is an increase of 10 or \$11 million, and I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the people of Saskatchewan, the people who drive on our highways, the people who use the system, are indeed very pleased that we have chosen to spend those additional moneys on the highways in this province.

Your question respecting property management corporation is a common question that has been asked by many of the critics in the opposition, and the answer there is, Mr. Speaker, that it has been this government who has chosen to fairly represent the rents that we pay, the services that we are provided with by the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation in a fair, reasonable, and realistic fashion.

The increase in costs from '87-88 to '88-89 run from last year being \$8.2 million, this year being \$9 million — approximately \$800,000 difference. And those are for services of . . . primarily rent is the big service that property management provides to us, but as well, mail services and photo services and records management and some small capital projects.

So you speak of the property management payment going up by \$9 million or something; in fact, it's gone up about \$800,000. We feel that it is a fair representation of the services that are provided to us, and I believe that it is prudent to allow individual departments to have the flexibility now, to go where the cost is least for these types of services, and I believe that that flexibility now exists in the system.

Mr. Trew: — A number of points, Mr. Minister. I did not say that the payment to Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation went up \$9 million; I said it went up nearly \$1 million. The 9 million is, coincidentally, almost identical to your new road rehabilitation program that you've announced, of \$10 million this year.

I want to take a little exception to what you said about the capital spending project. In 1986-87, the Highways capital budget, you spent, or claimed to have spent,

\$109.6 million. This year your capital budget is 111.3, counting your so-called additional \$10 million. Well 111.3, you subtract 109.6, you certainly don't have \$10 million; you've got closer to \$1 million difference than 10. So I mean the fact that you're using all this smoke and mirrors to say there's an additional \$10 million just simply is not there. Your spending is clearly up from last year, but only because last year you decreased the spending from the year before.

Minister, the maintenance budget I want to deal with. From 1980 to '81, from that year, that fiscal year, to '81-82, the maintenance budget for your department increased 18.4 per cent. Since that time we have seen a subvote to the point where in, for instance, 1986-87 the increase was 5.34 per cent; the next year, '87-88, after the election was safely out of the way, we see a decrease of 1.6 per cent in that subvote, and then this year, '88-89, no change; it is absolutely static. You made the cut last year; you've maintained it static this year.

The maintenance budget is clearly inadequate. Any and everybody who ever travel s a highway in Saskatchewan understands it. You can feel by the seat of your pants as you're bouncing from one pot-hole to the next. What we need is some additional moneys spent on road maintenance. Clearly that is indicated.

You look at any highway, but take No. 11, because it's one of the most used highways in the province — I say one of the most; I don't purport that it is the highest used highway — but you have shear failure on No. 11. Shear failure, just for . . . I suspect you know, Mr. Minister, but for any of your colleagues that may not know, a shear failure is when you have the pavement drop, usually in the outside, the passenger wheel area on the shoulder. When you have a shear failure it is simply too late to repave. There's no resurfacing that can take care of that problem once you've got a shear failure.

(1615)

A shear failure is an indication of an inadequate maintenance budget because you failed to spend a few dimes or a few dollars in a timely manner. Because of that, the road-bed has to be substantially replaced before you can again repave it. And that's the situation that we have on several stretches of No. 11 Highway.

I think it's just a disgrace that you haven't spent a few dimes to save many dollars at a later time. You're now into the situation where you have to spend dollars, and lots of them, on No. 11 Highway; either that or you're going to see an awful lot of accidents. Hopefully we will not be seeing any increase in the death rate on that highway, but certainly when you have a failure in the highway like there is in many parts of it now, that is a risk that we run.

Minister, I'll give you one more thing before I sit down. I'm sure you want to respond to the maintenance budget being inadequate, but I want to talk also about the Highways capital budget which has done even worse than the maintenance budget.

It had an annual increase of 12.1 per cent in 1981, and then it has had very erratic movement ever since. But inevitably you wind up spending less money than previous.

In 1981-82 there was \$113.7 million spent on the Highways capital budget. That dropped then, after you formed the government, to 104.4 million, and it has never reached \$113.7 million. This year is as close as you can say you have come to it with your capital budget of \$111 million.

You're still some \$2.4 million short, excluding inflation; totally ignoring inflation, you are still short. Inflation, from 1981-82 till to date, has totalled nearly 50 per cent. We may quarrel over whether it's 40 or 50 or 60, but as a ballpark figure inflation has run at that rate.

So even with your much touted rehabilitation program, the absolute level of capital expenditures this year is below what it was in 1981-82, and again, no account for inflation when I say that. That hardly represent, Mr. Minister, a record of continuing emphasis on maintaining and protecting one of the province's largest public assets. And when I say one of our largest public assets, I remind you that the total investment in the highway system now exceeds over \$3 billion.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, first I would like to respond on the question of the amount of money spent on maintenance in the Highways and Transportation budget.

The member can chat and quote figures, and in and out of context, but I'd like to quote the two figures, Mr. Chairman, to keep this debate and discussion very, very simple.

And these are the facts, Mr. Chairman: in the year 1981-82 the maintenance budget was \$56,965,420. Let's call that, Mr. Chairman, \$57 million — 1981-82, \$57 million. The current budget at 1988-89 is \$87,447,700 — let's call that \$87 million.

The fact is, Mr. Chairman, 1981 budget brought down by the NDP administration in Highways and Transportation maintenance, \$57 million; 1988-89, \$87 million, a \$30 million increase, if you want to take that over a longer period of time and add up the maintenance budget under the NDP administration from 1978 to '81, compare that with the last four years, Mr. Chairman, it is total, an increase of 69.7 per cent increase in the maintenance budget under Highways and Transportation. So, Mr. Speaker, or, Mr. Chairman, there's no question; we have spent more money in the maintenance part of the budget.

I will now respond, Mr. Chairman, to the member's comments on Highway No. 11. — a highway between Saskatoon . . . the portion between Saskatoon and Regina. It is a very, very busy highway, Mr. Chairman; it is a highway on which many of the members from the opposition do travel. I will certainly concede to the opposition that Highway No. 11 is one of the highways in the province that is in need of moneys being spent on it.

I am very pleased to announce, Mr. Chairman, and much

to the satisfaction of the member from Arm River, who has brought this to my attention on many occasions — a good portion of that highway travels through his constituency. And the member from Arm River, the member from Arm River, as many good MLAs on this side of the House, has represented his constituents well by bringing this to my attention, by bringing this to my attention.

And this year, Mr. Speaker, there is a contract that has been or will be very shortly let . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . it has been let, I'm advised, on No. 11 Highway — it is \$1.7 million. I would add, Mr. Speaker, that this amount is over and above, this amount is in addition to another contracts that were other moneys that we have spent on No. 11 Highway. And indeed, it is an important highway for the people of Saskatchewan and we have every intention, every intention of expending as many dollars as we possibly can to make that a first-class highway.

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Minister, you spoke of my numbers not being accurate. I talked in terms of 1980-81, the maintenance budget being \$51,127,860. I quote to you from the 1980-81 Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation annual report, and it shows the maintenance budget \$51,127,860. You can't get any more close than to the dollar.

I don't appreciate for two seconds you telling me that the numbers I am quoting are in any way, shape, or form inaccurate. This side of the House, when we were the government, we are the group that gave 11 balanced . . . consecutive balanced budgets, 11 of them. that's a record that you cannot even comprehend.

In the six years you have been the government, we have a record of six deficit budget. We have a situation where last year the Minister of Finance said, oh, the projected deficit's going to be 380-some million dollars. It turned into more than \$1.2 billion — out 300 per cent. And you have the audacity to say perhaps our figures are wrong when we take them from official reports.

I take exception to you questioning. You have every right to question it, but I just want to make it very clear, our numbers are accurate.

I want to deal with the changes that have taken place in regard to the Highways budget. In 1980-81, on administration for that department, there was \$15.7 million spent. In 1988-89, you're proposing \$32.7 million. That is more than double, more than double for the administration. I am most anxious to hear your comments on how efficient you are at administering your own department.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member brings up a very good question. I'm not surprised he would ask that. Any reasonable person looking at the increased administration would very soon see that there has been an increase in the administration portion of the budget. And it does have what I feel would be a very logical explanation.

When we formed government and since we have formed government, there has been various reorganizations that have taken place under this administration,

reorganizations that have taken place in the name of efficiency, reorganizations that have take place in the name of saving the taxpayers' dollars.

And I speak of such amalgamations or reorganizations as the Department of Highways under the Progressive Conservative administration in rolling over or taking into their budget or administration such things as the portions of the DNS (department of northern Saskatchewan) unit. The DNS unit was the mini-bureaucracy created by the NDP administration in northern Saskatchewan, and portions of that were rolled into Highways and Transportation.

I think it is clearly remembered, Mr. Chairman, by the people of Saskatchewan, the absolute bureaucratic mess that was created by the former administration in DNS, and Highways and Transportation has taken a portion of that bureaucratic mess into Highways and Transportation.

As well, there has been reorganizations with respect to the Highway Traffic Board. Changes there have taken place to cause increases in administration. Department of Highways has taken on what used to be a separate agency, the transportation agency and the transportation policy unit. These were separate units set up by the NDP rolled into Highways and Transportation, and there certainly have been many, many efficiencies there.

Now the member opposite, Mr. Chairman, will attempt to make the case that because the administration budget has gone up, that we are top-heavy in management, that a lot of the public's dollars are being spent on management. And I want to defend that very strongly, Mr. Chairman, by stating to you that this administration and, in particular, this department has undergone a very significant down-sizing that came as a result of an early retirement program where, in the Department of Highways and Transportation, we lost, frankly, a number of very, very good people in our department. Those people took the early retirement package.

(1630)

We are operating now with less management than I believe the department has operated for a long, long time. And there are efficiencies, Mr. Chairman, and I want to at this time commend all of the officials in the Department of Highways and Transportation who are doing today an excellent job with less people, with less people, Mr. Chairman.

And I am sure that every one of them has had added responsibilities, added burdens on their shoulders, to make Highways and Transportation operate as efficiently and as effectively as possible. And I believe today, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Highways and Transportation is operating as efficiently as any department across the country, and I'm indeed pleased and proud of the people in the department who have down-sized and who are operating very efficiently. And to make the case that we have got more administration, more top-heavy in management, is not accurate.

Mr. Trew: — So we have the Highway Traffic Board, which is now the regulation and traffic safety division — correct? Okay.

And in the year's vote I see we've got the regulation and traffic division, a total of \$3,495,000. Now we're just talking about a more than doubling of what it costs you to run your department, from \$15.7 million to \$32.7 million this year — just for the record, the \$15.7 million being what was spent in 1980-81.

You have taken some of the department of northern services into your department. You've described it as a mini-bureaucracy. Clearly by what you're doing here you've changed that mini-bureaucracy into a maxi-bureaucracy within the Department of Highways.

Take off three and half million dollars for the Highway Traffic Board, you still have a \$13.5 million increase in cost of running your department. You have done such innovative things as laying off hundreds and hundreds of Saskatchewan former Department of Highways workers — hundreds of them out there, many of them still without work, many of them not working on our roads and streets and highways.

Instead, you have now got people like the former MLA for Rosthern on your staff. You have also given yourselves, Executive Council, massive pay raises. My question is: what is the contract, what are the terms of employment for Mr. Katzman? Second question is: how large was the increase that you gave Gail Anderson?

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — To just respond a little bit further to your questions on the increase in administration — and here again, Mr. Chairman, I make the very strong point that those increases in administration were due to internal changes that, I believe, have created a far more efficient unit for Highways and Transportation with the amalgamation of different things from the Highway Traffic Board, the transportation agency and DNS, and a good portion of that in addition, was the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, a bill of approximately \$9 million.

So those types of reorganizations, Mr. Chairman, have been efficiency driven, I believe, in the interests of the taxpayers of this province. They have been wise and prudent moves. And today, as I once again said, Mr. Chairman, Highways and Transportation is operating with less people and operating very, very efficiently.

I would, secondly, respond to your question regarding Mr. Katzman's employment. And I would tell the hon. member that the terms of his employment are very similar to the terms of a contract that was in effect with the NDP administration. And they had on contract a former NDP MLA candidate — or was he a candidate? He was actually a former MLA, Mr. Martin Semchuk. And the terms and conditions of Mr. Katzman's contract would be very, very similar to that.

The difference would be, Mr. Chairman, the difference would be, Mr. Chairman, is that Mr. Katzman today and since he has become employed by the Department of Highways and Transportation, is actually doing some

Highways and Transportation work.

The difference is, Mr. Chairman, that I view Mr. Katzman as a trouble-shooter who has driven miles around this province and looked after very, very sensitive areas. When we're talking about disputes about landowners, when we're talking about accesses to businesses where small businesses want accesses onto highways, when we're talking about community signing where business people in the province of Saskatchewan want to place up signs, there are rules and regulations that should be followed.

And Mr. Katzman has worked very, very well and with the assistance of some people in the department, but has been out across Saskatchewan handling these sensitive matters and doing an excellent job.

Your third question was with respect to an increase in wages or a reclassification in my office, and that reclassification moved Miss Gail Anderson from an MA (ministerial assistant) 3 to an MA 4 and the increase in salary was from \$3,016 to \$3,392.

Mr. Trew: — So we have here an admission that the cost of administration has more than doubled from 1980-81 till to date — more than doubled. At the same time we see the proportion of administration of your department's figures having gone from 9.37 per cent in 1980-81, till today it's 14.12 per cent. That's an increase of nearly 5 per cent or one-third, as a percentage of your department's budget.

Had the same thing happened with regard to maintenance, instead of spending \$51.1 million as we did in 1980-81, instead of that having gone to 87 million today, it would rather be in the range of \$103 million. You're far short of that.

And in regards to the capital budget, that's where the difference really shows up. Had we seen the same change there, a doubling, as we have seen in the cost of administering, instead of spending \$111 million today, you would be spending \$205 million — \$205 million. That's if everything were done with the same efficiency that you handled the administration.

Mr. Minister, the people of Saskatchewan simply cannot afford any more of your pork-barrel administration changes, your internal reorganization, your shuffling of cost from one pocket to another, such as we have with Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation where you have in effect siphoned off \$9 million that used to be available to spend on highway maintenance and rebuilding and even building the odd new highway. That's \$9 million that now goes to Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation and thus is unavailable to do any real meaningful work to bring our highways back into shape.

I think it's a real shame the way you have not followed priorities as they should be. I've outlined that in Highway 11 and will be returning to that a little later in the estimates.

But Highway 11 is simply symptomatic of the huge

malaise that is out there. You can't drive a highway anywhere in Saskatchewan without finding pot-hole after pot-hole after pot-hole. We used to make bad jokes about the golf-course and the 18 holes to the mile; I won't even begin to do that. What you have done, Mr. Minister, is you have added an executive back nine to each and every kilometre of highway, and it's just really a shame.

I very much would appreciate hearing how you can justify holding the capital budget at such a low level, not taking anything into account for inflation but rather having a same capital budget this year as there was two years ago and has been for a number of years now, when all about you the highways are falling apart. How is that you can maintain such a woefully inadequate capital budget?

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — The member opposite and I are having a disagreement here, Mr. Speaker, on the increase in administration. Mr. Speaker, I once . . . or Mr. Chairman, I once again want to stress that those increase in administration are here and accounted for, and they break down as follows: rent to property management corporation, \$9 million; Highway Traffic Board administration, \$3.5 million; transportation agency, 300,000; DNS, 500,000. And the fact, the fact, Mr. Chairman, is this: that this government and this department has undergone down-sizing, has undergone early retirement programs, and we are operating with less people, and we are operating efficiently.

Mr. Chairman, I would say that the public in Saskatchewan, for some time now, have demanded that governments be more lean and more efficient and that their tax dollars are used to better purposes. And, Mr. Chairman, beyond a shadow of a doubt, this administration has done exactly that, and the taxpayers of the day are getting very, very good value for the dollars that they put out towards the Department of Highways and Transportation with respect to administration.

(1645)

This department, Mr. Speaker, is no longer, no longer . . . I'll start again, Mr. Chairman . . . Mr. Chairman, because this department never was that bad. But I'll tell you that departments such as DNS were not all that lean and not all the efficient. Other departments under the NDP administration were not all that lean or not all that efficient.

It has been this government that has done so — with a great deal of courage — has down-sized and early retired and has now a very, is a very efficient operating unit. And it is something, Mr. Chairman, that I frankly, and this government, and I believe the employees in this department, are proud of the work that they do. And there's no top-heavy management in this administration, Mr. Chairman.

Now the member opposite has chatted about the capital level of budget and the maintenance level of budget. And the facts are simply these; that in 1987-88 the budget for capital was \$100.9 million of actual moneys spent on the highways in Saskatchewan on capital projects. The budget for 1988-89 is \$111 million. That is a \$10 million

increase. I wished it could have been more. I don't say that this amount of moneys is representative of the true needs that are out there today in Saskatchewan. We have a massive highway system in this province, probably more highways per capita than any jurisdiction in probably North American or maybe even a wider area than that.

But the facts are, Mr. Chairman, that there has been an increase. It has been an increase of \$10 million of dedicated money to resurfacing of our major high-volume paved highways. This is where the emphasis is currently on, Mr. Chairman. I believe that the public of Saskatchewan, for the most part, have accepted that that increase, given today's economic realities and today's environment, is fair and is reasonable.

I wish the increase could have been more, and there were department that had no increase this year. This Department of Highways and Transportation has received \$10 million more that is going directly into the highways system, and I don't believe that the members opposite can deny that. If they denied that, Mr. Chairman, their heads are certainly in the sand.

I'll give you an example of the amount of resurfacing that we are doing this year. This year, 1988-89, more than 600 kilometres of major high-volume paved highways will be resurfaced. This is welcome news by the driving public in Saskatchewan, this is welcome news by the road-building industry and this is welcome news by this government. And it seems to me that the only people who are complaining, and with no justification, are the NDP.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, while you're in the mood here for making announcements of welcome news, I bring to your attention a particular stretch of highway that is badly in need of attention.

I was most encouraged by the fact that some 15 minutes ago or so that you announced that there would be one . . . some extra \$1.7 million, I believe you said, of capital moneys going to improve Highway 11 coming south of Saskatoon. I certainly concur and agree with you, Mr. Minister, that driving that stretch of highway is truly a driving experience. It's badly in need of improvement.

But there is a stretch of highway, Mr. Minister, that makes Highway 11 look like highway heaven, and I'm referring to Highway 363, Mr. Minister, about which you've had some recent correspondence. I note that in a letter dated April 21 to the R.M. of Rodgers, Mr. Minister, you refer to an estimate that it would take some \$10 million to reconstruct Highway 363 from the Crestwynd corner to . . . that would be to Hodgeville.

And I bring to your attention, Mr. Minister, that there is a section of Highway 363 that is particularly in need of attention from your department. The section of Highway 363 between Courval and Crestwynd corner is particularly crucial to a good number of people who live in that area south and east of Moose Jaw. People from the areas north of Gravelbourg, Shamrock, Bateman, Coderre, and Courval rely very much on that stretch of highway, Mr. Minister, to travel to either Moose Jaw or

Regina. And given that the hauling of grain to Moose Jaw, the patterns that exist now. It's become an absolute must that we have to have a decent stretch of road for those trucks to travel.

I note as well, Mr. Minister, and you'll be aware, that there has been some dust-free surfacing done on that stretch of highway. But that stretch is full of pot-holes, not different from a lot of other roads in Saskatchewan, except perhaps in degree. There are a large number of pot-holes. The road is really quite narrow. I can't say from personal experience, but I'm advised that it is a nip-and-tuck kind of manoeuvre to get a couple of semi's passing one another on 363 because of the width of the highway.

Now my question to you, Mr. Minister, is this: I recognize that you have recently indicated to the R.M. of Rodgers that there isn't anything in the plan this year for reconstruction of Highway 363, but I wonder whether you can see, in light especially of the fact that you just a few moments ago announced that there will be 1.7 additional dollars for Highway 11, whether you might be able to find it within your budget to make some extra funds available to do at least a portion of Highway 363, and noting particularly that the some-20 miles or so between Courval and the Crestwynd corner is particularly crucial.

Let me ask at the same time, Mr. Minister, to roll two questions into one. So first of all, can you see it possible to make some funds available to do some reconstruction, particularly in that critical stretch; and if not for the whole stretch this year, would you see it as being possible to perhaps look at something like 6 or 8 or 10 miles of construction this year, and a commitment down the road?

It is, you can appreciate, a very important stretch of roadway for people in that part of the province. And what they badly need is some kind of commitment so that the R.M.s also can do some assessing in terms of their road-work, and they can make some plans knowing what the intentions of the province are.

So the two questions: can you see some funds possibly this year for some reconstruction of that road, particularly in that Courval to Crestwynd corner, that stretch of highway — if not for the whole stretch, for a portion of it? And I also ask, then, whether you can make a commitment to some kind of long-term plan over the next one, two, three years that the R.M.s can use to rely on with confidence, and enter into their plans?

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — The member should be aware that each year, each spring in the legislature we table out annual project array of the projects that we would undertake in the current fiscal year. It was not as if I was making a sudden announcement on Highway No. 11. Highway No. 11 had been in our plans and was announced in the spring project array.

When you speak of Highway No. 363 west of Moose Jaw, I would tell you that Highway 363 is indeed an important rural highway. The member, the current member for Thunder Creek has visited with me, on Highway No. 363, over the last few years and has made strong and firm

representation to me for the need of reconstruction of Highway No. 363. The members opposite well know that contracts in the last few years have been undertaken on Highway No. 363, and some very significant improvements have been made. And I would trust that the member opposite would acknowledge that the work done on Highway No. 363 was good work, and the people in that area have been, I think, quite satisfied with the improvements to Highway No. 363.

The member speaks of additional moneys being spent on Highway No. 363 further west of Moose Jaw. I once again remind you that the project array for this year has been set. It is certainly a highway that will be reviewed, along with all other highways that are in need of upgrading, within the context of our project array for 1989-99, and I'll certainly take a look at it without making a firm commitment to you today.

Mr. Goodale: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the few minutes remaining this afternoon, I have two specific questions I would like to put to the minister affecting concerns I the south-western part of my constituency of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg. One is a highway concern and the other is a railroad concern. I'll, in the interests of time, put both questions at once, even though they're not directly related, and ask the minister to respond to them simultaneously.

First of all, on the highways matter, Mr. Minister, you and I have corresponded with respect to a particular problem on Highway 18, south of Wood Mountain, where there is a particularly blind and dangerous hill where there have been some mishaps and some incidents. Fortunately, to this point, they have not been of the most serious kind, but they do cause concern in that vicinity for the people who travel that highway on a daily basis. It's an area that I think does need some immediate attention, in the interests of safety, from your department in terms of removing some of the blind areas on the highway and bringing it up to more safe standards. You indicated in a letter to me that you were looking at some things that might be done in respect of that particular spot on Highway 18, south of Wood Mountain, and I would ask you if you have anything further that you can report at the time in terms of what will be done to alleviate the safety concerns with respect to that particular patch of road.

And secondly, Mr. Minister, the railway concern — I bring to your attention the CP Rail Colony subdivision, the subdivision running west of Rockglen to the community of Killdeer. That is a particular branch line in Saskatchewan that has been the subject of an abandonment order by the CTC (Canadian Transport Commission). That order is presently under appeal by the Killdeer rail retention committee. On behalf of that committee, I have filed, in this legislature, a petition indicating the substance of the appeal, and calling upon the legislature and the government to support the Killdeer rail retention committee in their appeal against the CTC abandonment order.

In my correspondence with the federal government, I have not yet been able to determine the exact status of this matter in the eyes of the governor in council at the federal level, and I wonder if you could, with respect to this rail issue,

indicate first of all that the appeal against the abandonment order has the full support of the Government of Saskatchewan, which I think is the case, but I would be anxious to have that officially on the record, Mr. Minister.

And secondly, I wonder if I could have your specific assurance that there is some technical difficulty in the manner in which this appeal has been filed, that the Government of Saskatchewan would come to the assistance of the Killdeer rail retention committee and urge the Government of Canada to overlook any technical defect and hear the appeal on the basis of the substance of that appeal, which, in my opinion, is very sound and solid substance and should substantiate the allowing of the appeal and the varying, at least, if the abandonment order.

(1700)

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to your question on Highway No. 18 and the blind spot, if you like, or spots that exist on that road and the safety concerns that you have, I would advise the member that I very much share those same concerns, and I am advised that indeed it is a valid concern.

I do not have any further information to give you today other than what we wrote to you in a letter a short while ago, but I will give the member the following commitment that it will receive serious consideration by myself and by the department in future expenditures. So I very much share your view on it, and it is something that we would like to very seriously question.

With respect to the Colony subdivision and the abandonment order by the CTC, and the ensuing appeal by the rail retention committee, the Killdeer rail retention committee, here again I share very much your same concern. And I want to tell you that we do support strongly the appeal by that committee. I have written to the minister in charge and, furthermore, I have met with the local rail retention committee on more than one occasion.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.