

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to all members of this Assembly, some 55 young people from the constituency of Regina South, sitting in the Speaker's gallery. They are Grade 5 and 6 students from Grant Road School located in Whitmore Park, a fine subdivision in south Regina. They are accompanied here today by their teach Mrs. Friesen, as well as Mrs. Inglis.

Hopefully they will find their visit to the legislature today both informational and education. And as they walk around the grounds on our beautiful Wascana Centre, they may have an opportunity to see our new crop of young Canada Geese goslings. And I look forward to joining them a little bit later and determining how they enjoyed question period.

I therefore ask all members to be on their best behaviour today and now join me in a pleasant welcome to these young people.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martin: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege on behalf of the member from Rosthern to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the House, 27 students and their adult companions from Dalmeny, Saskatchewan — Prairie View Elementary School in Dalmeny, Saskatchewan — grade 4 students, Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery. They are accompanied by Mervin Driedger, Mrs. Driedger and Liz Driedger, Miss Chomyn, Mrs. Polan and Mrs. Vance, along with Mr. Stubbs, who is the bus driver.

As my colleague from Regina South said, I hope that you enjoy the beautiful Wascana Park area and see the young goslings. I know you are all interested in wildlife. I'll be joining you at 3 o'clock for pictures, in the absence of the member from Rosthern.

On behalf of the member from Rosthern, will all the members here please welcome our fine students and our guests from Prairie View School in Dalmeny, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce to you and other members of the Assembly, 30 Grade 4 students from Grenfell Elementary School that are seated in the west gallery. They're here today with their teacher Gordon Warman, and chaperons Tim Taylor, Carol Piller and Gail Cole.

I hope the students enjoy their time here in the Legislative Chamber and enjoy their visit to Regina. I'll be meeting with you after for pictures and refreshments and answer your questions. So welcome here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have the honour of introducing to you, and through you, 31 students and two teachers from Fairview School in the constituency of Swift Current.

Mr. Speaker, Fairview School, in my six years in this House, has taken an active part, in terms of coming in every spring to view the proceedings. And I must admit that I find meeting with the students very refreshing, and their observations and questions often put one back into perspective in terms of the real world.

Mr. Speaker, they have with them today their teachers, Lois Bailey and Donna Rezansoff. They have also allowed four observers to come along with them, Arlene Walker, Randy Beler, Alice Elias and Blair Froese.

I would ask all members to give them the traditional welcome to this House.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Recommendations of Schwartz Report

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister, my colleagues and I will spend some time today asking your government about your betrayal of services to rural Saskatchewan families, and of course it's logical to start with your biggest betrayal, that of health.

Mr. Minister, your government's policies have betrayed rural families with the dismantling of the dental care program, cut-backs of public health nurses, cut-backs to mental health services and the prescription drug plan. And today we see that the Schwartz report, which you have hidden, Mr. Minister, from Saskatchewan people for almost five months, in effect recommends the closure of rural hospitals with 25 beds or fewer — 81 of this province's 133 hospitals.

Mr. Minister, do you accept or reject that recommendation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, a couple of things. The very first thing in terms of the preface to the hon. member's question regarding the betrayal of this government — of rural Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this government represents rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this government represents rural Saskatchewan; you look at the members on this side of the House and where are they from? We're from rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and we continue to represent rural Saskatchewan. it's the Progressive Conservative government that represents them in all aspects of their lives in the rural parts of this province, number one.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: The second thing, Mr. Speaker, the member makes specific reference to a report done by Mr. Elmer Schwartz, who is president of the Saskatoon City Hospital and who was asked to do a report regarding the role, the role of rural hospitals in the province.

Mr. Speaker, a report on the changing role of rural hospitals is certainly a far cry from anything that has been reported in the press, or anything about closure of rural hospitals. The report on the changing role dealt with . . . and I challenge that member or any one on that side of the House or any one in that press gallery anywhere to find a word in that report which says that rural hospitals should be closed. There is nothing in that report that says that, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one more point as it relates to rural Saskatchewan and the rural hospitals. This government, this Progressive Conservative government, in the last six years has been building integrated facilities; they integrated facilities by building nursing home beds, long-term, heavy-care beds on to — they're actually building them on to the small rural hospitals that have been in existence for some time . . . speaks directly to the viability of those rural hospitals and the continued viability of those rural hospitals, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, I didn't ask for a bunch of rhetoric from you and further attacks on the press. Your government commissioned a special report, and that report in effect outlines massive closure of rural hospitals, and you cannot deny that, Mr. Minister.

I want to know whether you favour that approach. I'm simply asking you whether you favour that approach, and if so, which hospitals you're intending to close.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I forget the word that the member used, but I deny clearly, on behalf of all members in this Progressive Conservative government and all members of our party, I deny clearly any intention — any intention — any intention to close rural hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, what we will do, and what we do in a responsible way, is when we said to Mr. Schwartz, do a report on the role of those hospitals; when we said, look at the changing role of those hospitals, given all of the demographics and all of the things that have been changing, we said, what is the role now in terms of the ageing population? Can we increase the number of special care home beds, which is what the pressure is in the delivery of health care in rural Saskatchewan?

If they don't know that, Mr. Speaker, they are a long way out of touch with rural Saskatchewan, a lot more out of touch than what I even thought they were. The pressure in rural Saskatchewan is for more and more special care home beds.

This government is delivering more and more special care home beds, and through the avenue of integrated facilities this government is providing viability for existing rural hospitals in their changing role, and at the same time providing nursing home beds for special care needs of elderly rural residents.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you sat on that report for nine months and you refused to make it public. and I want to quote from that report. It says:

If we had a health system similar to the United States, many of these hospitals would not survive. The market would have dictated their closure.

Now that's a direct quote from the report, Mr. Minister. And I suggest to you that that's what it's all about, Mr. Minister — your government's privatization and free-market ideology run wild. And the health care of rural Saskatchewan families are being sacrificed because of your blind adherence to the free market system. Isn't that what it's all about, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Two points, Mr. Speaker. Two points, Mr. Speaker, and this is a word to the hon. Health critic of the NDP opposite. Mr. Elmer Schwartz who did this report and, as we talked about, gave the whole analysis of this report last fall at the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association, which the member . . . I should have suggested she or her colleagues or somebody should have attended and listened publicly, at the SASH (Saskatchewan Association of Special-Care Homes).

The health care associations in this province have had copies of this report for a number of months. This member raises this question on the day in which the *Leader-Post* has a story about it. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is the Health critic; this is the Health critic they're talking about.

And the second point, Mr. Speaker, is that the member asks the question about Mr. Schwartz's economic analysis. What I will portray is this: an economic analysis of a social problem as it relates to his discussion about market forces, etc., and if you take that whole . . . the comment that she quotes is somewhat out of context — I invite people to read it all — and that when she takes that sort of economic analysis of a social problem, I don't buy it.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I say very clearly, I dismiss that kind of analysis of a social problem, number two. And, Mr. Speaker, I say once again very, very clearly, this government represents rural Saskatchewan; this government will ensure the viability of rural hospitals in this province.

But, Mr. Speaker, we will ensure that viability not by burying our heads in the sands and leave the *status quo* necessarily, we will address rural Saskatchewan and rural Saskatchewan's health care needs and, more specifically, rural Saskatchewan's hospitals by ensuring the viability of

those hospitals with continuing care or long-term care facilities built right on to them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Services to Rural Communities

Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also to the Minister of Health, Mr. Minister, if you had released that document in December, we would have asked the question in December.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — And I want to say, Mr. Minister, the people of rural Saskatchewan have been victimized by your government's gutting of the dental program. They've been victimized by the privatization of that same program. And prior to last June, there were 330 rural communities that were services by that program; now there are only 71. I ask you, Mr. Minister, how can you say that that's providing better health service to the rural communities?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Speaker, just one more comment as it relates to rural Saskatchewan and the record of this group on rural Saskatchewan, as opposed to their record on rural Saskatchewan.

In 1976, Mr. Speaker, they had a moratorium. They had the gall to put a moratorium on the building of nursing home beds for the most senior of our generations, the senior citizens in this province. They put a moratorium on. They built no nursing home beds anywhere in rural Saskatchewan until we came to government. My colleague, the former minister of Health from Indian Head-Wolseley, began that process and we continue it today. That's one thing as it relate to rural Saskatchewan.

As it relates to the dental plan the member speaks about, I challenge any of those members over there to find communities in this province, to find citizens in this province, who will now have to drive more than about 50 miles or 30 . . . 50 kilometres, I'm sorry, 50 kilometres or 35 miles to a dentist in this province — 35 miles, 50 kilometres to a dentist, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I tell them this: there won't be a student in this province who won't be able to go to the dentist during the summer months. They will be this year. they will be going to the dentist during the summer months. And, Mr. Speaker, we have dental services in community after community that did not have dental services in the past, and they now have dental services.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, that's contrary to the facts and you know it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Let me list you some figures, Mr. Minister. In the constituency of Arm River, before there

were a dozen places; now there are two. In the constituency of Thunder Creek there were 10; now there's zero.

Mr. Minister, I want you to stand up in this House and tell the people of rural Saskatchewan how that's an improvement to health care in Saskatchewan. it isn't, and you know it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — The member uses the typical NDP approach. He says, delivery of health care services, and he relates it to the House and to the public on the basis of constituency boundaries — on the basis of constituency boundaries.

Mr. Speaker, we're relating the delivery of health care services on the basis of need in the communities, and that's where it is, and that's where the health care . . . and he also says there were 12 communities in Arm River, I believe, that had dental services.

Let's just be sure that we understand clearly what those dental services were. Perhaps a one visit a year to the particular school in Simpson or in Holdfast or in Liberty or whatever; perhaps two visits — I'll give them that — maybe two visits a year to the particular school.

Mr. Speaker, clearly dental services provided by dentists in the communities across Saskatchewan, where there were no dentists before, provide services not only to children whose dental services are paid for by the public purse but also to their parents and their grandparents and others in the communities. And, Mr. Speaker, that speaks directly to the viability of rural communities, something that we stand for in every department that we administer, the viability of rural communities. And we stand proudly on that record, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — New question, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister, Mr. Minister, it's very clear that you disagree with your own Premier because at your November convention, your party's convention, your Premier recognized that the dental program has ill-served the people of rural Saskatchewan.

I want to ask you, Mr. Minister: how much longer do the residents of rural Saskatchewan have to wait before you reinstate the program that you scrapped, that you damaged, that you tore apart? How much longer do the people of this province have to wait for you to open your eyes?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the member . . . there's an interesting point here, Mr. Speaker, and it speaks . . . and I want to make it very clear here today.

The members opposite, the members opposite speak of the lack of dental services in rural Saskatchewan, and it's always from these urban folks who say that. And I say that very clearly, because in rural Saskatchewan, in rural Saskatchewan people are not saying we have a lack of dental services. they don't say we have a lack of dental services. Urban Saskatchewan people are saying rural Saskatchewan people need services.

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Allow the minister to continue.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — And the second point, Mr. Speaker, as I've said and as the Premier has said, it is our intention, and we continue to improve on the dental program with the location of more and more dentists in the rural Saskatchewan, more and more satellite clinics in rural Saskatchewan, to the point, Mr. Speaker, where I believe that there isn't a citizen in this province — with perhaps one exception in some parts of my own constituency and near the Goodsoil area — where people will have to drive more than 35 miles to a dentist in this province.

Mr. Anguish: — I'm sure the minister doesn't recognize that Edam, Turtleford, Porcupine Plain, Paradise Hill, and many others no longer have dental services.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Post Offices in Rural Saskatchewan

Mr. Anguish: — My question, Mr. Minister, is to the Minister of Rural Development, and it has to do with post offices in rural Saskatchewan. The minister would have to recognize that since the Mulroney government came into place in Ottawa there've been many closures of rural post offices and studies of closures for more rural post offices.

Mr. Minister, today there were two trucks that started a cross-Canada journey to pick up names and petitions to present to the Mulroney government in Ottawa to ask them to stop this insane policy of closing rural post offices. I would ask the minister: can we count on you, that when the trucks pass through this city, that we can count on your support to be there and show support; that we don't want rural post offices decimated in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, Mr. Speaker, in regards to rural post offices, I met with the postal union, two of the members here about a month ago, and we discussed rural post office in Saskatchewan. They had a concern as raised by the hon. member opposite in regards to the closure of post offices, more so in regards to the service to the people of rural Saskatchewan.

We have talked with the federal government in regards to the retaining of services in rural Saskatchewan as far as post offices go, and to retaining of post offices. And in regards to the petition, when it comes through, I'd be happy to sign it to support rural post offices.

Mr. Anguish: — Well we're very happy to hear that, Mr. Speaker, and we'll be looking forward to the minister being there with the names of all your colleagues on the

petition to tell Mulroney that we don't want the post offices closed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Since you're in such a co-operative mood this afternoon, I have a new question to the minister, and that is that recently some provinces have passed resolutions to be passed on to the federal government. For example, and I would quote from the Alberta *Hansard*:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly is of the opinion that post offices provide valuable services to rural Albertans and is therefore concerned about the negative social and economic effects caused by the closing of post offices in many rural communities across Alberta.

My question to you, Mr. Minister, is: will you and your colleagues give unanimous support to a resolution from this legislature to be presented to the Mulroney government in Ottawa so that there's no more deterioration of post offices in rural Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Mr. Speaker, we would certainly be happy to support a resolution that would help in any way retain a rural post office and service to rural Saskatchewan. so if there's a resolution that we could bring forward that we would have their agreement and their support on it, that would help us preserve the service of post office services to rural Saskatchewan, we'd be very, very happy to do so.

Summer Employment for Students

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Human Resources and Labour. Mr. Minister, local governments have long been major employers of students looking for summer work, particularly in rural Saskatchewan. In fact the Opportunities '86 program created 1,952 jobs with local governments. In view of the fact that there are some 15,000 young people between the age of 15 and 24 unemployed in this province, will you now make a commitment to local governments to provide them with the money needed to create necessary summer employment for students?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Urban Affairs grants, to my knowledge, approximately \$61 million annually for the support of urban and rural governments, and it's not the mandate of my department to shift money to urban and rural governments. We have a program for student summer jobs which is the same as last year which provides for incentives for business and farmers to hire students.

This is the part of the economy that produces the revenue that generates the income on which this province operates. And this is the part of the economy we have chosen in the last two years to generate jobs for students.

In a lot of cases it builds those farms and businesses into long-term jobs.

So no, we're not going to reconsider and have my department under job creation for students supporting local governments.

Mr. Pringle: — New question to the same minister, Mr. Minister, you should really be called the minister of unemployment, insensitivity, and deception because that's your normal . . . (inaudible) . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: — And you did not answer my question, as usual, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, for many students in small towns, local governments are their best chance of getting a summer job, yet your government is denying them that opportunity this summer by unilaterally, which is your usual practice, of restricting the funding criteria.

Mr. Minister, why are you eliminating hundreds of jobs, opportunities for young people in small rural towns?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, over the past three years small rural towns, rural municipalities have participated in welfare reform creating hundreds of jobs for young people who had no jobs at all and never had any jobs. What we're talking about here is a program for student summer employment. When we include farmers and small business, that includes a large part of rural Saskatchewan and means that under this program jobs in rural Saskatchewan are more plentiful than they were under the NDP. I was a student under the NDP, and I recall how plentiful jobs were under your programs, and so do my neighbours and their children.

We have a program to spend \$4 million; the federal government has a program. I said this is not a program of transferring money from the provincial government to local government, this is a summer job-creation program. Last year we had a record number of jobs, and I anticipate this year we will match that record.

Police Services for Rural Saskatchewan

Mr. Shillington: — My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Justice. During the most severe periods of restraint in the past, the justice system was thought to be beyond that, but not so with this government.

Mr. Minister, it is apparent that police services in many communities have gone the way of good roads and good health services with the election of this government.

Mr. Minister, last spring, during your budget, by press release it became apparent that about 40 RCMP officers were being lost, primarily to rural Saskatchewan. The full impact of that is now being felt as a number of communities are doing without police services. They're complaining vociferously to us. I assume, as useless as it is, they still talk to you. Will you, Mr. Minister, reconsider this and reinstate these men?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the hon. member, being a former EA (executive assistant) to an attorney general, would understand that the allocation of men to rural Saskatchewan through the RCMP is a responsibility and a prerogative of the RCMP. I can say to the hon. member that last year the budget increased some 17 per cent for the Department of Justice; that this year there was a significant increase again, Mr. Speaker, and the largest increase, the largest increase in the budget for the Department of Justice this year was to pay additional money to the RCMP, some significant increase in the dollars paid to the RCMP, Mr. Speaker. That continues to escalate, pursuant to the contract negotiated by the Leader of the Opposition, that says we have to pay more and more and more each year.

The RCMP have indicated that the payment levels are in fact appropriate; that they can certainly handle the service, the policing service in rural Saskatchewan. Clearly they would like to have more, Mr. Speaker, but the reality is that the budget is adequate for them. It is the issue has been the RCMP. We are committed to the RCMP; the RCMP is doing an excellent job in rural Saskatchewan, and we will be there to continue to support that service for rural Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, if your . . . new question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, if your budget, if your departmental budget increased by 17 per cent, then I think the communities of Biggar, Melfort, Lanigan, Humboldt, and Gull Lake, just to name a few, who lost two-man detachments, they're going to wonder why there wasn't a little left over for policing in their communities.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, will you stop playing games with the Saskatchewan public and stop playing games with numbers and reinstate the people and the RCMP who serve these communities?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from Regina Centre would have us believe that the town of Biggar lost its detachment — there was a two-member detachment — I say to the hon. member of Regina Centre, go to the town of Biggar and you'll find that the detachment in Biggar is a lot larger than two members. And I'll advise the member from Regina Centre, if he has an opportunity, go to the town of Biggar; he'll find that the detachment is still there, that there's police officers still there, that they're still patrolling the town of Biggar, and they're patrolling the rural area around the town of Biggar, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, they are doing so with two fewer members, and that's what I said. My question, Mr. Minister, is very simple: when will you stand up for rural Saskatchewan, the people who gave you a vote in

the last election?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, one could take advice from the members opposite, from virtually all members opposite, and clearly we do. But when it comes to the member from Regina Centre, who probably seldom ever gets out of the city of Regina into rural Saskatchewan. I very much doubt that he knows what's going on in rural Saskatchewan, let alone what's going on with the RCMP detachments in rural Saskatchewan that are providing the service to our communities, that are doing an excellent job for our communities, and who are properly funded by this government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order.

MOTIONS

Preservation of Rural Post Offices

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, prior to orders of the day, I would beg leave of the Assembly to introduce a motion this afternoon concerning rural post offices; it would be very brief and to the point. And since the minister agreed in question period this afternoon that he would give unanimous consent to a motion concerning rural post offices in Saskatchewan, I would beg leave of the Assembly to introduce this motion now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — I would ask the hon. member to perhaps read the actual motion and then we can decide.

Mr. Anguish: — The actual motion that I would move, Mr. Speaker, is:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly is of the opinion that post offices provide valuable services to rural Saskatchewan, and it is therefore concerned about the negative social and economic effects caused by the closing of post offices in many rural communities across Saskatchewan.

And that's seconded by the hon. member from Regina North East, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — The member has asked for leave, is leave granted?

Leave granted.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I'd like to thank the members opposite for allowing the motion to be put before the Assembly here this afternoon.

Many rural communities have had devastating effects over recent years as they see rail lines being abandoned and elevators being closed. And when the post offices and elevators being closed. And when the post offices start to go, it really means the death to many, many rural communities. And the people who live there, I'm sure it saddens them deeply to see their community deteriorate

to such an extent that the post office actually leave. Although they stay and they fight, they want the support of groups such as the Legislative Assembly in the province of Saskatchewan to support their cause.

And the cause that we're talking about here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, is to tell the federal government very clearly and very loudly that we do not want any more closures of rural post offices in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, many post offices, as I have said, have closed. In some cases — I would take the community of Aylesbury, for example, where Aylesbury no longer has a post office. They have to drive in to the community of Chamberlain to pick up their mail. And although someone who writes to them from central Canada or some other place in the province can address it to a specific person at the community of Aylesbury and maybe even use that postal code, the letter might have the perception of going to the Aylesbury community but does not actually go there. It would go to the community of Chamberlain, where the residents who used to pick up Chamberlain, where the residents who used to pick up their mail at the Aylesbury post office must drive in some considerable distance in many cases, to pick up that mail.

And this is not an isolated case in the province, Mr. Speaker. It is a case that is recurring all too often in the province of Saskatchewan.

The other concern that we do have, Mr. Speaker, is Canada Post and their policy of a movement towards privatization, and we have deep concern about that. But I suppose the thrust of the motion here this afternoon is very specific. It's to be sent on to the federal government to give the federal government a very clear and a very strong indication that the Legislative Assembly in the province of Saskatchewan does not want any more rural post offices being closed.

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to be very brief because I don't want to unduly delay the proceedings here this afternoon.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the government and the members on this side of the House for giving unanimous consent and allowing the rules to be bent a little bit and having this motion brought in whereby we're making our attempt to save post office in rural Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Does the hon. member have a seconder?

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, I mentioned when I had first read the motion that the motion had been seconded by the member from Regina North East, sir.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I simply want to get up and briefly add my words to those of the member from The Battlefords who has moved this motion.

And I want to say, first of all, my word of appreciation to all the members of this House, including the members opposite, for allowing leave so that this motion could be

brought to this legislature at this time so that we can say in no uncertain terms to Canada Post and to the federal government, that we in Saskatchewan believe very firmly that the policies of Canada Post with regard to the closure of rural post offices in wrong. It is contrary to all of those things that we all know have developed the very social structure as well as the community and economic structure of Saskatchewan.

I say this not unkindly, Mr. Speaker, but I simply say it because I think it's true. People who make decisions in the — I think Canada Post headquarters is in Montreal — fail to understand that the social structure and economic structure here in Saskatchewan is far different and unique, far different than it is in the central part of Canada or the eastern part of Canada or the west coast.

There is something here that has made us unique and special. We've been able to accomplish things in this province that would not have been able to be accomplished unless we had used the techniques and the strategies that we employed. The policy in the closure of rural post offices is completely contrary to those efforts and that tradition.

And I could list you, because I know much of rural Saskatchewan, many communities that have been severely negatively impacted upon when certain important institutions have been removed, whether it's the closure of an elevator, or whether it's the closure of a school. Or whether it's the shutting down of a post office in those communities. There immediately becomes a trend of movement of traffic and commerce to another community, leading to the downgrading and, in some cases, eventual destruction of that particular rural community.

I appreciate the fact that we're going to be able to say here today, clearly, and I'm sure unanimously, to the Government of Canada, that they are not following the correct path, that they ought to change their policy or that they ought to tell Canada Post that Canada Post should change its policy and provide the kind of support that will continue to develop rural communities in Saskatchewan as we have known them, and so that we can build on that strength and make this province even a better place to live in than we have known it to be.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join in supporting this motion in regards to the need for the existence of post offices in rural Saskatchewan. I believe that the motion itself which says that the Legislative Assembly has as opinion that post offices provide variable services to rural Saskatchewan, and therefore concerned about the impact it will have on rural Saskatchewan.

But I want to make a couple comments about not only the post office but the importance how it relates to the rest of the services of rural Saskatchewan.

There's much more to rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, than our postal services alone. They are part of the network that's needed out there to maintain a service and

a quality of life that we've been used to as people of rural Saskatchewan. How to maintain these services, and how to maintain the small business, the structure that we're used to, to get our services from, how to maintain our ways of life out there, and how to maintain young people in rural Saskatchewan — all are part of this network that relates not only to post offices, as the member said a moment ago, but also to our schools, our elevator, our delivery points. The points that we service from, they all relate to.

And we have been facing over many, many years, Mr. Speaker, not only the closure of post offices, I can go back many years when we . . . where I lived out in the country, where there was a post office every four or five miles. I'm sure each one of us here that's lived in rural Saskatchewan can related to that. They moved from that into a smaller area, and now they've moved again into some of the large areas.

I think the concerns that most rural folks have is that we must maintain a service there and it must be available to us. And I think it's recognized in some of the areas where the post offices went over the years, that it just didn't meet the days . . . we went from the horse and buggy days to the small car, and then to better roads and different types of delivery service, of our postal delivery services.

But I believe it is important now, if we are to maintain a system out there in rural Saskatchewan the way that we've been used to, rural way of life, that post offices are a very, very important part of it.

There's much more to the overall maintaining of that system, Mr. Speaker, besides post offices. We've been dealing, as you know, in this province with drought in the South, and up in the north-east corner of the province, I believe, there's one R.M. has 23 bridges washed out. They all become part of a system out there that we as government, and we as part of the Legislative Assembly, must deal with.

So I guess, in closing, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say to the members of the Assembly: yes, post offices are very, very important; yes, we would support this motion and forward to the federal government.

But more important, to maintain the way of rural life that we've known for many, many years, we'd have to do much more than that. We'll have to work together in a more cohesive way. We must do such things that we're doing — the rural development corporations which gets communities working together to maintain that postal service and to give opportunities to young people to stay there. So we'll need those post office for years to come.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to spend a few moments this afternoon in this debate to express my support for the motion that has been moved and to applaud the rather remarkable process that seems to be taking place in the House this afternoon, where there's a large degree of unanimity on a very important point for

Saskatchewan, a very important point for rural Saskatchewan in particular, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, some months ago, I'm not exactly sure of the date, but some months ago a plan was circulating in some place across this country that was described as the Canada Post master plan or corporate plan for the future shape of the postal system in our country.

It was difficult, Mr. Speaker, for the ordinary citizen to get their hands on a copy of that plan, so it's very difficult to say what was actually in the Canada Post master plan for postal service in this country in any great detail. But I'm given to understand that if that Canada Post master plan, as it was originally drafted, if that master plan were to be implemented in its entirety, then much of rural postal service in Saskatchewan as we have known it in the last number of years, would quite literally be decimated, Mr. Speaker.

(1445)

And to give you just a tangible example of what that might mean, one specific example from the area that I know best, the general Assiniboia-Gravelbourg part of our province. I'm told that the original Canada Post master plan for that area would leave in that area, if the plan were to be implemented, only three full-fledged and functioning post offices between Weyburn on one side and Shaunavon on the other.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you understand what a broad stretch of rural Saskatchewan that is from Weyburn to Shaunavon, and can you imagine the type of non-service the people of that area would receive if they were reduced to three fully functioning post offices in that incredibly large territory. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, that would be unacceptable. Obviously, this legislature must take a strong and unanimous stand against what the Canada Post plan seems to be.

I fully support the motion that is before the House this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, I think, though, more than just supporting this motion as I'm sure we all will do in strong and unanimous terms, I think we ought to take some steps to spread and expand the pressure that we're talking about on the Government of Canada this afternoon to alter the course that Canada Post seems to be on and to retain the kind of service that we want in rural Saskatchewan.

And in order to spread that effort, Mr. Speaker, for members in the Assembly this afternoon, I would just make two additional suggestions. First of all, I understand from the minister responsible for rural Saskatchewan that he will be sending a copy of this resolution to the federal government, and that's all well and good.

But I think in addition to that, we ought to immediately telex the substance of this resolution to the four western premiers who are meeting at this moment in British Columbia, telex to them the substance of this resolution, and invite the four western premiers at their meeting to endorse what we are now doing in this Assembly and which I understand the Alberta Assembly has already done.

Let's have the four western premiers go on record at their conference that they support the gist of this resolution. And in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, might I suggest to the minister that he invite all of his counterparts, or the other appropriate ministers in the other 10 provinces, to join with him and join in the spirit of this resolution.

And let's make it unanimous, from every Legislative Assembly in Canada, that we reject the course that Canada Post is taking, and that we want rural mail service retained as we have come to know it in rural Saskatchewan. And let's have Saskatchewan lead that crusade to get all the provinces on side, and then maybe, just maybe, we may have some chance in turning around the ill-advised course that Canada Post seems to be on.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased that the government has saw fit to agree to this motion. I'm a little bit surprised, or not surprised, I suppose, that the government didn't take the initiative themselves. But, you know, we're standing up for the people of rural Saskatchewan, and I'm glad to see that they've jumped on our bandwagon to show support for rural provinces.

I hope this continues in the future because, I'll tell you, the problems out there in this post office business is just one of them. We are seeing a greater cost to rural people because of the closures to post offices. This cost is coming out from the mandate the federal government has put forward to make the post office more efficient and more profitable. Unfortunately, we're seeing that the rural people are having to pay for that.

And what it does, Mr. Speaker, it leads to a deterioration of the quality of rural life, and that is a major part of what's happening in rural Saskatchewan today — a deterioration of the quality of life. And this is, as I say, adding to it.

We see the federal government now showing support, not showing support to the rural areas, and I don't understand why. They have seen a ground swell of opposition to their policy of closing rural post offices. They have not reacted to that.

People in Saskatchewan at least, and across Canada, are saying no to these closures for a number of reasons. First of all, the post office employees a large number of women in rural areas. I mean, women can find jobs in post offices and do very, very well and it's another opportunity for them. But sometimes in rural areas they don't have that opportunity.

We see a number of other jobs, from the janitorial services which would be eliminated, from the mail delivery vans that deliver mail to every post office across the country — these jobs would be lost in the rural areas. And we just can't afford, in rural Saskatchewan, to see those jobs being lost and that money not coming in to the rural areas.

So the ground swell of opposition, Mr. Minister, must show the federal government that there has to be a change. They have to turn around their policy. We have

something here that's very, very critical. And I can relate to that, because nine miles down the road from my home town, the town of Zelma lost their post office. And they lost their post office after a large fight.

The process that they went through when that post office was lost was despicable. The people went around the area talking to people, and they would say that everybody else was in favour except you, which was not true. The process was wrong.

But what came out of that, Mr. Speaker, and the tragedy that came out of that was the loss of identity of those people. Those people now say that they're no longer from Zelma, Saskatchewan, they're from another town, because that's what their post office address says. And that to them is a very, very major part of their identity in the rural aspect of Saskatchewan and their rural life.

And what happens if this post office closure trend continues? Will their post office address then again change? We see the general deterioration of quality of life, the loss of identity, and all because the federal government is putting forward a proposal to make the post office profitable basically on the backs of rural people.

So I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to support this motion, and I'm glad to see the government has come on side and help support the quality of rural life through the post offices. And I hope that they send a strong message to Ottawa that this must stop.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make a few comments in respect to the motion that has been put forward by my colleague from North Battleford, and I think it's a motion that we should be consistently putting forward to Ottawa. Not only is the rural postal system under attack, Mr. Speaker, but we have seen rural Saskatchewan being continuously — and the way of life in rural Saskatchewan — being attacked by the actions of the federal government.

First of all, if you take a look at the rail line abandonment that is in process which is helping to destroy many of the rural communities, and we have not had a strong, strong position put forward by the government. We have seen the freight rates have increased in respect to the farmers, and there's been no opposition put forward by the government opposite. We have seen, when the moratorium on farm credit foreclosures had been lifted on the . . . allowing the foreclosure, and we say no action.

And what I'm saying here is that rural Saskatchewan is a unique way of life. I think it's a place where people can raise their families, where they can grow up knowing their neighbour, where there's the intercommunication in rural Saskatchewan, and I think it's a way of life that should not be determined by the market-place. And the Tories federally, and to some extent in Saskatchewan, are governed by the market-place rather than a way of life in supporting that which we value.

Any rural community is dependent upon certain services for its existence, and certainly you require your local elevator for the farmers can deliver their grain, and we have fought for the retention of that. We also need the postal system where people can come to deliver their mail and receive their mail. It gives them, as you say, a focus point of the community — necessary services.

But more than that, it decentralizes and brings some form of employment into many of our rural communities. And I think only of the community that I am from, from the community of Muenster, a very small community. But there we had a postal . . . a postmaster, and worked throughout the years, raised a large family, a lovely family of 11 children, and what a contribution he was able to make to that community.

And so what we are saying here is that we were against the right-wing governments that say that a way of life has to be measured in dollars and cents. We're saying that the market-place is not going to decide the face of Saskatchewan. And accordingly, what we're going to do on this side of the House is to start standing up for the rural way of life and for rural Saskatchewan.

I think it would be fitting here in the unanimity of the House here today, Mr. Speaker, and I would recommend and I would ask the consent of the members here — I would think it'd be fitting, Mr. Speaker, that if this resolution were in fact sent by Mr. Speaker representing the unanimous support of all members here. And I would suggest that it should be sent by Mr. Speaker, that it should be sent to the Canada Post, it should be sent to the federal government, and as one member indicated, to the western premiers. I think that would be the proper way of doing it. I think we shouldn't make this partisan because all of us together want to join in helping to guarantee a post office throughout rural Saskatchewan.

And so at the conclusion, I would be asking the legislature, the consent of the legislature, that it be sent under your name, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join in support of this motion. And I find it a very good motion; I find it an interesting motion.

But I think, Mr. Speaker, what is most interesting about the resolution is the real motives behind the NDP in bringing this to the legislature today. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP bringing this resolution before the legislature today is absolutely nothing short, nothing short of a desperate attempt, a very desperate attempt to gain some semblance of support in rural Saskatchewan.

And firstly, Mr. Speaker, let us understand where the NDP members come from. Where do they come from, Mr. Speaker? Well, Mr. Speaker, there are but two single rural members on the NDP opposition benches, but only two of them. It is very interesting, Mr. Speaker, that this resolution was introduced, introduced by the member from the city of North Battleford, seconded by the

member from the city of Regina — very interesting, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let us face the facts. Let us fact the facts, Mr. Speaker. this is nothing but a desperate move by the NDP to gain some support in rural Saskatchewan. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that we all know, and all of rural Saskatchewan knows when we speak of the post office and the NDP, that the NDP support in rural Saskatchewan is nothing to write home about, nothing to write home about at all.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP has not supported our programs and policies for rural Saskatchewan. The question to be asked, Mr. Speaker, is, has the NDP supported such things as the deficiency payments, the deficiency payments from the federal government, supported by this provincial government? Has the NDP supported such services in rural Saskatchewan as individual line service? The answer is no.

Has the NDP supported such things in rural Saskatchewan as the farm purchase program? The answer is no. Has the NDP supported such things as 8 per cent money, the farm purchase program advances, advances on livestock to rural Saskatchewan, and on and on and on? Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the only thing that these people on the NDP benches have supported when it comes to post offices is the eastern union bosses who strong arm our local post office workers here in Saskatchewan. That's as close as the support has come to post offices.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — So, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that although this resolution is a very good one, I question the sincerity of the NDP.

I want to say that the record of this government with respect to this subject is a good one. I am very proud to have a Premier who has made strong and firm representations to Ottawa on this matter. I am very pleased to have a colleague such as the Minister of Rural Development who has fought on behalf of rural Saskatchewan on many issues, and on this one in specific.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly, firmly support this resolution. My closing comments are, once again, I find it very interesting the real, true motives of the NDP for bringing this up in the legislature today.

(1500)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1506)

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 54

Muller	Kopelchuk
Duncan	Britton
McLeod	Romanow

Andrew
Berntson
Lane
Taylor
Smith
Muirhead
Maxwell
Schmidt
Hodgins
Gerich
Hepworth
Hardy
Klein
Meiklejohn
Pickering
Martin
Toth
McLaren
Hopfner
Petersen
Swenson
Martens
Baker
Gleim

Prebble
Rolfes
Lingenelter
Shillington
Tchorzewski
Koskie
Brockelbank
Mitchell
Upshall
Simard
Kowalsky
Solomon
Atkinson
Anguish
Goulet
Hagel
Pringle
Lyons
Calvert
Lautermilch
Trew
Smart
Koenker
Goodale

Nays — 00

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, I ask you to seek unanimous consent of the House, apropos of the suggestion that was made, that the resolution just passed be sent under the title of your high office to the Canada Post, the Government of Canada, and other bodies that were suggested.

Mr. Speaker: — I understand that in order for this to happened we must have a separate motion. If you would so move.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, I've quickly drafted a motion, moved by myself, seconded by the member from Quill Lakes:

That the Speaker's Office send the resolution just passed, to Canada Post, the Government of Canada and the western premiers.

I do so move.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Education Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 5

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Rolfes: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, the other day when we started with the estimates on

Education, I had made a few brief remarks concerning the welfare of education since you became the minister. And I would like to, for the edification of the people of Saskatchewan, reiterate a few of those things and indicate to them exactly why we are in the state that we are in today.

Mr. Minister, as I have indicated the other day, in order to appreciate how far we had come in Saskatchewan and how well we had done, one had to understand the process that we have accepted in this province. And my accusations, I guess, were that the reason we have had so much trouble in the last few years is that you simply didn't understand or appreciate that process, and that you simply — as some of the people out there have said, the practitioners have said, that the minister feels that he knows best what is good for Saskatchewan. and therefore he unilaterally makes decisions, and his deputy and his department make decisions without any consultation, without any appreciation of what has gone on in the past and how this process has worked.

And we saw that, Mr. Minister, in the total transformation of the post-secondary education system in the technical schools, without any consultation whatsoever, either with the trustees of this province or with the teacher of this province or with the people concerned in the technical schools. This was simply something that you had conceived, or that the cabinet had conceived, and unilaterally you went about changing the structure and firing, without any consultation or without any notice, hundreds of people who had served this province well.

Mr. Minister, I believe if we are going to put the education back on the right track again, you have to assume and become knowledgeable about the process of what has gone on in the past and appreciate that process.

There was a co-operative approach between the trustees, parents, and the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), and the Department of Education. There was always a process of co-operation, collaboration, and through that process we developed what some people have recognized as probably the best educational system in North America and possibly even in the world. It was very, very successful, and it was very progressive in that as the times changed and as the needs changed, the policies changed, the program changed, and the process changed. But it always remained a co-operative process.

When you took over as minister, as I said, you abolished that process and you started making decisions unilaterally.

(1515)

I'm saying to you today, Mr. Minister, that you and certainly your top official, your deputy, will have to start appreciating the work that practitioners are doing out there, and that they have something to contribute, that the people of LEADS (League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents) and our directors and our teachers and our principals have something to contribute and they want to be consulted.

Consultation, Mr. Minister, is not to go and tell . . . go to a

meeting, call them together and say: here is what I'm going to do; this is what I think needs to be done in order for us to meet the objectives or the needs and demands of the 21st century. That is not consultation. That's not consultation at all, and people out there resent it.

Mr. Minister, I think it's the first time in the history of this province that a minister, when he spoke to Easter council, was booed by the teachers of this province. I think that was the first time . . .

An Hon. Member: — That wasn't the first time.

Mr. Rolfes: — Yes, that's true, the first time. You were not very much appreciated, and I think you should have learned from that. I hope you have learned from that, that you simply can't bypass those people. you simply can't ignore them. they won't accept that. They have a vital role to play — always have.

You do it at your own peril, as I think one of the former ministers of Education, the Hon. Cliff McIsaac, found out in 1969, 1970 and 1971. I was around at that time as a practitioner in the field. And when again they were dictating to us . . .

An Hon. Member: — So was I.

Mr. Rolfes: — Yes, the member from Meadow Lake was certainly around too, and unilateral decisions made then by the Premier of the province and dictated by him to the Minister of Education did not go across well.

I don't know who instruct you, Mr. Minister. If it was on your own, if you did it on your own, I'd say you better have a quick conversion if you wish to remain in that portfolio and be successful. You simply can't ignore the trustees, you can't ignore the teachers, and you can't ignore the parents of this province. If you want to make some changes, than do it in consultation and in a co-operative manner with everyone involved.

Mr. Minister, not only did you not consult in making those major changes, not only did you not consult when you devastated the Department of Education and fired or let go — whatever — you terminated — or whatever the term you use — about 20 or 25 people in the department who had dedicated their lives to education, who had a lot of knowledge in helping you to implement the new core curriculum, and for some reason you felt that you had to get rid of those people. There was a lot of resentment out there, a lot of resentment. And again I'm saying, if you want to get the confidence of the people in education, you'll have to do some sweet-talking out there.

And I think you're going to have to get out there and show the people that look, maybe I don't know best; yes, maybe I do know some things, and I have some ideas where education is going to go, but I am willing to go out there and consult with you, and consult with the parents, and consult with the students, and consult with the trustees; and I'll do that, and together we'll work towards the 21st century to meet those demands. You can't do it on your own, and your deputy can't do it on his own. Simply not possible.

Mr. Minister, those weren't the only things that you did. And consequently, because of that, if you went out in the teaching profession today, the morale is extremely low, that teachers are frustrated. They don't believe that you appreciate the work that they are doing. They believe that maybe it would have been better if they could get out of the teaching profession — many, many good teaches — and look somewhere else for work. And some are doing that.

I was talking to a couple of teachers the other day — and thank goodness they can now receive their pension at 50 — who are very, very . . . and that, by the way, I want to compliment your government on. It was an excellent bargaining concession that you made . . .

An Hon. Member: — Are you going to take it?

Mr. Rolfes: — No, I don't have to take it because the people are going to re-elect me in Saskatoon South for another term after this to present their views in the legislature on that side of the House. I may even be sitting in your chair and be consulting with teachers and trustees and parents to devise a new educational program for the 21st century.

And I will tell the teacher, I will teach the teachers today, and the parents and the trustees, that when that happens there will be real consultation, and there won't be interference in the bargaining, in the collective bargaining procedure.

Mr. Minister, one of the worst things that your government did, the Minister of Finance — and I don't know whether you instructed him or whether he did it on his own — was to interfere in the collective bargaining procedure, virtually doing away with collective bargaining. When he said that for two years there will be no increases, that was a slap in the fact of the teachers of this province.

That wouldn't have been so bad, Mr. Minister, to have restraint. And I have your brief with me, and I want to talk about that some time later in these estimates. Where you say that all department shad to undergo restraint, that's simply not true. That's simply not true because many departments didn't undergo restraint; many of your own people didn't undergo restraint. I mean, you have people in your department that received fairly liberal and generous increases in their salaries. I don't know whether your deputy got an increase or whether your associate deputy got an increase, but I do know your political staff did.

Mr. Minister, I did a fairly rough calculation. When I was the minister of Health and sat on treasury board, as I said the other day, I basically had four people in my office: two executive assistants, two secretaries. Sometimes because of the Department of Health, which is one of the largest departments, we had a lot of mail coming in and we would temporarily hire a secretary to come in and do some extra work. A quick calculation, Mr. Minister, meant that we spent, in my office to run my office, excluding my own salary, approximately \$10,000 a month; maybe a little bit more some months, probably a little bit less; approximately \$10,000 a month.

Mr. Minister, do you know what you're paying for your political staff per month in your office? You're paying \$19,065. One of your ministerial assistants is getting about half, a little over half, of what I paid four people in my office to do their job — four people got twice as much as one of your individuals is getting today.

So some people, Mr. Minister, weren't under restraint. Some people are doing very well, as was shown in question period here a few weeks ago. Some of your executive assistants received up to 22 per cent increases. Oh, you say, well we gave them a different job. They stayed in the same office; they basically did the same job. You simply redefined the job in order to justify a substantial increase in salary.

I don't object to that, Mr. Minister, but you can't have two standards. You can't say to the teachers of this province that a starting teacher, for example, in this province who gets less than a starting fireman, gets less than a starting policeman, gets less than some of the janitors paid in the school — and maybe the janitors are being underpaid — but that, Mr. Minister, will not attract the most intelligent and the talented people to the profession.

If we are not going to compete with some of the other occupations and some of the other professions where they don't need any formal training whatsoever, and you're asking teachers to take at least four years of training, of professional training, maybe to the extent of putting themselves into debt of 25 or \$30,000 because of the changes that you've made to the bursary program, and yet you're saying to them that no, you don't deserve an increase in your salary; no, we're not going to be competitive with some of the other occupations that a person go into right after high school without any formal training.

Mr. Minister, I'm sure that you must be aware that Ontario has predicted, and B.C. has predicted, that they will be short of teachers in the next five to 10 years, Ontario, I believe, predicting of being short about 800 teachers. B.C. are predicting that they'll be short about 700 teachers. If we're not going to be competitive here in Saskatchewan with some of those provinces, we're going to lose, we're going to lose some of our best teachers, our best practitioners in this province.

That is not, Mr. Minister, going to meet the objectives that you put before this House when you said that we have to have the best education system that money can buy. We must have the best in order to meet the needs and demands of the 21st century. That's not the way to do it.

And if you don't recognize that, if you don't recognize that you have to meet those demands, and if you don't appreciate that the work that the teachers are doing in this province, then, Mr. Minister, you are out of touch with the reality out there — you're out of touch. And it's a very, very short-term approach, and we're going to pay the price of that 5, 6, or 7 or 8 or 9 years from now.

We've got to do something to entice our young people into education. The role of teachers has changed very dramatically from what it was 20 or 25 years ago. It is

much tougher today to be a teacher in the classroom. The demands are much greater.

And, Mr. Minister, many of the teachers were extremely insulted, and I want to say again, insulted by an action taken by yourself around December or January of '87 or '88. And I want to ask you, Mr. Minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . '87, December of '87, January of '88, and that, Mr. Minister, was a decision that you made to do a little survey in the province of Saskatchewan.

Although I've tried to get a copy of the survey, I'm not able to get one, but some of the teachers, some of the teachers who were smart enough after a while to maybe not be entirely honest with the caller . . . The phone call went something like this. The person would phone the individual and say that we want your opinion on a survey that we are doing. First of all they were asked if they were a teacher. If the teacher said yes, of if the person said yes, that was the end of the conversation.

If the person said . . . of if they said, are you a teacher, and the person said no, then the next question was: are you related to a teacher, or is your husband or your wife a teacher? If the answer again was positive, that was the end of the telephone conversation.

However, if the individual said no, I'm not a teacher, then the conversation went on: are you related to a teacher? Again, if you were not, then the next question was: do you realize that teachers make, on the average, \$35,000 a year, and do you realize that teachers only work four of five hours a day? This, Mr. Minister, was done during a period of time when there were very delicate negotiations going on between the government trustee team and the teachers of this province.

(1530)

I can only assume, Mr. Minister, that the reason for this survey was to undermine the collective bargaining position of the teachers and to try and put in the minds of the public, that look out, what do these teachers want? They're only working four or five hours a day — which was a falsehood — a falsehood to begin with, and then saying that the teachers earn 30 . . . do you realize they are making \$35,000 a day . . . 30, pardon me, a year, I'm sorry — \$35,000 a year; trying to leave the implication that hey, they're being overpaid and here they're asking for some increase in salaries.

Mr. Minister, that is not the way to get the confidence of the teachers. And is it any wonder that you were booed at the Easter council . . .

An Hon. Member: — Ask him what happened in Eastview with the teachers. They were working against them.

Mr. Rolfes: — Exactly. The member was saying, what happened in Eastview? I remember full well when I was knocking on doors. The very first door that I knocked on, I didn't know the individual; I introduced myself and told him I was here on behalf of our candidate, and I asked him if he had any questions or concerns. he said to me: I'm a teacher; does that answer your question? That

happened over and over and over. And there are close to 400 teachers in that constituency, and I'll tell you, Mr. Minister, you paid the price for your government.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you now: have you any plans afoot at all in the very near future to try and set aright the relationships that you have destroyed in this province? Have you . . . and I say destroyed because you destroyed them. I want to ask you: what are your plans in the very near future to try and set up that co-operative process again, and involving the STF, the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), LEADS and parents, and everyone else, instead of making unilateral decisions because you think you know best.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member has raised a number of points. I think . . . I mean, the one that maybe bears some discussion is the whole business of consultation with the major partners in education, and indeed with the parents themselves and the grass roots teachers, even probably the students.

The reality of what we're facing today in education, not unlike in so many other areas of society, is that society is facing changes like it's never faced before, and probably never so rapidly as the children are going to face them now and in the future. The issue then becomes one of — whether it's the educational system or the health care system or any other system — how do you manage those changes in a reasonable and humane and compassionate and sensible manner? And I'll be the first to concede that making change is never easy.

I'll also be the first to concede that the NDP have become the establishment party. You are now the change registers. Once you were the progressive element in Saskatchewan politics; now you are the change resisters because by every measure, by every measure . . . All of those in education recognize the need for change, and that was why they embarked on an exercise called *Directions* long before I came along, spearheaded by my colleague, the Minister of Energy and Mines, the member for Swift Current.

The system, teaches, educators, trustees, parents, administrators all recognized that we hadn't had, for example, a major curriculum overhaul for something in the order of 25 years. A lot had changed in that time, if you look at the science curriculum particularly. And so there was a need for change, Mr. Chairman, and I use that as just but one example.

The hon. member tried to draw the analogy that there was no support for the changes we made in post-secondary education, and that somehow there was no public support for what we have done, and yet if you look at some of the headlines over the last year as it relates to the changes we did make, albeit that once again your party were the change resisters, one of the headlines in November of '87 in the *Star-Phoenix*: "College amalgamation applauded by trustees." "Local governance best, Kelsey faculty told," was another headline. And yet another headline was, "More independence for technical schools urged." And yet another headline was, "Governance should apply to technical institutes." And that's exactly what we did, Mr.

Chairman.

And finally — and this is what is so ludicrous, Mr. Chairman — a year ago . . . a year and two months ago now, the NDP themselves put out a press release and held a press conference suggesting that our technical institutes should have autonomy. And the headline in the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*, the member who today is the opposition critic for advanced education, the headline went like this, “Autonomous technical school board suggested by New Democratic Party.” We did that, Mr. Speaker, as one of many things that we did in the post-secondary education reorganization. And now, somehow they’re . . . for some reason or another they’re against it now, Mr. Speaker.

Let’s move to my speech at Easter council of the STF, Mr. Speaker. let’s move to that speech.

An Hon. Member: — Why did you get booed?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — And the hon. member from Regina Elphinstone now, asked the question: why did I get booed? I went into that council . . . and I must say that I have nothing but the utmost of respect for the teachers, the education, because they are the front line, they are the front line in the education system. And I went into that, and I knew that some of the material in the speech was contentious — I knew that.

Now maybe the NDP approach would be to not speak directly to the subject, to try and sweep it under the carpet, to avoid the issues.

An Hon. Member: — That’s not true.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — That is true. That is the NDP approach, Mr. Speaker, to sort of turn a blind eye to the changed process that we’re having to deal with; to be change resisters — that is the NDP approach.

I knew that when I said to the council that we must examine questions like standardized exams, I knew that that is not popular with the teacher’s federation.

But the thing is, are we elected, are we elected merely to be populous legislators? Are we elected merely to turn a blind eye to the tough issues that face society? Is that what being elected to this legislature is all about? If so, I would suggest to you we would be letting down our constituents, our children, our society, our future.

It’s easy, it’s easy just to take the easy road out every time.

An Hon. Member: — What is the easy road?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The easy road is to not raise the difficult questions that society must face; somehow pretend that they do not exist; somehow pretend that the world is not changing; somehow pretend that there isn’t a greater expectation of our young people in a highly competitive world; not a matter of whether will the students in Regina be able to compete successfully against those in the job market or in university from Saskatoon or from Meadow Lake or from Weyburn or from Nipawin. The question isn’t even will they be able to

compete with those in Ontario or Quebec, or B.C., the question is: will they be able to compete in this global village of the future? That is the question.

The NDP may want to ignore those questions; they may want to ignore the issues, but I tell you that virtually every western economy is addressing these questions. And that is all I have said to the teachers is we must examine the questions. I don’t go in there was preconceived notions, because that is a policy that’s foreign to our government and to our Premier and to our party. We want to work with them together, and we will continue to work with them as we look t the answers and how we manage this change. And the hon. member had the audacity, Mr. Chairman, to say that somehow I, as a minister, or my officials, don’t get into the schools, and we don’t consult, we don’t talk.

I would ask the hon. member opposite, the critic, I would ask him this: how many schools has he been into in the last year? How many? Tell us. put it on the record, because I’ll put mine on the record again, as I did in the throne speech debate.

I’ve been very proud to go into dozens of schools across this province. I’ve now had a chance to visit with some 8 or 10,000 young people in that setting, some several hundred teachers and something in the order of one out of six or one out of every seven boards in this province. And I’ll continue to do that. And I’ll tell you, I wish everybody could see what I have seen.

Now the hon. member suggested somehow what I said that speech was — to the spring council, to the teachers’ federation — was highly inflammatory, was misguided, etc., etc. What I said is we must examine some questions.

And the question that I would put to him is this — this is the question that he must answer: the speech that I gave, the speech that I gave at spring council was virtually identical to the speech that he listened to in the throne speech debate in this House two or three months ago. And there was somehow nothing wrong with what was said in that speech then because he raised not one question.

Not one member of the opposition raised one question, including the member from Saskatoon who speaks from her seat this very moment. She was in the House that night and she listened to that speech, and she knew that that speech was right on the money., that we must examine these questions. The hon. member from Saskatoon South sat and listened to that speech. Now somehow it wasn’t until there was a teach reaction to that speech that it became an issue.

Now I ask: why was that speech quite good material here — no major flaws in it apparently, because he raised not one question — why was it that after the *Leader-Post* reported on it and the television cameras reported on it that it became as issue? I ask that question. I ask that question.

An Hon. Member: — You gave a different speech.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — It was the same speech.

The other issue he raises is the question of the survey, and the hon. member, Mr. Chairman, used the word, falsehood. I would suggest to you that the survey he is referring to, with the question he referred to specifically — talking about four and five hours, that that's all a teacher talks — if he is suggesting for one moment that that question was asked by this government, any arm of it, including the Education department, if he is suggesting that, then that is a falsehood. That is a falsehood. And I dare not ... I say that without fear of anything, Mr. Chairman. That would be a falsehood if he is suggesting that.

If he's asking me, have we done surveys? Yes, we have. Will we likely do surveys in the future? Yes, we probably will. Have we even bought surveys from other companies? Yes, we have. Will we continue to? Yes, we will. Has the STF and indeed the Canadian Teachers' Federation done surveys? My understand is, yes.

And perhaps he has some of our questions confused with them. but certainly any question that would suggest that teachers only work four to five hours, Mr. Speaker, and that somehow we would put that information out, that is an absolute falsehood.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there was some question about the \$35,000 a year, the salary. The numbers that I've seen relative to the average teacher's salary that were published in the STF bulletin about a year and three months ago now, for that last year that they had numbers for, which was I think 1986 — and I'm working from memory, but I think they showed in there they had the average salary of teachers going back over 10 or 15 years. And the '86 average salary — and I said I'm working from memory, but I think I'm fairly close — that they had in their own bulletin was something in the order of 36,800.

So, I suppose if there was a survey using that number, then it probably wouldn't be all that far off the money based on this STF's own numbers in the bulletin.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, you have demonstrated exactly my point and you've reinforced it — that you don't listen. You just don't listen. You know best. You close your ears to everything that is said, and you say, I'm the one that knows best; I will go in and tell the STF what has to be done.

You made a public statement saying that parents were dissatisfied with the evaluation process. I ask you time and time again, give me the evidence; give me the evidence. Where is the evidence that parents want standardized tests? Where is the evidence that we should have merit rating?

You may go to a few people who might have some axe to grind with the school system. We have people who don't like everything that happens in the public school system and therefore draw their kids out and put them into private schools. Does that mean, therefore, we need to do away with public schools?

(1545)

Mr. Minister, you talk to a few people and then you make a generalization and have the audacity to go before the teachers and say that the parents out there don't like what you're doing.

What you should have done, Mr. Minister, you should have had the trustees in, you should have had the teachers in, representatives, and should have said to them, hey, look, I'm getting some representation maybe we ought to examine these things together so that we can meet the needs and demands of the 21st century.

You don't go out there and make accusations without any substantiation whatsoever, and then say to teachers, oh, I didn't mean to accuse you people just because you happen to be the ones that are the practitioners; don't take it personally.

Well that's ludicrous, Mr. Minister. And I'm saying to you again that if that's the kind of attitude that you're going to have, then you can't rebuild that good relationship that we've had in this province, and the co-operative approach.

Mr. Minister, you said that the NDP is the change resister, and that it was your former colleague who put in the *Directions* report. Mr. Minister, in the *Directions* report, let me just read to you how outdated you are, how out of touch you are. In the report it says:

The committee (that means the *Directions* committee) was to assess the quality of education in this province and to establish some directions for the future. In fulfilling our mandate, we have identified the need for change while still respecting the stability and previous growth of our education system.

This was signed by Karen Rongve, chairperson.

Now it want to read to you the first sentence of his report:

Dear Mrs. Smith: In May of 1981 ...

May of 1981 we were the government. We commissioned the report. The former minister of Education, the hon. Doug McArthur, was the one that recognized that we needed to re-examine the goals of education and the process and the programs. They made 16 recommendations, out of which has come the core curriculum.

Surely, Mr. Minister, you're not going to say that you initiated this report, which it was established in May of 1981 by the hon. Doug McArthur. We weren't change resisters; we've recognized that there had to be some changes made in order to meet the demands of the 21st century.

But what we objected to when we came back here was the way you went about it. Not even your former colleague, the member from Swift Current, because she appreciated the process. She knew what it meant to have to be co-operative and to work through a program and a process in togetherness with the STF and the trustees'

association and the parents of this province.

But when you took over, when you took over, you changed that. You changed that. That is when your trouble started, because you said, I'm going to do this unilaterally because I know what is best.

It is not that people out there were resistant to change, because this *Directions* report recommended 16 ... or made 16 recommendations on which we now are building the core curriculum. Not all of them, because you haven't accepted all of them. And that's fair enough. But don't tell the people of Saskatchewan that you initiated this and that we were resistant to change.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you again, why did you commission the survey that was done in either December or January this past year? and would you tell me who did the survey and what did it cost, and could I have a copy of the survey that was done?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Twenty-five thousand dollars was the cost, and Tanka was the firm that did the survey, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rolfes: — Minister, you didn't listen again. Why was it done, and could I have a copy of the survey? And if not, why not?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — This particular survey was done to get some sense of the public, some sense of the parents, some sense of society relative to our educational system. Obviously we're into some major changes with the introduction of a new core curriculum.

And as well, we have bought some other survey material relative to illiteracy, specifically. I suspect we'll even be doing some more of that to help us make sure that parent particularly, understand the changes that education is going through. Because as you I think can appreciate certainly we as legislators on this side understand that when you're making these kinds of major changes it's never easy, and having the people understand what those changes are is critically important in that process.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, you didn't listen again. Could I have the copy of the survey? If you're doing it to reassess what has ... and by the way, Mr. Minister, you are just about three years too late.

First of all, if you find out, I mean, it's rather strange ... first of all, the former government commissioned *Directions*; the former Education minister, the member from Swift Current, then set up another committee to re-examine it further and came up with core. Core was then presented to the government.

And then after all that is done, then you have a survey commissioned by Tanka. For what? All of this consultation had been done. Teachers had made their recommendations, trustees had made their recommendations, parents had made their recommendations, students had made their recommendations, in *Directions* and in the core curriculum proposal.

Why did you need a survey now to find out what they thought about education? Or was it, Mr. Speaker, because at that time you were trying to embarrass the teachers of this province when very delicate negotiations were going on. And you wanted to say to the people and some of the parents, particularly in rural Saskatchewan, do you know what these greedy teachers want when they're already making 35 or 36,000? That's what you were trying to tell.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you again, and please come clean because you already had all the answers: why did you commission that survey at that time? At that particular time when you had the *Directions* report, you had the core curriculum, you knew what the response of the parents were, you didn't have to ask again.

Thousands of people were asked in core curriculum. Thousands of people were asked in the *Directions* report. You had the recommendation. Why, at a time when there was collective bargaining going on, and there was a stalemate, why did you think you had to do a survey which was embarrassing to the teachers of this province?

If you are not ashamed of the questions that were asked, why won't you let me have a copy of the survey now so we can discuss it in this Assembly and let the people of the province decide, let the people of the province decide whether or not you were justified in that particular time to have that survey.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I've already given the hon. member the reasons for the survey. And if I was to amplify on that I would say our reasons are probably no different than those that ... our reasons would be not dissimilar to the reasons that the school trustees had when they conducted their survey, the teachers' federation had when they conducted their survey, that the Canadian Teachers' Federation had when they conducted their survey.

And I will tell you ... I will tell you, and I will tell you clearly, because I don't want you leaving this legislature and saying to the teachers or to the public, that this government did a survey to discredit teachers and to interfere with the collective bargaining process, or any of those things, because if you do so you will be not being truthful. Because I will tell you here, I will tell you, as a man of honour, I say to you that there was nothing in that ... first of all, it had nothing to do with the collective bargaining process. And secondly, it wasn't there to discredit teachers, or anything like that.

Having said all of that, a report on the findings will be available to you after I have discussed it and put together the report and taken it to the major players first.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, that is simply being hypocritical. If I could use a stronger word in this Assembly I'd do so, but I'd get thrown out. Mr. Minister, you are just simply ... now I can't use the word. You are falsifying the situation. Take it for ... You know exactly what I mean.

An Hon. Member: — Is he doing it intentionally, Herman, that's what ...

Mr. Rolfes: — Well I would have to agree with your suggestion that he probably is.

Mr. Minister, I want to say to you, if you have nothing to hide on that, if you want to consult now . . . What's the sense of consulting now when you've done the survey? Why do you want to say to the teachers now: hey, lookit, I've done this survey; now I want to consult with you people if you think this is all right? That doesn't make sense.

Mr. Minister, what you're saying to me is that those teachers who contacted me and asked me if I knew anything about the survey . . . They asked me, why is somebody asking us how much teachers are making? Why are they then stating: do you realize, or do you know that teachers are making \$35,000 a year, or 36,000, you say. I was told 35. I'm not going to quibble about a thousand dollars.

It's not that; it's why was the question asked, at the time when there was very delicate negotiations going on, if you didn't intend to embarrass the teachers of this province? And you did it because you felt at that time that rural Saskatchewan people were suffering and you wanted to set again a rift between rural people and the teachers so that the rural teachers would have no choice but to accept your demands of zero and zero increase. That's why you did it. And if you were honest, you'd come forward and say that.

Mr. Minister, if you think for one moment that I will believe that you hesitated or wouldn't interfere with collective bargaining, then I have to say to you also that you have very little influence in cabinet, because surely, as Minister of Education, you would have said to the Minister of Finance: no, I will not condone or I will not accept and I will not stand by while you destroy the collective bargaining process of Saskatchewan. That's exactly what he did when he said that there will be zero-zero increase. So don't try and convince me that you hold the collective bargaining process sacred when you did nothing to stop the Minister of finance — nothing!

Mr. Minister, if you have nothing to hide, why will you not show me that survey?

And I will give you an ironclad guarantee, Mr. Minister, an ironclad guarantee . . . You show me that survey in confidence. I will not show it to anyone on this side of the House. I will not show it to anybody if there is not in that survey, if there is not in that survey anything that would be of some embarrassment to the teachers during the process of collective bargaining. I will give you that guarantee. And if I break that guarantee, Mr. Minister, I will resign my seat. I will resign it.

An Hon. Member: — In writing.

Mr. Rolfes: — Yes, I'll give that in writing.

Because I'll tell you, Mr. Minister, if you have nothing to hide, then you will give me that survey. And let's discuss it here. And if you have nothing . . .

An Hon. Member: — Send over the letter.

Mr. Rolfes: — Yes . . . Oh, I'll give you the letter. I'll give you the letter if you'll give me the survey. Agreed? If you agree, Mr. Minister, if you have nothing to hide, I'll put my seat on the line. All right? Will you do that?

Mr. Minister, I've asked you if you would do that.

(1600)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The hon. member, Mr. Chairman, tries to suggest that somehow this survey was done because of the collective bargaining process; that it was somehow done, the results of which would be used to discredit teachers during this bargaining process and this negotiating process.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, that there was nothing . . . it was not done for any of those reasons. Secondly, there was nothing made public during the negotiations about salaries, or for that matter there was nothing made public by myself or my government colleagues about any aspect of the negotiation — what was on the table, what wasn't on the table — despite the fact that that hon. member in this House in question period one day asked questions about that, knowing full well that the usual procedure and the gentlemanly and the professional way of handling these things is for us not to comment.

He said, Mr. Speaker, he said at that time, Mr. Chairman, that we were interfering in the collective bargaining process, that we weren't sincere in negotiating a contract. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, as I said, and the Premier said on more than one occasion and to the STF executive, that we were sincere in our belief that the collective bargaining process could work again.

The reality, Mr. Chairman, is that the teachers and the government trustee bargaining team did successfully negotiate a settlement. It was ratified and not one word was said throughout about any offer on the table, about salaries. There was no attempt to discredit any part, not one. And if he suggest other wise, then maybe he should resign. Maybe he should resign for misleading the legislature, if that's what he's saying, Mr. Chairman. Maybe he should, because there was not one whiff of what was going on at that table, not one whiff to the public.

Mr. Chairman, the reality is that teachers ratified that contract and they ratified it in spades. And I'm happy that it's been ratified. I'm happy that it's behind us. We have a busy agenda ahead of us, as all the teachers know, and it was very useful for them and for us to get that behind us and a successful negotiation behind us.

History, Mr. Chairman, has proven that we were right and he was was wrong. We did successfully conclude a negotiated settlement with the teachers of this province; collective bargaining worked again. He said we were interfering. We did not interfere; we delivered with the teachers in a successfully concluded contract, Mr. Chairman.

I give to you again, relative to this survey, now that you

have been discredited on the arguments that you have made, I give to you the commitment that I said earlier . . . (inaudible interjection). . . Yes, a report on the findings will be made available to you after I've made them available to and have discussed them with the major players in education, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, can't weasel your way out of that one. I've made you a challenge. I will, on my word of honour here, I will give it to you in writing; I will give it to you in writing. If you have nothing to hide, make that survey available to me. Make it available to me. I will give you my assurance, as I said before, that I will not make it public to anyone here, but I want to have the option of discussing it in this House, if I believed that it was a direct interference with the collective bargaining and that one of your objectives was to insult the teachers of this province, to make sure that the rural people knew how much teachers were making relative to their economic problems that they were having.

Otherwise, why would you ask the question? Why would you ask the question? You knew that, you know, what the average teacher was making. Why did you want to task those teachers, or why did you want to ask those people — other than teachers — do you know that teachers are making on average \$35,000 a year . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . or 36, I won't quibble about it.

Why would you ask that during delicate negotiations if it wasn't because you were hoping by the survey — and, Mr. Minister, you said nothing publicly was said. You make a thousand phone calls to each individual, individually; you don't have to make a public statement. No public statement has to be made. It will become public very shortly because people will be asking: hey, did you get a call like this? They had a number of questions they wanted to know. It was all over Saskatchewan that someone was doing a survey, that someone was doing a survey. You didn't have to make a public statement.

You accomplished exactly what you wanted. The whisper campaign started, and it didn't take very long and everybody knew exactly — they got the message — exactly what you wanted them to get: here were those greedy teachers, who on average were making 35,000, who were only working four or five hours a day, and here was the poor farmer who couldn't make ends meet. That's what you are trying to do.

Mr. Minister, if you didn't have that in mind, and if that wasn't part of the survey — I haven't seen it; I can only go by what people have told me — if you didn't have . . . if that wasn't in the survey, then why wouldn't you make it available to me so we can discuss it in this House?

Mr. Minister, I will leave that because I have many other things that I want to discuss. One of the things, Mr. Minister, that I do want to talk about and spend some time on this afternoon is the lack of funding for education by your government. I started last time by talking about operating grants, and that's what I want to talk about.

Capital funding, Mr. Minister, is absolutely necessary. You have no choice, you have no choice but to make

schools available so that education can take place. And in some areas like Saskatoon where there has been substantial growth, there have been a number of schools built by your government, as they were by our government. And if schools are worn out and they need replacement, you have to make those things available. And as inflation continues, more and more money has to be spent on schools, on maintenance and on operating of the schools.

Mr. Minister, what I want to talk to you about this afternoon is on the operating portion of your budget. In the 1970s the province picked up, in many instances, about 60 per cent, about 60 per cent of the financing of education, and the people at the local level picked up about 40 per cent, varying, as you know, through the foundation grant program.

Mr. Minister, I want to read to you from the chairman of the finance committee of the Saskatchewan School Division No. 13 — just a few excerpts from his statement that he made to the board. And it says:

Mr. Chairman (and he's making this to his own board just recently), I am pleased to present to the board of education the 1988 budget proposals prepared by the finance committee.

And I'll skip a lot of this — I know you have it — but on the bottom part he says:

We regret to advise you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the board, that the Saskatoon School Division did not receive additional funding from provincial sources. In fact provincial grants declined by \$295,127 from last year's estimates, and the foundation grants are projected to be \$631,247 below the actual grants received in 1987.

Later on in his presentation he says this:

In 1988 provincial grants payable to the board of education are projected to be \$28,583,783 — 295,000 below the 1987 budget estimates, and 513,492 below grants actually received in 1987.

Mr. Minister, I want to continue. A little later in his presentation, he says:

Your committee (the finance committee) is deeply concerned . . .

And, Mr. Minister, listen to these words:

Your committee is deeply concerned about the ongoing trend to rely more heavily on property taxes to finance schools. Ten years ago provincial grants accounted for 43.4 per cent of total revenues. Today only 33.9 per cent of total revenues come from provincial coffers. The gap between local contributions and provincial grants has widened far too much.

The last thing I want to read from here is this; he says:

In all honesty we were very disappointed with the level of provincial funding afforded our school division. Even our most modest expectations in this regard were not met.

Mr. Minister, as I pointed out to you the other day, your operating grants have increased about 12.5 per cent over the last six years. That's an average of 2.1 per cent when inflation actually was over, I think, over 5 per cent, or 4.9 to 5 per cent, maybe a little higher.

So that, in effect, in effect the school boards have lost when you take the real dollars into consideration. When you take inflation in consideration, the school boards have lost and they've had to, they've had to go to the only source they have and that is property taxes. And you have shifted, you have shifted the burden of financing education very dramatically from the provincial government to the local level.

And, Mr. Minister, if you take into consideration what your government did, you also cancelled about \$80 million of the property improvement grants which people at the local level and small businesses received. Those were also cancelled.

Mr. Minister, is it any wonder, is it any wonder that we have today a real frustration of the people out in rural Saskatchewan and urban Saskatchewan? You have shifted it and you're saying — and I read your brief, and you say in your brief, but everybody has to undergo restraint. I pointed out to you before that that is not true. There are some people who have done extremely well in the last six years under your government — extremely well.

And I don't have to, and I'm not going to repeat, but I'll simply say in all the patronage appointments that have been made and the huge salaries that you are paying to those people, those people have done very well. In your own office, you increased your own office expenditures to your political appointments, and every cabinet minister needs those, but you have increased your total expenditure in your office by over 100 per cent — pardon me, by about 90 per cent to what they were in my office when I was minister. Those people haven't suffered.

Your top ministerial assistant, Mr. Minister, your top ministerial assistant is receiving, under contract \$5,290 — \$5,290 for a ministerial assistant. That, Mr. Minister, is about two and a half times what I paid my top ministerial assistant when I was in cabinet.

An Hon. Member: — You never had a smart one.

Mr. Rolfes: — Oh the member from Meadow Lake says, you never had a smart one. I'll tell the member from Meadow Lake maybe that was the reason why the former premier of this province, Allan Blakeney, was able to put in 11 balanced budgets and you people have put in six deficit budgets. Maybe because you don't know how to administer; maybe you are so lavish and so generous with your own friends that, you know, you haven't got sufficient money for education and for other departments.

I ask the minister again, am I correct in saying that you

have dramatically shifted the cost of education, particularly operating grants, particularly operating grants from the province to the local level, and the only choice that the people at the local level had was to increase property taxes or reduce programs and cut staff.

(1615)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, and hon. member, I want to take up your last question first, and if I could get the hon. member's attention for a minute, because I think . . . and I say that sincerely, because I think you're being unfair to a professional, I would hate for you to continue to discredit him.

And you raised the case of the person in my office who's making the largest salary. Well I want to tell you why, because I think it's not useful for you to discredit a member of the teaching profession. Here is why he is making that salary. He was a principal at Marion Graham High, and I hired him straight away from that job and I'm paying him the same salary as he was making when he was principal there. And that's the reason for the salary.

And he asks, why didn't I hire Lee Iacocca at 18 million, or whatever is. Because what I wanted for my office was not somebody who made cars; what I wanted for my office was somebody who has a great deal of understanding of the educational system, and particularly of teachers and teaching administration and school administration.

And I might say, Mr. Chairman . . . he says it is 62 grand. Well if that's what he was making as principal of Marion Graham High, I am quite prepared to pay him that where he is now working on behalf of the 200,000 children in the school system.

But let's get back to the hon. member's question. And his question was this, Mr. Chairman: he wanted me to tell him whether he was correct or not in his assessment that the provincial government has off-loaded or has decreased its share of funding for education. Do you want me to tell him if he's correct or not? Well he is not correct, and in fact, his analysis is rather simplistic. And I want him to listen to this carefully because your arguments are in two categories.

You first of all say that we haven't kept up with inflation, that inflation has gone like this, and government spending has been something less than inflation. Well you are wrong. You are wrong. We are staying up with inflation. In fact the numbers are like this, Mr. Chairman: our grants are up 58 per cent; inflation is up 40 per cent — a real increase of 18 per cent. Now by every measure, that's an increase over and above the rate of inflation, Mr. Chairman.

I say that, and I say that proudly, Mr. Chairman, and that's over a six-year period, I think it is, since we took office. And I say that, and I say that in the face of the fact that during that time provincial revenues from oil, wheat, potash, have been flat or substantially down. And I think that's a pretty fair commitment to education in the face of what our resource economy has faced, Mr. Chairman.

So his first argument, Mr. Chairman, and members of this legislature, is the government grants have not kept pace with inflation. He is wrong. The government grants have more than kept pace with inflation. So on your first argument you are incorrect.

The second one, he says, is that we have somehow shifted to the local boards a greater responsibility for the cost of education. He says that in 1970, or whatever year you used, the provincial portion of education then was 60 per cent or something, okay, and that somehow today it's substantively less. I think, perhaps what he was using was one board example as opposed to the whole province, and I would suggest that he might have been trying to fool the people of Saskatchewan with his example, as opposed to give the real picture.

The numbers that I will read into the record, I think have probably been read into the record by every minister of Education, including those under his government when they were in power, the NDP in the '70s, because the same argument was made by oppositions then. And the reality is, if you look at, for example, our administration — I won't try and defend yours — over the last six years, the change has been minimal. The per cent of the total education expenditure, provincial share, was 52.6 six years ago. Now it's 51.3 — a minimal change, still over 50 per cent. So your argument that somehow we've off-loaded onto local jurisdictions is untrue.

Now let's not just confine ourselves to that argument, because he could say, well you've got your numbers and I've got my numbers. So let's look at some other data that would either refute or back up his claim.

If we were off-loading onto local jurisdictions a greater burden, the way they would respond is by having to raise the mill rates. If it isn't going to be forthcoming from the provincial government, then what they would do is they would say, well if they're not going to give it to us I guess we'll raise the mill rates on our property assessment so we can get more money.

Well the question is: what's happened to the mill rate over the last three or four years? Have we seen it go up dramatically? The answer is no. Last year the average mill rate increase over the province was a zero per cent increase — or decrease, depending on how you like it. There was virtually no increase the year before that it was .25, and the year before that it was level at zero. The year before that was five and a half, I admit. But you can compare those to some of the changes in the '70s of six and a half, and 3 and 3.9 and 6.

In fact, Mr. Chairman, if one was to look at the NDP record of mill rate . . . or increases in mill rates under the NDP years and the Conservative years, you will find that they were substantially larger under the NDP. That is to say the NDP put more pressure on school boards to raise taxes locally than this government has ever done, Mr. Chairman.

Now if he doesn't like that index, if he doesn't like that index, let's look at another one. If we were off-loading our responsibilities to the local board, you can bet your bottom dollar that they wouldn't have one penny in the

bank, Mr. Chairman. They wouldn't have an ounce of surplus sitting around. There wouldn't be an ounce of fat, there wouldn't be an ounce of reserve for them to draw on. They would have used it up, rather than raise mill rates. If the money wasn't forthcoming from the provincial government, if they didn't want to raise mill rates, they would go to the bank, the savings that they might have built up, the reserves.

So what you would expect to see then, Mr. Chairman, is the reserves either very small or having declined rapidly, while this awful Conservative administration was to power.

Well what do we find? What do we find? Have the reserves of local school boards gone down dramatically since this Progressive Conservative government was in power because we were forcing them to go to their local taxpayer and their bank to get the money to run education?

Well has that happened, Mr. Chairman? Once again the answer is no. In fact we see the exact opposite. The reserves have climbed dramatically over the last six years.

Now if a system was going somehow bankrupt out there, like they would suggest, the reserve would not have gone up. In fact in 1980 the reserves were 30.9 million. This is the accumulation of . . . Some had deficits, some had surpluses, Mr. Chairman. But he balance it out; there was \$30.9 million sitting around in surpluses somewhere in the school boards of this province. The next year it was 34.7, up to 41, 45, 53, 57. And for 1987 we had \$56 million sitting in reserves, in surplus accounts, Mr. Speaker.

So once again, by whatever measure you use, have we kept up with inflation? Has the provincial local ratio changed? The answer is no. Have the mill rates gone up dramatically? The answer is no. Have the surpluses ceased to exist or become non-existent or decreased? The answer is no.

So then the only thing he can use is some examples across the province where, for example, in Saskatoon — whatever the example he used — the provincial share went from 60 per cent to 40 per cent, or whatever the example was he used.

So then what he has to be saying to the people of Saskatchewan, the trustees of Saskatchewan, is that he doesn't like the formula. And just for your information, Mr. Chairman, and some others in this legislature, or perhaps some who are watching this afternoon, there is an equalization formula in education. That is to say, the provincial government decides we shall — and I'll use for example, \$400 million — we shall make available \$400 million to the school boards of Saskatchewan to run the schools. Based on the fact that it's about 50-50 for both sources, the property tax base also raises about \$400 million.

Now one way that a guy could . . . or an administration could divide that money up, Mr. Chairman, is say, we'll just give a cheque. There's 200,000 students in the system, roughly. So if you had \$800 million, 200,000

students, you could say to all the boards, well we'll just send a cheque to every board based on the number of students — \$4,000 per student. If you've got 100 students, well you multiply 100 by 4,000. And that would be a simple way.

But the trustees and the government, in their wisdom some years ago — in fact I think it might have even been an NDP government — decided that that might not necessarily be fair, because some property tax bases had the ability to raise a lot more than some other school boards.

For example, if you lived in a part of the country where you had a lot of richly-assessed land, or very rich productive land, or maybe that land had oil wells on it, or a city that has factories and upgraders and lots of businesses and high-rises, well the ability of the local school board to raise taxes or to raise money, if you like, might be a lot easier there than it would be, for example, in an area of the country I come from where there's a lot of range land, and mostly what we have is a lot of dry sloughs and gopher holes.

So they put in place an equalization formula. And what that means is that if you're a richer assessment, you get a little less from the government because your own base will raise more. If you're not so well off, you'll get more from the government. So now the hon. member has to come clean with the public. because all of his other arguments are incorrect, then the only one he is left with is: does he not like that equalization formula that is based on the ability to pay, that says we will help those who have less resources?

Because you see, Mr. Chairman, the example he has not used, not have any of his colleagues every brought into this legislature — you see, they can find an example where a city that maybe has upgraders being built in its backyard, that has a great ability to raise money locally; or in Saskatoon, that has a large assessment; but what examples has he not brought into this legislature, Mr. Speaker?

He says over 10 years the provincial share has declined. Well I say, rightly so, if their local tax base has increased that greatly. You're saying that we shouldn't help those who have less chance to raise it locally. You're saying, give it to those rich urbans that perhaps do have every opportunity to raise money a lot easier than some of the rurals. Is that what you're saying? Come clean with the people. tell them that you're not happy with the equalization formula, if that's what you're saying. Or other wise acknowledge what has happened with the equalization formula.

Let's compare some other jurisdictions that you don't care to bring in, because this equalization formula is working. In Prince Albert, for example — the hon. member from Prince Albert is sitting next to the critic — over the last six years this awful formula saw their provincial share go from 52 to 55. Do they want the formula changed? Or what about Leader in some of that ranch country? It went from 31 to 39. Or what about Battleford? Or what about Battleford, it went from 50 from to 56. Do you think they want the formula changed? Yes,

Saskatoon might like to.

An Hon. Member: — What about Lanigan?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — And he says what about Lanigan? Well I don't know about Lanigan, but I suspect that because they have potash mines and some of the kind of development that goes with it, that they are probably a pretty rich little board. Okay.

Or what about Northern Lights? Or what about Northern Lights, they've gone from 66 to 80 per cent. So what I'm trying to say, Mr. Chairman, is ether you believe in a formula that tries to provide some fairness and equity, tries to reflect the ability of a local board to raise its own money. It's based on need, Mr. Chairman. And so on that basis, it's a formula that has served us and served us well over the years.

And so it seems to me then that if you're going to take the approach the hon. member has taken, that of being simplistic, at best that's all I can say about it, it's incorrect. It's incorrect. If you do analyse it in some detail — because no matter which of his arguments he wants to use: inflation, the ratio is changing; the mill rates are going up locally — there's no surplus. Or that the formula is somehow bad, his arguments are flawed and flawed seriously on every one of those, Mr. Chairman.

Now we could debate that for some good long time, and he'll say I'm not talking about operating, or I'm not talking about this. I'm telling you, I'm talking the same way that every Minister of Education has analysed this data for I don't know how many years.

Now he will say, he will say: well that's not quite true. And I will say, well yes you're right because the one thing that was missing when the NDP were in, Mr. Chairman, is there was no education development fund to help excellence and to help school boards buy computers and help build new libraries and put books in those libraries. There was no fund in those days when they were in, Mr. Chairman.

(1630)

So I suppose one could argue that you were not really comparing apples to apples and oranges to oranges, because they didn't provide that kind of fund for school boards to draw on, Mr. Chairman.

So I rest our case. If he wants to get into a simplistic analysis, let him so do, but he should clearly state for all the boards of Saskatchewan, clearly state whether you like the formula or you do not. Because if you do not like the formula, then you must go and tell just a handful of the boards I read off here that they have had unfair advantage because their share of provincial funding has gone up as opposed to down.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Minister, I want to come back to the point that was raised very much originally before you went on and brought in all the other extraneous arguments, and that is the argument that there is a tax shift taking place, a shift in funding from the provincial to the local tax base. And specifying it more specifically, we're

talking about the revenue provided by the provincial government in terms of operating grants and in capital construction grants.

I want to bring to your attention, specifically in the last three years — because what you just said, if I believed what you just said, I'd have to go back to my school boards in my particular area — I'm talking about the P.A. public and the P.A. separate and the P.A. rural boards — and I'd have to tell them that, look, your calculations are all wrong, because the minister told me that there is no switch.

Now the information that I have been provided, by the members of the board, is that in the Prince Albert public board in 1986 they were at 54.9 per cent, that is 54.9 per cent of the revenue, of their revenue, was received from the department; this year it's 52.8. Now they did go up last year, but you brought in the figure from 1985. I would expect you compared '85 and '87, but we're talking about the current year and which way we're going.

Now if you take the public . . . the rural board, and you talked about areas which perhaps need a little money. And a rural board in Prince Albert certainly isn't regarded as one of the rich boards, and it's gone from 67.8 in '86 to 65.1 to 63.9. So there's a definite funding shift there. And the Catholic board is seeing a very similar shift — 47.9, 45.8, 43.9; again down from 47 to 43.

Now the concern of the boards is that this kind of a tax shift will eventually result in a decrease of services to the students, because what is happening is that there is a tremendous pressure, a tremendous pressure from the public not to see property taxes increase. They just . . . they can barely . . . they feel that the property taxes have been pushed to the limit, and there's a tremendous attempt on the part of city councils and town councils and R.M.s not . . . to keep tax increases below the inflation rate, particularly in these years.

So not only are school boards faced with this particular problem of being squeezed from both ends, but we also have parents of school-age children who have a particular reason to be concerned about this trend. Because they know if the provincial funding continues to shrink, that the boards will not be able to provide the necessary programs that the students have been starting to receive in a better and a better fashion every year.

Because what's happened in our schools is, as our teachers have become more and more proficient, they've been able to deal more and more with students' individual needs. And if school boards are forced to cut back on staff and increase ratios, then these needs, which teachers know how to meet, will not be met simply because there is a decrease in educational funding.

Now there was one other figure that I thought I should look at to see just whether or not your government is shifting its priority or is not shifting its priority from education to some other areas. And what I did is, I did a little calculation to see just what per cent of the total budget of this province is now given to education operating grants and to capital construction grants for public schools.

And if you take that figure and do a little calculation, my calculation, and I would like you to check this out, showed that there was a slight decrease from 10.64 per cent to 10.17 per cent of the total budget. Now, slight decrease, but it shows that your priority is not increasing, but it is . . . for K to 12 schools, it is actually decreasing.

And my question, Mr. Minister, my question to you is: do you agree that if this tax shift continues, that this will not result . . . that this will result in decreased offerings to our students?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — First of all, I do not accept the notion that there's been a tax shift, and the hon. member didn't bring forth one shred of evidence to suggest there has been.

I have the numbers here for a P.A. board — I don't know which ones they're for, it's a xeroxed copy and I can't see, except I know it's a Prince Albert board — and let's use that as an example, okay? And these are, I suspect, from audited statements, these numbers.

The total revenue in the year 1981, okay 10,854,384 — 10.8 million, roughly; 1987, same number — 18.650279 millions. Now, by my arithmetic, that's an 80 per cent increase over those six years, and inflation during that time was 40 per cent. So how does the hon. member square that with the allegation that somehow we haven't kept up with (a) inflation or indeed, there's been — I would suggest to you that that's been far outstripped, the inflation, and maybe so it should.

It shows that there's been a tremendous commitment by that board and this provincial government on education. What is even more incredulous, Mr. Chairman, is the member from P.A. asking about shifts between the local tax base and the provincial contribution.

Now the last time I checked, it was the NDP Party, the member from Prince Albert and his colleagues from Prince Albert, that at every turn criticized an expanding tax base. They criticized, at every turn, the development of an industry that I don't know how many hundreds of thousands of dollars they're going to pay in education tax.

I'll bet you there's 30-some of my colleagues in this room, given that they had trees in their constituencies, that would give their eye-teeth to have a paper mill built that would expand their tax base for schools and for municipalities, that would tax . . .

An Hon. Member: — You guys lost on that one.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well the hon. members from Prince Albert says we've lost on that. You go and ask the school board in Prince Albert, do they or do they not like having that revenue? You go and ask them. I challenge you to stand before them and ask them if they don't like that revenue — you ask them, as I am sure that they are very happy to have that revenue from a diversify. But I can understand the hon. member's a bit sensitive because they have consistently been against Weyerhaeuser, they've consistently been against economic development and diversification, and that is the way that we shall,

indeed, see education and other municipal services developed. It's by diversifying our economy, expanding the tax base.

Now the hon. member says, he says that nobody out there likes to pay more property taxes. Well I think he's right. That's one of the first sensible things he's said in this legislature. Nobody likes to pay more taxes, particularly. They don't mind paying more taxes if they think it's for a good purpose. But he's right; nobody likes to pay more property taxes. I think everybody comes from that essential starting position.

And yet at the same time, when we raise taxes on behalf of all the people of this province so that we can spend more on health and education, the members are against that too, Mr. Chairman. Now you can't have it both ways. You can't say that we don't want property taxes to go up, that more money should come from the provincial coffers. Then when we go to the provincial coffers and raise taxes and spend four out of every five dollars in this last budget, four out of every five new dollars on education, they're against that too.

They say we don't . . . don't raise the sales tax, don't raise the flat tax, don't raise the tax on cigarettes, don't put a tax on the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) . . .

An Hon. Member: — What about the oil companies?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — And the hon. member from Shaunavon, or now from Elphinstone, says what about the oil companies. Well, what about the oil companies? In this last budget big resource companies contributed 30 million new dollars to this tax base of this province, and I'll tell you, it was a very shrewd budget that was put together by that Finance minister.

And I'll tell you about the oil companies in my riding, now that you don't represent one that has oil companies. I'll tell you, the school boards in my province just see that as windfall revenue. I've seen the numbers, Mr. Chairman, and I forget them, but I think in the R.M. of Weyburn, I think one oil well brings in the same revenue as five quarters of land. Now you ask me if the R.M. councillors of the R.M. of Weyburn and the school board at Weyburn if they don't like that. Because what that means is they can reduce the taxes on the property because those big, rotten oil companies, as the member from Elphinstone would have us believe, are paying a pretty handsome share. In fact, it equals one farm; five quarters in about the average size of a farm in Saskatchewan. So in Weyburn, unlike Regina Elphinstone, they kind of like those big, bad, rotten oil companies. Let me tell you, they like them.

So I say to the hon. members, if you're going to be consistent in your logic, if you're going to be consistent in your logic and somehow say that we ought not have the local jurisdictions raise their taxes to get increased funding for education and you want the provincial government to pick up a larger share, than I say to you, you better get behind us and support us when indeed we do raise taxes and take more out of the resource corporations and, indeed, the CBC, because four out of those five dollars went to health and education. Four out

of five new dollars that were raised this year went to health and education. So I say, wither you support that or you don't. come clean with the people of Saskatchewan; get rid of this convoluted, simplistic logic that you seem to engage in.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Minister, you might remember that the question that I asked originally had to deal with the tax shift, and I dealt with it and I gave you figures relating to Prince Albert and the tax shift, percentage wise — the percentage of money that the province now provides compared to the local tax base compared to what the province used to provide two years ago — and I asked you the question whether or not, whether or not you feel that if this kind of a tax shift continues, whether that will not be harmful to the students who are entering our schools in this particular decade.

Now that's the question that I would leave with you, and I'll ask you to direct it. But you brought up several other issues, and I think it's only incumbent on me to answer, because when you start talking about the Weyerhaeuser mill, you know, I would sooner have, I would quite sooner have right now the \$80 million in revenue that that particular mill is making, than having nothing on revenue, having a \$248 million thing sole with nothing down and no payments to date except that from the goodwill of the people of Weyerhaeuser, who have contributed \$30 million, having foregone a . . . given us concession on gasoline on the natural gas tax, which they no longer have to pay, \$475,000 annually which the city no longer gets. And your government went and even relieved them of paying an electrical surtax of a half a million dollars every year, which the city no longer gets.

So the problem here is, Mr. Minister, is that the deal that you made simply doesn't stack up, and it didn't stack up, and the people of Prince Albert knew it. You made up a little story about it losing \$90,000 a day. And nobody buys that story because the people who work at the mill know darn well that the mill never lost that kind of money.

But let's go back. Let's go back to the original question which was, once again: what's going to happen to our students if this tax shift continues?

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Okay, I want to make . . . in response to his question, I want to make three points, Mr. Chairman. The first is he's using a specific example of a school board that he says it's . . . the provincial share has gone down. Now in doing that, he has to either acknowledge that the equalization formula is a good one or it is not a good one. Okay? He's got to acknowledge that because globally the percentage of provincial funding has stayed roughly the same — 51.52 per cent over the last six years.

You see, because that formula is, Mr. Chairman, based on if you're a rich community in terms of an assessment base, you get less help from the provincial treasury. If you're a less rich community, you get more help. So it balances out so everybody has equity.

An Hon. Member: — And Weyerhaeuser made P.A. rich.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well that's true. The Deputy Premier says Weyerhaeuser made P.A. rich. So the question then becomes one of, well, if their grant went down, did their assessment go up? Because that would be the offsetting factor.

And I just happen to have the numbers for the last two years for both Prince Albert public and Prince Albert separate. Now if they got less money from the government because of the formula, it was either because their assessments went way up or that their enrolments went way down. Now if we assume that the enrolment's essentially stable, does that mean then that their assessments went up?

Well what do we find when we look at the numbers? P.A. public — their assessment base, just be being that much broader, went up by \$3.6 million. That's how much more money it brought in, Mr. Chairman — 3.6 million. What about Prince Albert separate? An even larger increase, a 5.87 — nearly 6 per cent increase of 4.17 million.

Now by everybody's measure, a 5.87 increase even outstrips inflation of the worst kind for last year, of the worst kind, because in that year there was no teachers' salary increases, and 80 per cent of the cost of the average school board are teachers' salaries.

An Hon. Member: — No. 75.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Okay, 75, I stand corrected. But the reality is, those school boards, without having one other thing happen, because of pulp mills and paper mills saw their revenues go up, between the two of them, to the tune of nearly \$8 million.

I'll tell you, I bet there's a lot of people, a lot of constituencies in this province, Mr. Chairman, who wish they had a paper mill in their constituency to help contribute to that kind of a school base. And I'll bet the member from North Battleford with that hog plant there, I'll bet those people are kind of happy that they've got one, eh?

I'll bet they are kind of happy about that and I'll bet . . . You know, I asked my official the other day to get me the numbers for Regina, for that upgrader. How much was that going to contribute by way of school tax? I'll bet it's a handsome sum. They couldn't find it for me — perhaps I'll have it for next year — but I'll bet it's a handsome sum. And I'll bet you, that one that they're going to build in Lloydminster, that Husky upgrader, I'll bet you that'll pay a handsome sum in school taxes.

And yet the hon. members are against diversification of our economy; they're against development of our economy. All they can think of is: give me something more from the public purse. Well I'll tell you, because of this kind of development in those local cities, Mr. Chairman, they are getting substantial increases as seen in revenue from their broadened assessment basis.

And that doesn't mean to say that we have lessened our commitment at all, because in fact we increased the

amount of moneys available to the entire province. The formula distributes it fairly. If some get less, it's because their assessments rose locally for the most part, Mr. Chairman. And we'll stand by that development strategy and that diversification strategy over the next few years as well, because it's good for Saskatchewan people. it's good for Saskatchewan children, and above all, the school boards like it, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, I've been listening to the . . . that member amazes me. I'll tell you, I thought I had an agreement from him that he wouldn't get on this wild rhetoric of his and go on for 15 or 20 minutes. Now we're going to address the problems of education . . . (inaudible interjection). . . Yes, well I'll get to you too a little bit later. I've got some information on you that I want to ask the minister about — where you were on holidays.

Mr. Minister, I just want to ask you very simply before 5 o'clock, could you tell me, from 1982 to 1983 to the present day 1988-89, those six years, did operating grants go up by 12.5 or 12.57 per cent? Would you agree with that?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The number that you asked for, or the confirmation of it, it really proves nothing because what you're asking me is to ignore things like the educational development fund. You're asking us to ignore the \$19.3 million that we put into teachers' pensions as a result of the stock market collapse. You're asking us to ignore what we put into teachers' pensions in generally, which is unilateral and not the school boards. You're asking us to ignore what we do in terms of dental benefits. You're asking us to ignore an awful lot of what is important to me, and I think to a lot of people in Saskatchewan, relative to the commitment of this government and this province's people to education.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, if I asked you very simply, you were 38 years old last year; one year hence, how old would you be? You don't have to tell me how old your member from Wascana is or somebody else. The answer simply would be, I'm 39 years old.

Mr. Minister, very, very simply, in 1982 the operating grants were approximately \$299 million. They'd gone up approximately 12.57 per cent operating. I don't care what you've done with all the others. And that's great about the EDF (educational development fund). I told you that the other day. It was appreciated by the teachers. Didn't like it when you cut it back; after the election you changed your mind. It was great before the election and a lot of teachers liked it.

And I had to go out when I was on the doorsteps and say yes, but don't you worry, when this election is over, that'll be cancelled. Now I was wrong, it wasn't cancelled, it was reduced — cut in half. But it was good political strategy, and I've got to give you credit for that. It was dishonest but it was good political strategy . . . (inaudible interjection). . . Dishonest, I can use in this House, but I can't use the other.

Mr. Minister, what I really . . . Look, can you at least tell me — look let's stick with the operating grants. Would you not agree with me according to the estimates that

operating grants — forget about all the others — operating grants increased over the last six years by 12.5 per cent. Can you agree with that?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I can only agree with your simplistic analysis. If you're prepared to as well, then take away all of the things that would contribute to inflation and somehow say that that is an acceptable analysis situation . . . well you and I both know, because I respect your intellectual capacity, and I'll say . . . (inaudible interjection). . . I didn't say how large it was, I just said I respect it. And that you and I both know that that would be indeed a simplistic analysis.

And I know that you don't care about what we're spending in conjunction with school boards on buying computers for those schools. And I know you don't care about the books that have been bought for libraries, and the resource centres that have been built and opened up, or the energy efficiency that has been put in some schools. I know you don't like talking about those things because they are initiatives of a Progressive Conservative government, and you are a little bit . . . that's like touching a nerve when you discuss those kinds of things.

I want to leave you with one final comment. I want to leave you with one final comment, you and all of your colleagues. We're going to . . . whether it's post-secondary education or the kindergarten to grade 12 system in this province, both of which are embarked on a very exciting, new adventure, if you like, as they head towards the 21st century, new directions, new curriculums, all of the people — the 200,000 children, the 12,000 teachers, the 2 or 3,000 professors in this province, regional college instructors, technical institute instructors — they all are excited, to a person, about this new agenda.

And I want to leave this with you: we are going to bring the NDP opposition into the 21st century, whether you like it or not, and we'll bring you in kicking and screaming if we have to, but we're going to go into the 21st century when it comes to our education; and I say, come with us.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:56 p.m.