

May 25, 1988

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills

Ms. Smart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As chairperson of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I present the fourth report of the said committee which is as follows:

Bill No. 7 — An Act to amend The Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments Act

Ms. Smart: — I wish to report Bill No. 7, An Act to amend The Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments, as being non-controversial.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration in Committee of the Whole on the said Bill be waived.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

Bill No. 16 — An Act respecting the Licensing of Persons who Perform Work of Gas Installation or Sell Gas Equipment

Ms. Smart: — As chairperson of the Non-Controversial Bills Committee, I wish to report Bill No. 16, An Act respecting the Licensing of Persons who Perform Work of Gas Installation or Sell Gas Equipment, as being non-controversial.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration in Committee of the Whole on the said Bill be waived.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the said Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

Bill No 5 — An Act to declare a Day of Mourning for Workers Killed or Injured in the Course of their Employment / *Projet de loi No. 5 — Loi relative à la déclaration d'un jour de deuil en souvenir des travailleurs et travailleuses morts ou blessés au travail*

Ms. Smart: — As chairperson of the Non-Controversial Bills Committee, I wish to report Bill No. 5, An Act to declare a Day of Mourning for Workers Killed or Injured in the Course of their Employment, as controversial.

Bill No. 9 — An Act to amend The Fire Prevention Act, 1980

Ms. Smart: — Bill No. 9, An Act to amend The Fire Prevention Act, 1980, as being controversial.

Bill No. 10 — An Act respecting the Licensing of Persons who Perform Work of Electrical Installation or Sell Electrical Equipment

Ms. Smart: — Bill No. 10, An Act respecting the Licensing of Persons who Perform Work of Electrical Installation or Sell Electrical Equipment, as being controversial.

Bill No. 8 — An Act to amend The Public Libraries Act, 1984

Ms. Smart: — As chairperson of the Non-Controversial Bills Committee, I wish to report Bill No. 8, An Act to amend The Public Libraries Act, 1984, as being non-controversial.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration in Committee of the Whole on the said Bill be waived.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the said Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Saxinger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to introduce to you, and to the members of this Assembly, some people seated in your gallery. Hermann Heister is here visiting from West Germany; he's here on business. Also with him is Mr. and Mrs. Keller from La Ronge. The Kellers have the Nature Berry — they manufacture and produce gourmet blueberry and cranberry. Would you please help me welcome these people.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Gardner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, some students we have in today from the Pelly constituency. They are 26 students from the Fort Livingstone School in the town of Pelly, and they're here today with their teachers, Gwyn Shankowsky and Murray Bruce, chaperon Violet Keshane, and their bus driver, Art Johnson.

These students I know, being rural folks, are used to getting up in the morning, Mr. Speaker, because I passed their bus about 100 miles from Pelly this morning at 7:30, so I know they were up and on the road before breakfast.

I hope they enjoy themselves here this afternoon and have a good safe trip home, and I hope that everybody will help me welcome them in the usual manner.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, it's my great pleasure this afternoon to present to this Assembly 37 visiting students from grades 4, 5, and 6 at the Lafleche Elementary School in the town of Lafleche. They are seated both in the east gallery, Mr. Speaker, and on the floor of the Assembly. I will have the opportunity to meet with the students following question period.

I hope they enjoy their visit with us in the Assembly this afternoon and have a safe journey home. And, Mr. Speaker, I would invite all hon. members to join with me in welcoming them, together with their teachers, chaperons, and bus driver, Daphne Fogal, Sandy Filson, Charlene Hodgson, and Donna Sewell.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce and welcome 15 students from Southend in northern Saskatchewan. It's about 135 miles north of La Ronge. There's 15 students here with their teacher, Mr. Stephen Davidson, and also the mayor, William Dumais, and also Angelique Clarke.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to welcome them in Cree.

(The member spoke for a time in Cree).

So I would like the legislature to please welcome them, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Lay-off Notices for PCS Workers

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleagues have some questions today on the important drought situation, but in order not to break up the continuity of those questions which will follow, I have a series of two or three short but important questions which I should like to direct, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Finance, I believe, who is the minister in charge of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

My question to you, Mr. Minister, is as follows: is it correct that yesterday approximately 200 workers of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan at the Cory Mine just outside of Saskatoon received lay-off notices? Are these lay-off notices, if the story that I've received is correct, are these lay-off notices to be indefinite? Or at least the possibility of them being indefinite has been raised by management. And if so, will you be kind enough to also advise the House whether or not other PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan) operations are going to be similarly affected; if so, where and when?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The advice I have to the hon. member is that the lay-offs at Cory are of an indefinite nature. Cory will continue to produce the white product. It's a function of over-supply in the various products.

The other mines should not be affected, because what we've endeavoured to do to bring inventories under control is to allow . . . the other mines will continue to work at the 11 months with the usual one-month lay-off. The others, as I say, will continue to operate for the full normal 11 months.

The other option was, given the inventories, was to reduce the activity at all mines to a straight nine months for the year. We elected, in light of the need for the white product, to continue in the manner that I've set out that the other mines should be able to operate year round with the one month, normal exception.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I believe this is a new question to the minister in charge of PCS in the light of his answer. The minister I'm sure will agree with me that with today's confirmation the total number of jobs which have been lost to PCS since 1981 approximate about 1,000 now.

In 1981 there was a work-force of approximately 2,267. Today, prior to the Cory announcement, the work-force was 1,466. If you add two more from Cory, that's a loss of about 1,000 in this period. Certainly it's a devastating number of Saskatoon families, 200 Saskatoon and area families.

My question to the minister is this: why is it, Mr. Minister, that it seems to be the policy of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, and your government in particular, that in these kinds of circumstances the brunt of the lay-offs, the cut-backs to the productions, the job reductions, and the suffering to the families fall on those families who are associated with the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, as opposed to being more or less evenly distributed throughout the industry? Is it the policy of your government to make PCS, in effect, the doormat to the entire industry?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I can take some offence in the fact that it was this government, over the objections of the New Democratic Party opposition, that managed to bring some stability back into the potash industry world-wide with our actions last summer.

Secondly, we have made it abundantly clear to the people of this province that the potash corporation will not be run as a social welfare agency, as the NDP did. We are trying to, Mr. Speaker, and we did it fairly — and I know the press will support what I say — that when we undertook the down-sizing of the potash corporation last year, we did it management first, Mr. Speaker, and we had a significant reduction in management at the potash corporation.

There are management employees affected by the lay-off, but to argue, as the Leader of the Opposition does, that the lay-offs should be 50-50 management and union members, when you have a great number of employees and relatively few management, Mr. Speaker, I think is unwise. Management, Mr. Speaker, there are management lay-offs.

Now certainly we regret the need for lay-offs. But in order to make sure that the potash corporation and the industry is to function, recognizing the world of realities of supply and demand in potash, we are simply bringing in our production and our inventories in line with the potash demands.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the minister in charge of PCS. He might not have heard me correctly, but I did not suggest that the lay-offs be 50-50 as between the employees and the management.

However, the minister having made that suggestion, perhaps it might be a worthwhile comment for me to make that one good permanent lay-off for PCS to have is to lay off your buddy Paul Schoenhals, who apparently can't operate with PCS.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — My question to you, Mr. Minister, directly relates to this legislation that you referred to last year, The Potash Resources Act and its regulations, and the stability that you say that Act apparently presented to the market. Stability for whom? The New Mexico producers and privates?

My question to you is this, Mr. Minister: why is it that this Act has not been implemented to, in effect, make the pain equitable to all of the potash producers? Why is it that The Potash Resources Act that you tout as the saviour of the industry, but in effect has made Saskatchewan the doormat to the world industry, why is it that the Act has not been implemented, and the pain, if I may describe it that way, is applied equally or equitably to all of the potash producers in this province, and not just simply on the families of PCS and the communities in which PCS is located?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I believe that one of the other mines already announced some lay-offs a couple weeks back, and we will expect the normal lay-offs from the other mines during the course of the summer, which is traditional.

So I suggest to the hon. member, to simply keep people working when there is a surplus of potash is something, of course, you in your capacity as former minister responsible for the potash corporation did advocate prior to the 1982 election, which helped balloon up the surplus as you kept people working even though you were simply building up inventories to keep people working during the election.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker — and I'm disappointed that the member from Quill Lakes is objecting, because the Lanigan mine is one of the beneficiaries, Mr. Speaker, under the changes we've made where we're trying to maintain the operation of the other mines for 11 months of the year, at the request, I might add, of the people of Lanigan, Mr. Speaker, that they wanted to see some stability. We've tried to do this in a fair manner to deal with the surplus that we have and the traditional, normal maintenance shut-downs which take place during the

course of the year, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, one last question, a supplementary to the minister in charge of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. We're talking here, Mr. Minister — at least I am — the issue of equity, and also at some other future date, the wisdom of that policy decision of yours on The Potash Resources Act.

My question to you is this, sir: why is it that the private potash corporations outside of this country in New Mexico are thriving and not laying off people; why is it that the private potash companies in this province are thriving and not laying off people; why is it that the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan alone has been asked to bear the brunt? My question to you is: where's the leadership in that situation? Tell us what the policy behind that is.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I do find it disappointing that the former minister responsible for the potash corporation is so ill-informed as it applies to the potash industry, because let me tell you that, one, the policy has had some success in terms of having the price increase for Saskatchewan potash nearly 100 per cent in the last year.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we have had record sales to China as a result of policies of this government and initiatives of this government. The sales to the United States are being well maintained, notwithstanding the significant price increase. And I have advised the hon. member that other potash mines will be doing their normal shutdowns, and I believe — I'm subject to correction — I believe Kalium already announced theirs a couple of weeks back.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will try and keep the inventories in line with sales. We have had record sales. We are producing more, Mr. Speaker, but we will keep them in balance so that we are not having surplus inventories at great cost to the taxpayer.

Again I'm disappointed that the member from Quill Lakes, when now that his town has stability of the mine operating for 11 months of the year instead of nine, he sits here and objects to that, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sure the people in Lanigan are going to be terribly disappointed in the New Democratic Party position today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Drought Relief for Farmers

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture, and it deals with the drought problem that we have in Saskatchewan. Now we all know that last night there was a little bit of rain, Mr. Minister, and we're all very thankful for that. But despite the marginal rainfall in some of the areas around the province, from your questions and answers that we're getting out of you in days gone by we see you can't deal with the problem. So maybe we can give you a couple of constructive ideas to take with you.

So, Mr. Minister, will one of your proposals be specifically to give farmers and ranchers a per head grant to cover the cost of transporting livestock and feed due to the drought conditions?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that when we were going through Agriculture estimates I talked about that money would be going directly to farmers and not to truckers or not to people who were in the hay business, so that the farmer or rancher could be making the decision on his operation or her operation, so that in fact if they need to move feed or move water or move cattle, they should be doing that as they see fit because it will be retroactive. The money, whatever it is, a grant, a loan, a combination of the two, federal-provincial, will go to the farmers, go to the individual farmers directly as opposed to other people in the community.

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Minister, my actual question was: will that grant be based on per head? Will it be dollars per head so that it's a fair and equitable program?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — It very well could be on a head basis . . . a per head basis, a cow-calf pair or a combination of various kinds of livestock. And you look at the combination of whether it's sheep, goats, cattle, calves, horses, the combination of livestock that you could have, and a per head basis is something that the livestock producers have suggested may be appropriate, so that certainly could be part of the formula.

Mr. Upshall: — Well, Mr. Minister, here we go again. You know, we just can't get any specific answers out of you, and the farmers and ranchers have been waiting for months to hear what you're going to do.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — So let's try another one. Mr. Minister, you said that the program would be retroactive. Could you tell me, Mr. Minister, what the effective starting date of your program will be?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the suggestion from the livestock industry and others is that you pick a point in the spring when you were about to turn your cattle out, and normally do, and find out that you don't have the feed or you don't have the water or the combination of those two, and you say from that point on when farmers and ranchers are making those decisions and if they have to move it, then you make it retroactive back to a point that is reasonable for them. And they've suggested that we look at that, like when the snow goes and when normally you move cattle on the land.

I think we got talking about it here in estimates, where you had some suggestion that we move cattle into northern Saskatchewan several weeks ago, and clearly there wasn't the grass; the snow was still on the trees; it was not a good time to do that. So you don't want to move so early

as to look foolish in parts of the country where you're going to have to be opening up pastures that obviously aren't ready because of ice and snow.

So the farmers and ranchers have said to us, pick a time early enough in the spring so that you could make the logical decision. If you didn't have the water or the feed, make the move because it will be retroactive to that point in time.

Mr. Upshall: — Well, Mr. Minister . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order, order. I'd like to ask the hon. member to please direct his questions through the Speaker, and indicate if they're new questions, supplementaries.

Mr. Upshall: — Yes, certainly, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is again to the Minister of Agriculture, who has been unable to answer the last two questions. And I will say to him the reason that we were bringing up this matter in estimates is that we want farmers and ranchers to know ahead of time what's going to happen, and they still don't know. That's why we're suggesting getting something in place for moving cattle.

Now, Mr. Minister, we assume that you will be covering the costs of fencing and making Crown land available for grazing. Mr. Minister, my question to you is: will you also be adjusting crop insurance so that we could write off fall crops that are not of much value for grain and allow that for grazing? And would it also be possible to write off possibly spring crops at a later date for grazing if they are not eligible for grain?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, in my conversations with the minister of the wheat board, and talking to federal cabinet ministers and in conjunction with their own cabinet, I believe that the minister of crop insurance will be making a ministerial statement today, or an announcement with respect to crop insurance as it applies to fall commodities like winter wheat and rye, so that we can accommodate the feeding patterns of individuals that are facing obviously a crop that is probably not going to make it in terms of going to seed but could be used for feed, and not to be jeopardized or penalized in crop insurance.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier, the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Order.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture, and I guess that I would ask first of all that the minister thank the member from Humboldt for writing the drought program for the Conservatives caucus because there's nothing coming from over there.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, you're flying to Ottawa today to meet with your provincial counterparts and the federal Minister of Agriculture. Now you remember back

in 1985 when we had a similar drought, not the extreme that it is today — it's a much bigger area that we're dealing with — and at that time you and your federal counterpart promised a long-term program for drought so that never again would we have to get into this ad hoc development of programs for agriculture when we had a drought like this. I wonder if we can expect, tomorrow, an announcement as to what the long-term plan has been, seeing you've had three years to develop the program?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, as a result of our conversations and the national agriculture strategy, we have put in a mechanism that triggers crop insurance payments to be increased if you have back-to-back dry situations.

What we're dealing with now is the livestock, and that is very specific that when you need water for livestock, that you can't be waiting for the drought mechanism to set into place through crop insurance. So in the national agriculture strategy, we have a kicker that goes into place immediately with respect to the crop insurance payments that can be increased to farmers in a designated area as a result of an emergency.

Now what we're looking at is the ability to deal with livestock which may need to be moved or may need feed or may need water, or the combination thereof. And certainly the co-operation between the prairie provinces and the federal government is such that we'll be able to provide that kind of mechanism in the very near future.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, supplement to the minister, the only kicker that farmers are talking about is kicking this government out and getting one that will get on with their programs.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — What I want to say to you, Mr. Minister, is that while you're in Ottawa dealing with your federal counterpart, I'm sure you'll be seeing the Prime Minister. And it's clear now, it's clear now that there is no long-term plan, and I wonder, if there's none announced tomorrow, will you then be asking the Prime Minister for the resignation of Mr. Wise, because he's failed miserably the farmers in Saskatchewan and across western Canada?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that the hon. member is aware of the fact that the Prime Minister is in Europe meeting with the various heads of state, putting together an agriculture policy with respect to trade so that when they have the summit in Toronto, they will be able to deal with some of the long-run problems associated with surpluses and low prices for farmers.

And in fact, the Prime Minister is one of the first people in the developed world, in the free world, to be providing that kind of leadership. I congratulate him for making those changes and having those initiatives, both in terms of less subsidy and less protectionism and freer trade and freer markets.

All of those are going to be very good for people in agriculture, and that's one of the reasons that western Canadian premiers support those kinds of efforts. I will not be able to meet with the Prime Minister because I believe he's still overseas.

And with respect to the crop insurance mechanism, I've advised you that we have now an emergency system that's there, and as it kicks into the crop insurance it allows you to pay out more.

What we're dealing with now is livestock, not crop insurance, and there is a difference. I mean the crop insurance . . . (inaudible) . . . and the livestock. So that we can modify crop insurance, but that does not keep the livestock sector alive because most people, most people when they fill out their crop insurance, they're not looking at the livestock industry. They're in the grain business. And we know that this is a livestock problem in particular.

And I would also point out to the hon. member, in 1985 across southern Saskatchewan there was a difficult drought situation. Now we find that there's rain, as you pointed out, or somebody did, last night. There's rain in the south-eastern part of the province. It's primarily in the south-west, and that's what we want to focus on, and the beef herds in the south-west corner.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear! Hear

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Final supplement to the Premier. It's clear now, Mr. Premier, that as the minister of Agriculture you've failed the farmers on their debt problems over the last six years. You've failed them now, once again, on the drought problem.

I ask you: when will you come to the point where you develop some long-term strategy for farmers in this province so they don't have to wait for political expediency at election time to get results from you people?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well I can only say, Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect to my hon. colleague that the policies that we have designed in co-operation with agriculture have been very well received in our province by rural people, in Manitoba by rural people, in Alberta by rural people. Clearly the NDP's policies are not well accepted across rural Canada and certainly not rural Saskatchewan, or in Manitoba, or in Alberta.

I mean, you lost your seat in Shaunavon constituency because of agriculture policies. I will grant you that you can come back into Elphinstone and you might be able to be elected there, but the NDP agriculture policies are clearly not well respected and you know it. You're trying pretty hard, but you look like you're trying, and that's your problem.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, we have been talking

mostly about the livestock industry in terms of the drought situation in the province, but I want to assure you that many grain farmers are also very concerned about the impending drought that could be there, in fact last month there were some areas in the province that only had 25 per cent chance of getting enough moisture by the end of this month to have a crop for this current year. And many areas are facing the worst drought in the history of the province — there's no question about that.

And what I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, through you, Mr. Speaker, is: what plans do you have in store for the grain producers to protect them from the very serious threat of drought? And if you don't have an answer to that, rather than asking the federal Minister of Agriculture to resign, maybe we should ask the provincial Minister of Agriculture to resign so we have a full-time Minister of Agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — It seems, Mr. Speaker, that they have to resort . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps what I could do is I could send over to the hon. member the communiqués published by the western premiers when we reviewed the agriculture situation, talked about soil erosion and money to prevent that, crop insurance, deficiency payments to back up the farmers, make sure that we deal with the drought situation, and meet federally with our counterparts as well as across the West — a combination of packages, Mr. Speaker, that we believe that have helped us a great deal.

And we will continue to be very, very sensitive to the needs of the farmers, and particularly, not only at the local level so that we provide money for people to cope with difficult situations, but at the international level, Mr. Speaker, where in fact we can see the prices come up as a result of policies that obviously the NDP don't understand and they don't want to promote.

They don't want to trade; they'd rather have subsidies and protectionism. We don't think that's going to help farmers, Mr. Speaker. And our policies locally, nationally, and internationally with respect to food and agriculture have been well received across western Canada and indeed across the country.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Well, Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. If the main amigos in the province of Saskatchewan can't answer the agricultural questions, I'd like to turn to the Minister of Rural Development.

And very straight and to the point, I was wondering if the minister will assure us that any crops with less than a seven bushel per acre harvest this year would be considered as write off or zero production, and will the minister give us that reassurance here this afternoon?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Mr. Speaker, first of all the regulations and the legislation that we work under under crop insurance were drafted both at a federal and provincial level, and it's across Canada. The percentage of bushels per acre, or the bushels per acre that are used, are set out for across Canada standards. Right now I believe it's five bushels and prorated down to two.

In regards to fall rye and winter wheat, I'll be making an announcement very shortly.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Changes to Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Policy

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan has been working hard to respond in an effective and meaningful way to the farm producers adversely affected by drought conditions which exist throughout the south-west and mid-west part of Saskatchewan.

Today I would like to announce that effective immediately, the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation will be implementing the new measures to assist cattle producers facing increasingly difficult feed shortages. Farmers affected by drought conditions and the resulting shortages of feed will be able to use fall seeded rye and winter wheat crops as fodder until June 10 while still remaining with the crop insurance program.

This represents a significant change to existing policy and procedures which during normal growing conditions would not allow producers to graze fall rye or winter wheat and retain their crop insurance coverage. This change applies to all winter wheat crops which can be utilized for feed, and affects grain farmers and cattle producers.

Because the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation recognized that not all farm and cattle situations affected by the drought are identical, we have built in a number of options which will give producers the ability to identify and use the one which represents their best interest.

Mr. Speaker, there's three options which include, one, if a farmer has established fall rye or winter wheat crop and he wishes to use it as feed, we will allow them the opportunity to: (a) leave the crop and harvest the grain as was intended; (b) declare the field to be used for fodder, cancel your insurance and be refunded the uninsured portion of the premium; or © declare the field to be used for fodder and retain the crop insurance coverage. In this case they'll pay the premium.

Other important information farmers should be aware of relating to this program are, one, should a farmer choose to use his fall rye or winter wheat for fodder and retain coverage after June 10, check areas or uncut strips must be left for adjustment appraisals. In other words, Mr. Speaker, you'll be able to use that area as a crop or a fodder for his cattle until June 10, then he makes up his mind what he wants to do with it. Also if a farmer chooses this option, the premium will be paid.

Second, should a farmer choose to use the crop for fodder

and cancel the insurance, then a partial premium will be charged for the risk carried over the winter.

And third, it is vital that the farmer wishing to exercise any of the options available under this program, they must advise their local Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation customer service office of their intentions and that an adjustment of the fields should take place prior to the use of the field.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation will continue to monitor the drought conditions that exist within our province so that identification of special enhancements or requirements may be made and implemented to assist farm producers. We're committed to the agriculture community and we'll work hard to assist farm producers as they work to manage their operations while the drought conditions persist.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to see that after weeks and weeks of this side of the House begging the government to come to make some decisions on agriculture and the drought situation, at least they've attempted to put something forward. I would hope that this is just the beginning, Mr. Speaker, of developing a crop insurance corporation that will respond to the severe conditions that we face in this province from year to year, whether it be drought or insects or other disease.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — I would also hope that the minister would take into consideration, despite the fact that he continually says that the crop insurance can't be adjusted because it's a federal-provincial program. Well I say that's a mere technicality when farmers in this province are suffering, are suffering from drought conditions. And I say if the government wants to make those adjustments, they can make those adjustments along with their federal counterparts.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — I would also just like to again . . . as the member from North Battleford suggested that crops producing less than seven bushels an acre be written off as zero production for farmers to enable them to at least cover some of their costs.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to conclude by saying that we will be continuing . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. I'm sure many hon. member are having difficulty hearing the member from Humboldt, and I'd like to ask you to allow him to speak.

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to conclude by saying that we on this side of the House will be continuing in the days to come to press the government to implement programs immediately and not wait until farmers are on their knees and then do something so it makes them feel better.

And I think . . . and we'll continue to do that, and I just hope that this government has enough responsibility and enough wisdom to listen to us and continue to develop good programs in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

(1445)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 33 — An Act respecting the Registration of Leafcutter Beekeepers

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting the Registration of Leafcutter Beekeepers.

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

Bill No. 34 — An Act to promote Regulatory Reform in Saskatchewan by repealing Certain Obsolete Statutes

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to promote Regulatory Reform in Saskatchewan by repealing Certain Obsolete Statutes.

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

Bill No. 35 — An Act to Amend The Jury Act, 1981

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Jury Act, 1981.

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

Bill No. 36 — An Act to amend The Meewasin Valley Authority Act

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

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

Bill No. 37 — An Act to provide for Security for Saskatchewan Family Farms

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask for leave of this Assembly to introduce an Act providing for the Security of Saskatchewan Family Farms, ask for that leave.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I beg to inform the Assembly that His Honour the Administrator, having been informed of the subject matter of the Bill, recommends that it be considered in the Assembly. And I move that a Bill, An Act to provide for Security for Saskatchewan Family

Farms, be now introduced and read a first time.

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

PRIORITY OF DEBATE

Drought Conditions in Saskatchewan

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Speaker, thank you. And before orders of the day I rise pursuant to rule 17 of this Assembly to seek leave to move that a matter of urgent public importance now be given priority of debate. In accordance with the rules, I've provided written notice to the Clerk of the Assembly this morning, and I believe that the government has also been advised.

I will just take a moment, Mr. Speaker, to state the issue, and that is the drought crisis facing Saskatchewan today. More specifically, it is urgent and pressing need for the Government of Saskatchewan and Canada to take concrete, positive action to address the issue and to provide immediate assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I know that all members of the Assembly will agree that this is indeed a matter of grave public importance. Livestock is threatened, farmers are threatened, communities are being threatened, and I believe that it is no exaggeration, Mr. Speaker, to say that the agriculture economy of Saskatchewan is being threatened.

I also respectfully submit, Mr. Speaker, that this matter is urgent. I am aware of previous rulings in this Assembly where it was ruled that a matter was not of sufficient urgency to warrant the immediate setting aside of other business in order to permit consideration of an issue. Today, however, consideration of the drought crisis facing Saskatchewan and the pressing need for immediate action is indeed urgent. Livestock producers know it, rural communities know it, and just yesterday the Assembly was advised of the hastily convened federal-provincial meeting to be held in Ottawa tomorrow.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, and with all due respect, I urge you to acknowledge the pressing urgency of this matter. Question period provides only a brief opportunity to seek information from government ministers. This urgent issue, Mr. Speaker, warrants the substantive consideration of the Assembly today.

Therefore I seek leave, Mr. Speaker, to move a motion along the following lines:

That the need for the Government of Saskatchewan and Canada to implement immediate measures to assist Saskatchewan farmers and communities facing crisis conditions caused by drought, now be given priority of debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — A notice regarding this matter, proposed for priority of debate, was received in the Clerk's office at

11:36 a.m. today, for which I thank the hon. member.

I refer all members to rule 17(6) which states that the matter proposed for an urgent debate must be in order and of urgent public importance. I rule that while this matter is of substantial public importance, it is one of a continuing nature. I further rule that there are adequate opportunities within the normal framework of the parliamentary procedure to debate this issue, and thus the request to set aside all the other business of the Assembly today is denied.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Education Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 5

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Minister, the critic for K to 12 education may have a few comments to make yet, or a few questions, but today we will be spending, I think, most of the afternoon dealing with post-secondary matters. I want to start out by asking a series of questions about concerns that have been brought to my attention with respect to private vocational schools in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, as you well know, things have changed considerably in the private vocational schools situation. These changes may have been stimulated by various causes. I think one of the causes seems to be, or impetuses was because the Canadian job strategy . . . there was some money being made available, more money being made available for post-secondary training, and as a result we've had a lot of new private vocational schools established, some of which are in direct competition with the technical institutes.

And there's really no problem with the concept on my part and the part of people on our side, this side of the House, with the concept of private vocational schools. We've always had several in the province. I think that the numbers have doubled or perhaps increased more than that lately. The schools that were here had established good reputations and are quite interested in maintaining their good reputations.

I know that I've had family members that have attended some — one at least, or two of the private vocational schools in the province, and they had reported from the schools that they really appreciated the program. They thought the quality of the program was quite good. However, in recent times, I've found that the reports I've been getting from constituents and a lot of people that I know and students who have gone there the reports have changed somewhat.

And the other remarks that I will be dealing with today with respect to the problem areas, I want to at first, Mr. Minister, indicate that it is not my intention and I certainly

don't think it would be yours in our discussion of this to tar all the private schools with the one brush, with the bad brush, because they are not deserving of that. But there is some element, there is some elements in the private schools that I think should be discussed, need to be discussed because there is some responsibility on the part of your government to deal with some of the complaints.

Now let me get a little more specific with the complaints and the type of complaints that I've heard. They deal primarily with the quality of the programs and the quality of the instruction that some of the students have experienced, or the lack of quality compared to what the students have expected. Students may be applying to go to the technical institutes and they find that there's a waiting list. They'll see an ad for one of the private vocational schools, they'll answer the ad, they'll get a good sell job. Remember, the people are there because they're into it to make a profit.

And when the students enrol, they are enthusiastic at first, and in several cases — and I repeat again, not in the majority of cases but in too many cases — they've found that the quality of the program has been lacking. It has been due to, in most cases, inexperience on the part of the instructors, or the situation has been where the principals or the operators of the schools have hired people that are unqualified — either unqualified because they have not had any training in teaching or any training in dealing with an adult teaching situation, or in some cases not even being expert in the field.

Now our people that have come out of high school or out of the technical institutes are used to and expect, and I think have a right to expect quality instruction, because we've developed a scheme and a system in Saskatchewan where four years is a minimum for any teacher — goes out into the teaching field now, and the people that are teaching in our technical schools and the universities usually have more than that in works of training.

The technical schools and the institutes and the public school system all pay wages which are commensurate with the training. People that go to the private vocational schools, which get jobs at the private vocational schools, don't have that kind of wage protection, and as a result they are not always able to attract the top-notch instructors.

My question, Mr. Minister, is: have you received complaints or inquiries or concerns of this type, and as a result of those concerns, what is it that you are doing about it?

(1500)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The hon. member, Mr. Deputy Chairman, raised some questions about complaints regarding private vocational school operations over this past year, and certainly I've had some raised with me — and I view them as serious.

For example, we've had, relative to the quality of training, I think, six student groups raised that issue, eight on an individual basis. Relative to misrepresentation of programs we had a group of six and a group of four, and as

well, four individuals raised that issue with us. Relative to credits, marks, and schedules, we had four individuals. Unprofessional conduct, a couple of individuals raised that with us. Fee refunds, four individuals; and relative to advertising, three individuals. So we have had certainly some complaints.

I recall, as well, meeting with operators of these schools — or at least many of them — probably about a year or a little over a year ago now. They are cognizant of the fact themselves that they want to have a high standard and maintain a high standard. They too are concerned about fly-by-night operators, if you like, damaging their reputation collectively, when indeed many of these schools enjoy a fine reputation. But they're worried about all of their reputations being damaged because of a few.

But because I do take this matter seriously, a number of initiatives will be under way, are under way, and will be under way over the next year.

First of all, for the member's information, all complaints that we get are followed up by the department. As well, an advisory committee, including members of the department and school operators, will be established to examine such things as needed revisions to the Act and regulations, student grievance procedures, in-service needs, quality assurance, level of bonding. And specifically, I would see the Act and the regulations being reviewed to ensure that the department's role meets the needs of the 1990s.

As well, we'll be making available additional resources within the department to increase the vigilance, if you like, of the private vocational schools.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Minister, I acknowledge the fact that any complaints that have gone to your department have been followed up, because I've had the opportunity in a couple of cases to follow up myself, and I've had your staff down, and I'm appreciative of that.

The concern that I have here now is the approach that you take as a result of the information that we now have at hand, and the nature of the complaints, the approaches you're going to take over this next half year or year in order to cut off the complaints at the pass. That is, I feel strongly that a lot of the cases where students or parents have had to come and say to their MLA or directly to the department, that there may have been some other way of getting the complaints addressed.

So I want to ask you a couple of specific questions about how you're going to handle this. Are you calling or have you appointed any kind of a committee that would be representative of the private vocational schools for advice on this matter, or for consultation as to how the Act or the regulations might be changed?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — An advisory committee will be established with departmental representation, and operators of the private vocational schools represented as well.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Could you give me an indication of when you would expect this advisory committee to be

appointed?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I would say, probably within the next 60 to 90 days at the outset.

Mr. Kowalsky: — In the intervening time — now this is probably going to take, I would expect, another half a year at least or maybe a year until we come up with a new Act and new regulations — as I peruse the existing Act and regulations, I notice that there really is quite a lot in the Act that gives a minister quite a lot of power that I'm wondering whether you've been using, Mr. Minister.

For example, with respect to the qualifications of an instructor. In article 11 of the existing Act it says:

The minister or any person authorized by him may, at any time during the business hours of a private vocational school, enter and inspect:

- (a) the school;
- (b) the premises (in or on which the school is operated);
- (c) the equipment, and the method of instruction (used in) the school;

Would you consider having a regular inspection system set up in the interim to try it out to see if that would work? You know that our public school systems have a regular inspector system. I'm not sure if inspector is the right kind of word. It sometimes is not regarded by professionals as the way to go. They would look maybe at something, at some type of a collegial supervision, but some type of a supervisory practice where this would be held on a regular basis in the interim until we've got regulations in place . . . pardon me, until you have new rules and regulations in place.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well as I mentioned earlier, we will be making available in the department resources to increase the level of support and of vigilance.

I might share a bit of background with the hon. member that might give us some indication as to why at least perceptibly we have more complaints, and that is that over the last six years the number of schools increased about two and half times. It's gone from 16 to 40, and the number of students from approximately 1,600 to 4,500.

And perhaps if there's a straight-line relationship between complaints and numbers, if you've got a 250 per cent increase in the students there and in the number of schools, one might expect that you would generate more complaints. That doesn't mean to say one ought to tolerate them if they're legitimate complaints. And to that end, because we've seen this increase, we'll be shoring up our side in the department over this next year, at the same time as this advisory council looks at Act revisions, in-service needs, quality control, if you like, and those kinds of issues.

Mr. Kowalsky: — One of the powers that is given to a minister here is:

Where, as the result of the inspection of a private vocational school, (the minister) or upon (this is section 12) the minister is satisfied that . . .

Section 12(b) refers to prescribing the accommodation and equipment necessary for private vocational schools, and refers to the means of instruction.

One of the complaints that I've had brought to my attention is that the facilities in these places are quite often crowded and substandard, particularly when compared to the technical institutes, because that's really the basis of comparison; that some cases are dealing with equipment where the students have to wait in line for a long time to be able to use some of the equipment, and in other case where the class-rooms are kind of crowded into a commercial space in the downtown area. Now the downtown area is usually a good feature, but the crowdedness of the spaces, because they are not built for that particular reason, sometimes causes problems.

So the question I'm asking: is there some way, or have you got any kind of regulations in place, or will you be contemplating regulations about the spaces, the kind of spaces and equipment needed?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well as in the past and as is present practice, the fire and the health department do their inspections, and I believe they do them annually. Over and above that, this past year we as well are spot checking the schools. About three-quarters of them have been done to date, and as well, all the teachers' names and their resumes are forwarded to the department for our review and approval. So if you're asking me if we're being more vigilant in increasing our inspection, if you like, the answer would be yes. And it's over and above the fire and hell stuff that have always gone, and it's the spot checking and filing resumes and those kinds of things.

Mr. Kowalsky: — One thing that I think would be very helpful is if there was some type of a standard set up for both space and qualifications.

See, one of the difficulties when you're operating a business for profit is that if your competition can hire a space cheaper or a person cheaper, then of course he's got the competitive monetary advantage. The unfortunate part about this, if this I done repeatedly — and this is what the reputable operators don't like to see — if this is done repeatedly, then it lowers the quality of education the student receives.

I think that that's where the department should come in; that there should be a certain standard in terms of square feet per person, per student; or there should be, perhaps, a minimum standard of qualification, as well, set for the instructors.

I know that by doing your monitoring, you will . . . it'll put people on their toes for a minute, and it'll also give you the advantage, I guess, of having the data to go by as to what kind of qualifications people have.

But if there were some way of setting a minimum qualification for instructors, particularly in some of the areas that are taught in technical institutes, so that — because there you've got a good comparison. Perhaps if a new field comes in, it's difficult to get a qualification in place immediately.

But I could see that a standardization of qualifications and space would go a long way. And I think that the institutes, that the private vocational schools would like it if it was standardized so that they wouldn't feel that they would be undercut by somebody just hiring some body off the street, to give them a text book and say, here, go and teach this, or somebody in some cases where they've actually been hired . . . have hired people who've just graduated from their courses without any practical experience. But because they were nice people and because the instructors . . . the schools needed somebody; they would hire them immediately. And of course it's the entire . . . and once again I would mention that this is not a general practice, and I don't want to give the impression that the entire works is being tarred here, but the entire works tends to get tarred if they're not protected from these individual cases.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well just to pick up on your last points first, relative to the qualifications of instructors, we have an approval process now; there are some qualifications now. Over and above that, what we would want to discuss with the operators is how continuing education needs of their instructors, in-service training, that kind of thing, so they too can stay current.

Getting back to the initial part of your question, when I met with the operators, I sensed very much on their part a genuine willingness amongst these reputable operators to run schools with high standards. They know that in the long haul it is only their reputation and track record which will continue to bring students into their facilities. So they no more want to either be, or be seen to be, fly-by-night operators.

(1515)

And my preferred approach in terms of further standards and/or new measures that we might take, or changes to the Act and regulations and so forth, my preferred would be to work with them because I think their goals are the same as our goals — work with them to design a new Act and anything else that might make sense. That would be my preferred choice, as opposed to unilaterally dictating something. I suppose if I don't see a genuine co-operative approach and some headway being made, then I might change my mind. But at this very moment, because I sense very much a genuine desire on their part, that would be my preferred approach, at least initially.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I would think, Mr. Minister, that I would certainly welcome you using, in your department, using a co-operative approach with the folks and the operators. I think that from the discussions I've had with several of the operators, that that would go over well.

I want to bring to your attention also another aspect of the private vocational schools that I haven't discussed so far, and that is some of the curriculum that they're offering themselves.

Now what happens here is you get an independent operator and the operator sometimes feels, well look, here's a course in, let's say, travel and tourism, because that's one that the several used, that he thinks he may be

able to sell to people, to students or prospective students because it may not be offered any place else. And it's consistent with our concept of a sort of a mixed economy where a person should be able to offer a course of any sort if he can find the students to take it.

But one of the difficulties with this particular course was that the students were placed in so much of what I would call a "buyer beware" situation. Because I've had several graduates indicate to me that after having taken the course, or relatives of graduates saying that after they've taken the course, they've gone and applied for jobs. And whereas somehow they had fixed in their minds that this thing was going to get them a job, or get them at least closer to a job, they'd go to a travel agency and virtually be laughed at.

So in this particular case . . . or to go to a hotel management, or a hotel operator, and once again they'd be laughed at and told, well if you really want to get into this, you should have gone through a different route.

And so another thing that's really needed here is to be able to deal with a situation where the students, or the prospective students, are not put into so much of a "buyer beware" situation. At least when they come to a technical institute we've got the research staff at the technical institutes to be able to advise students of what the job capabilities are, or availability is.

At least they can say, well, 70 per cent of our last set of grads got a job, or 40 per cent, or whatever the number happens to be. But there's some type of a follow-up agency that need to be put into place in co-operation with these private vocational schools so that students — and that's I guess on whose behalf we are really here — can feel relatively sure that they're not in a buyer beware situation as to the schools that are licensed here in Saskatchewan. There's not much we can do of course about those that are correspondence schools sent in from out of province.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well relative to travel agents, that has been a particular problem area, not just in Saskatchewan, I'm advised, but across the entire country. And you say, young people, students who are spending some considerable time and money taking that course and then finding out that it wasn't what travel agents wanted, or in very real terms the jobs weren't there, and that's to nobody's . . . it's not to the school's benefit nor is it, certainly, to the student's benefit.

And because everybody recognized there was a problem there, meetings have been held with the national association of travel agents to find out what indeed it was that they required of their employees, what a legitimate and right and proper curriculum would look like. And I'm advised that that meeting was productive and that now there is ongoing work with the three schools in Saskatchewan to put that new curriculum or modified curriculum in place.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would imagine that you're quite aware of the fact that there are several students who, as result of some of their experiences, have actually taken or are in the process of

taking one of the vocational schools to court. And also what I want to do here, just in closing before I turn this over to my colleague from Moose Jaw North, is to put on record just a couple of the complaints that some of the students have had so that you would have it for your records, and as you go into committee, the committee will also be able to put it into for their own purposes.

I have listed some of the things that students have brought, and I would like to read them into the record at this time. Their complaints, including: the failure to provide the total number of course hours that they were advised; that the course was not taught by instructors qualified to teach; that much of the course content set out in a program outline was not covered; on some occasions — in this case it says on numerous occasions — students were required to teach themselves; the instructor did not have sufficient knowledge to respond to proper questions that were put to them by the students; in some cases the preparation of classes and organization of the course was not properly undertaken.

See, Mr. Minister, we talked about in generalities. These are the specifics that the students are indicating. In some cases class time was wasted in discussing subjects irrelevant to the duties or to the class content. Now this is particularly galling to students when they're paying in the vicinity of 3 to \$4,000 a year tuition. Specifically, the instruction reasonably necessary to the performance of some of the duties of travel counsellor was not given.

In some cases classes were dismissed early because they felt . . . because the instructors didn't have their lessons prepared so they'd go for their 20 minutes, or whatever, and then leave. As the case that you've indicated, the travel counsellor course was not certified with the Canadian Institutes of Travel Counsellors, and that no effort to assist in making . . . in giving suitable employment after the instruction was given, where as I guess some of the students must have had the feeling that it should be given.

Now I just put those things down on record, Mr. Minister, for your information, and I would pass this over to my colleague from Moose Jaw North.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I just have a few very short and concise questions which I would like to present to you, and I would anticipate that your responses would be equally brief and to the point, Mr. Minister.

The questions which I'd like to raise with you relate to the issue of the representation for purposes of bargaining a collective agreement for instructors of the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology.

Mr. Minister, you will be aware of course that when you presented the Bill to this Assembly last year bringing into place the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, that at that time there was a clause in the Bill that overrode The Trade Union Act and in effect discontinued the collective representation of employees of all the technical institutes who were to come under umbrella of Saskatchewan Institute of Allied Science and Technology.

You'll be aware that subsequent to that then, Mr. Minister, that there were organizational efforts by a couple of bodies to represent employees, and subsequently — I believe without opposition — the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union was chosen to select the office and clerical employees of SIAST.

However, my questions today are specifically related to the procedures that impact on instructors, academic instructors who were employed by SIAST. And you will be aware, Mr. Minister, that there were two bodies who sought to represent academic instructors and made representation to the Labour Relations Board, and subsequently the Labour Relations Board determined that a vote should be held, and democratically the instructors of SIAST selected the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union as their bargaining agent to represent them for purposes of collective agreement.

My questions to you, Mr. Minister, then, in the context of that history, have to do with the current impacts of that decision.

I wish to ask you first of all, Mr. Minister, whether it is a condition of employment that all SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) instructors be members of SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union); and secondly, whether all employees are required to pay union dues to SGEU?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — As I understand it, all are paying union dues and all are in the union.

Mr. Hagel: — And if you could just clarify for me, Mr. Minister, my question was whether the union membership is a condition of employment.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, it is.

Mr. Hagel: — Further to that then, Mr. Minister — and I appreciate the brevity of your response, and it wasn't all that painful, Mr. Minister — I would ask: in order to be a member of SGEU adult education branch no. 24, must each instructor then sign an SGEU membership card?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — As I understand it, yes.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Let me ask in addition to that, then: what action must SIAST take if an employee does not want to be a member of SGEU?

(1530)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — It's not SIAST that would do something, as I understand it, it's the employee. All members must belong, but if they wish not to belong for religious reasons, then they must apply to the Labour Relations Board.

Mr. Hagel: — And it's your view, Mr. Minister, that that is the only exception which would permit an employee not to be a member, a dues-paying member of SGEU?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — That's the only one that we're

aware of, and I think it's probably important because this question and one other was relative to the SGEU policy. I wouldn't want to ever be construed as deciding SGEU policy as the Minister of Education.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, I think you can rest assured that there are a whole lot of folks who would not construe you as deciding SGEU policy.

Mr. Minister, let me ask you as well whether all SIAST employees must sign specimen cards authorizing employee deductions of union fees and also whether . . . will the employer, will SIAST advise SIAST employees that they must sign those authorization cards?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, all employees must sign a card for their deductions, but if you're asking if it's up to SIAST to ensure that that's completed or whatever, it's not; it's up to the union organization.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, then will you please advise me as to whether SIAST will provide all employees with authorization cards for union deduction fees — for deductions of union fees, I should say — and would you also advise me as to by what time all employees will receive those cards from SIAST?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm advised that this isn't the employer's responsibility. But having said that, we have apparently assisted in the distribution of them, but it's not the employer's responsibility, as I understand it.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, then will you tell me whether the employer will advise the employees of SIAST that a failure to sign authorization cards, as a matter of fact would place their employment at risk and result in job termination? And also would you advise me, Mr. Minister, at what point that would occur?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — As I understand it, the policy is that the cards have to be signed within 30 days of the commencement of employment. But it's not our responsibility, it's the union responsibility.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, if an employee refused to sign the authorization card in that set of circumstances, is there a point at which the employer would terminate the employment of that instructor, or would the employer, SIAST, require that that card be signed as a condition of continued employment?

I hope I didn't hear you say that if an employee refuses to sign the authorization card for deduction of union dues, and does that indefinitely, that that would be acceptable to the employer, to SIAST.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — It's a condition of employment, so presumably, if the condition wasn't filled, they wouldn't stay employed.

Mr. Hagel: — And let me repeat the question. Maybe I'll just make it a little shorter, Mr. Minister. I do appreciate that this exchange is one of brief questions, to the point, and the answer is very similar . . .

An Hon. Member: — Very unusual.

Mr. Hagel: — This is as new style, a new characteristic of these estimates that perhaps may become precedent setting, who knows?

Mr. Minister, let me ask you: is there a point at which — and I repeat the question very simply — is there a point at which, if an employee refused to sign that authorization card, that SIAST would say: no longer; your job shall be terminated unless you sign that authorization card? The opposite of that, Mr. Minister, would be that the condition could just go on interminably. So at what point would the employer insist that those authorization cards be signed, submitted, or employment will not continue?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Our best, considered, non-legal opinion, I guess, is . . . The question, as I understand it — and I don't . . . I'm presuming it's hypothetical — is if the card wasn't signed by 30 days, would it go on for 40 days or 60 days or 90 days?

Now what I'm led to believe is that if the card isn't signed by 30 days, then the offer for employment would probably be null and void.

Mr. Hagel: — So just to be crystal clear about this, Mr. Minister, it would be your view, then, that the employee would be terminated if the card is not signed and submitted within 30 days? I just want to be clear on this.

These are not trick questions, and they're not complicated questions. I simply wanted, Mr. Minister, to have it crystal clear. There are a number of employees who are concerned about this, and as you're aware, there has been a somewhat heated campaign for representation.

I think it's extremely important that all those employees who are affected and who are obliged by law to accept a democratic decision know what the rules of the game are.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm rechecking with my officials so that we can be as crystal clear as possible for you. There may well be some situations that are still outstanding before the Labour Relations Board that the board has not yet ruled on relative to, for example, controllers and managers of human resources on each campus, that weren't exclusions in the legislation but have been applied for before the board, that haven't been ruled on yet. And it may well be that some of those, if they're obviously, they probably are over the 30 days, and so they may be not . . . they probably are continuing their employment and not been terminated because it's still outstanding or awaiting a ruling of the labour board.

Mr. Hagel: — Would instructors?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well the examples I have is controllers and managers of human resources. There could be some others, but those would be a couple of examples for you.

Mr. Hagel: — I appreciate that possible exception, Mr. Minister. I just . . . my question was specifically related to the academic staff of SIAST.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well not that I'm aware of. I mean, that's maybe not totally crystal clear, but I and my officials aren't aware of any.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, I appreciate that assurance, and I appreciate as well the somewhat humble and perhaps atypical admission that you're not aware of absolutely everything. Mr. Minister, I want to simply thank you for this very brief and factual exchange of questions and answers, and I look forward to other exchanges of a similar nature at other times, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Kowalsky: — On the same topic respecting conditions that affect employees. Before the amalgamation, employees at the technical institutes had the opportunity to transfer to the Public Service Commission, and vice versa; I would like you to confirm that. And I would ask whether you're making any provisions for current employees now of SIAST to transfer, with all employee rights and benefits, to the Public Service Commission?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm advised there's no reciprocal agreement between SIAST and the Public Service Commission.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Well I think, Mr. Minister, that's something that perhaps you would take under advisement. There are the employees who of course become sort of pawns in the operation here as you amalgamate or switch from one type of employer to another, where they're still doing the same job, find that they have, in this particular case, lost something that they had before.

You have been quoted by employees as saying that nothing would be changed, but they're finding that maybe in this particular case something has changed. They were also told, I understand, that no employee rights would be lost.

So what I'm asking you to do is to see if you could make provision, at least on an interim basis, perhaps for two years or three years, for those employees who have started to work at the technical institutes, at SIAST, who may find themselves uncomfortable there and think that they may be able to do a better job, or work under conditions where they would be more productive, with the public service, but are unable to do so now because it would be a switch of employees and a loss of rights, a loss of some of the benefits. They may want to go but they're very reluctant to even apply or to go because of the losses that they would suffer.

(1545)

The institute itself might even find it a benefit to encourage a person who might take that initiative to go, but if there's no transferability of benefits, then of course that's a deterrent to the move. Would you under take to do that?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the hon. member raising this and why he might raise this point about reciprocity, but as he can probably as well

appreciate, this could, or at least potentially could, become an issue at a bargaining table, for example. And for that reason, I think it would be injudicious of myself to make any comment on it.

I think the other point that I would make here is that I think — and I can understand this because it's a relatively new institution — but I think the kinds of questions you ask and the expectation or the perception that I have from my side of what you think the role of the Minister of Education is relative to the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, is different than my view, because we have now an autonomous institute.

The kinds of questions you ask, I mean, in terms of . . . are not the kinds of questions that you would ask of me relative to the university, for example. And yet the two institutes have their own boards now, a board of governors and a board of directors.

I think maybe you and some of the public have to recognize that there has been quite a major change here and that it's no longer an arm of the Department of Education, or advanced education it was in the past. It's an autonomous organization now and so it should be, so you wanted it to be, so did many out there. And that casts a different light, if you like, on some of the questions — not that they aren't pertinent. It's just a matter of if we really believe in autonomy of the institute, then it's not for me to start making decisions or imposing decisions on the institute unilaterally.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Well, Mr. Minister, in this particular case I don't think you'd be imposing anything on the institution. There would be a situation where you would be contacting the Public Service Commission, which is directly under the control of the government, and you would be advising them that there may be 1 or 2 or 3 people or maybe even a half a dozen or 10 that might be able to take advantage of such a provision.

About the autonomy of the institute, I have to ask these questions of you, Mr. Minister, because at this stage I understand it's still working under the interim governing board. I also understand that your deputy minister sits on the board and maybe you would clarify that for me at this time.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well my comment relative to the issue — and I understand why you're raising it — but my answer would still be the same relative to . . . I think some could see it as interference in the bargaining process, and staking out an opinion on something that I really probably, maybe do not have any business in staking out an opinion on.

Relative to the board of directors, you can expect an announcement very shortly on the board of directors for the institute.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I can expect an announcement with respect to what on the board of directors — you mean as to when the SIAST will become completely autonomous? Is that what you're talking about?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, an announcement on who

the board of directors are, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Minister, back to the issue that I raised before we got to talking about the relationship between the department and the SIAST board: what would you advise, then, a person who came to you or came to your department and was looking for this type of a transfer in the interim until the new contract was signed? Is there any kind of advice that you might be able to give a person that's looking for this type of transfer?

I might indicate to you that there are precedents for this type of thing in bargaining. I believe, if I remember correctly, I even helped bargain as article like that between a school board and a joint board when there was a joint board formed and there was a shift in governance, which is rather a parallel situation to this one. What would you advise to the person who was looking for this kind of a transfer?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well if an individual has a desire, I guess is the best way to put it, relative to the kind of issue you raise, as I understand it there is a union structure designed to handle that, stewards, etc., and I guess that would be the appropriate route for the individual.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I'd like to turn now to discussing some of the issues pertaining the university, both universities: one, University of Regina here, and University of Saskatchewan. In perusing some of the written material and some of the political concerns about the universities I noticed that back as far as April 30, 1986, that your government, amidst a great deal of fanfare, announced funding for a building, a students' union building, here right at University of Regina.

It's my understanding that there was a hundred-guest reception held at the university, and that our ruling Conservative Party pointed to the contribution during . . . to this particular contribution as an example of the government's commitment to the U of R and to the post-secondary education in general.

Mr. Minister, what happened there was that the Premier announced that you'd pay half of the cost of a \$4.4 million students' union building and the students of the U of R were to put up the other \$2.2 million. The students' union have already raised 1.9 million; they've been working on it since 1965, for 22 years.

And as well, the Premier added to that that not only was he willing to put money in for the building, but he was willing to add another \$1.2 million for a walkway to join that building to the main university complex. And on top of that, the Premier promised another 400,000 to convert an old building, that is the old students' union building, into a day-care facility.

So my question to you, Mr. Minister, is: what has happened to that announcement, or since that announcement? How are you coming along with the building?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The answer is not unlike last year. The project has not been cancelled; rather, it has been deferred or postponed, and will be considered for

next year's budget.

But lest the hon. members opposite think that somehow we don't have a commitment to the capital building at the University of Regina, we do. And in fact we're providing the University of Regina with nearly \$6 million in capital grants in the fiscal year '88-89, which, for the hon. member's information — and this titbit I think you will find interesting, especially the member for Regina Centre, for example — the 5.7 million in capital grants that we'll be providing the University of Regina this year is more than the previous government provided in its last six years in office, what a shameful record. What a shameful record.

So our commitment is clear, whether it's operating moneys or capital grants for universities.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Well, Mr. Minister, you may think it's clear, but I think it's getting fuzzier by the year, because here you just tell me it's going to be postponed for another year. I thought maybe you might honour the commitment that you gave last year, and I quote here from the Star Phoenix of April 3 in 1987. Now this, I think, is 1988, so that would be a year ago where you said, and I quote, in the Star Phoenix:

The government's \$2.2 million commitment for new student's union building on campus has been put on hold for a year, possibly setting the project back until next year.

This was in '87. This was in this article where they had a picture of the minister and a headline indicating how popular you were on campus. It says here, "Hepworth the most unpopular . . ." Pardon me, Mr. Chairman, I apologize. It says here, the Minister of Education is the most unpopular man on campus.

Well, Mr. Minister, it's a little amusing to me here at this time, but I really want to take this quite seriously. I don't think it's right for the students or the people of Saskatchewan to be used in this manner politically, because clearly what this was, was a political promise prior to the election of 1986, and then you hedged on it in '87, and now you're hedging on it in '88. Why don't you come clean on the whole thing and tell us exactly when you're going to do it? Or if you're not going to do it, let the students know. Have your priorities changed?

Now it's not a matter of just having the money. It's a matter of not making the money available for the university's building project, because clearly you had the money. Your Premier said that he was making the money available prior to the election '86. I think he just decided to do something else with it.

Now we need to know, Mr. Minister, at what stage, a little more definitely, at what stage this is and where and when the students can expect you to hold up your end of the bargain.

(1600)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I've already told the hon. member that the project has been postponed

and will be looked at again for . . . in next year's budget process and . . . But to put . . . And the reason for that is, yes, that's an important project, but there are a lot of important projects at the university.

I think of things like . . . And I look at the things that we have done, our administration has done in conjunction with the University of Regina over the last few years. I think of things like a \$1.6 million commitment to computers; a \$1.7 million to Darke Hall. I look at \$1 million to library acquisitions. I look at 3.45 million committed to library upgrading.

And, Mr. Chairman, just to give you some perspective — because you bounce these number around, 1 and 2 and 3 millions of dollars — to put them in perspective, the \$1 million in library acquisitions that we made available to the University of Regina last year — a rather novel arrangement — that \$1 million was more — just that one project, library acquisitions, that \$1 million — was more than the NDP administration spent at the U of R in '81-82 when they spent 800,000 in total; in '80-81 they spent 508,000. In one project alone, Mr. Chairman, we spent double their expenditure in '80-81, in one project alone.

And it's no better as you go down the years: '79-80 they spent less than a million; in '78-79 it was 690; in '77-78 it was 560. So I don't think that we need necessarily to be lectured to by the NDP about capital commitments at the University of Regina, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Well it could be understandable, Mr. Minister, if you have to postpone a project, a building project or some type of a project, if you weren't spending and your government wasn't spending like the proverbial drunken sailors on other matters.

Now when I'm talking about spending, Mr. Minister, we can look at the types of figures that the Minister of Finance has put forward. And it wasn't till after . . . till you reached this sort of a bottomless pit after you lost the — which came out to be a bottomless pit at the end of . . . after the election, and then all of sudden you cut the education spending off. And for example, the university renewal and development fund which you announced in 1985, you announced \$125 million over five years — that was '85. And then what happened? It was stretched out to a 10-year program.

In the meantime, what happened to oil revenues? Well we all know, and that story has been told many times in this legislature — and I even hate to repeat it again but I guess maybe I have to, Mr. Minister — and that is that the price of oil in '83, '84, '85, '86 and '87 was this — was still at \$26, to the nearest dollar, in '83 and \$26, to the nearest dollar, in '84 and up to \$30 in '85 and then dropped down in '86 to \$13, in '87 to \$17. But none of those prices, Mr. Minister, were any lower than the prices prior to '79, none of them were, and yet somehow we managed to keep our commitments. The former government managed to keep its commitments to the university when the price of oil was down at \$3 a barrel. Ranging from \$3 a barrel, '70, to \$12 a barrel in '79, we managed to do it.

I want to know, Mr. Minister, about what your top priority is for building at the University of Regina? Is the top

priority going to be the student union building, or is it switching to fine arts building?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The priorities of the university are set in conjunction with the board and the executive officers of the university, but let us be totally clear, our commitment must be at least 600 per cent better than the NDP's because we have spent more in this . . . we'll be spending more in this year than the NDP spent in six years, Mr. Chairman.

The URDF (university renewal and development fund) — and I'm presuming the hon. member was . . . didn't realize what he was saying: did you say the URDF had been stretched out over 10 years? Well that's clearly not the case. The URDF has not been stretched out over 10 years; in fact, it was a five-year program with \$125 million in the fund. We have approved to date nearly 97 million, with left to come, 28 million.

Mr. Kowalsky: — If I'm in error on that, Mr. Minister, I apologize. I have to double-check that advice again. Thank you.

With respect to your funding and the amount that you're funding the universities, a statement from the university management, a commentary from their management in '85, which I expect you have in your files somewhere, states that in 1982 and '83 the operations of the University of Regina as evidenced by the financial statements of the University of Regina gave little rise . . . gave rise to little concern, rather, both within and without the institution. Now that is prior to 1982-83 — 1982-83, little concern.

And what they did at the University of Regina is that they were in a process of setting up new programs. And they did set up some new programs which included the School of Journalism, a systems engineering degree program, and a graduate program, the Faculty of Administration. Those costs were quite clearly foreseeable, and they knew full well that they were going to need additional funding for it. And going by the precedence that was set by the previous government they . . . once the board of governors had made the decision and the senate had made the decision to go into those programs, they were expecting that they would be funded in the same fashion that they had been by the previous government.

But then because of your underspending in the universities, and spending elsewhere, the university found themselves underfunded to the tune of 4.1 million. That was a deficit they ran into.

Now there were a few things that came into play there, Mr. Minister, in addition, that perhaps were not foreseeable. They had some legal fees, some asbestos problems, some problems with the gym roof, but the university went through a considerable internal struggle and made adjustments internally, which included reducing travel budgets; they froze salaries and other . . . restricted the sabbatical leaves, I am told. And in addition to that, they substituted sessional or term instructors for permanent staff where possible.

Now, Mr. Minister, you were advised of all of those things

by the university. You were also advised that these new programs were being put into place. And what concerns me is why your government at that time did not act to protect the integrity of the University of Saskatchewan, because if you believed that those programs were going into place — that is, I should say, the University of Regina — if you believed that those programs which were going into place, and if you believed in the autonomous operation of the university, that they were meeting the demands placed upon them by society and that there was need for journalism and systems engineering and an administration post-grad program, if you believed that, why did you put them in a position where they had to consider program cuts, actually had to go as far as to consider program cuts?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The hon. member, Mr. Chairman, raises the question of funding to universities. I think it's worth noting, as I have in this House before — but I'll provide a few more details because they're important numbers — and that is that over the last six years funding to universities has increased 36.4 per cent or \$ 46 million.

And some would say, well that's fine, but relative to other provinces we're not keeping pace. And the reality is the opposite, Mr. Chairman. University grants, operating and capital, in Saskatchewan, if you look at between '82-83 and the '87-88 fiscal years, our increase, as I mentioned, was over 30 per cent.

In British Columbia it was 1.7 per cent; in Alberta it was 9.5 per cent; in Manitoba, 24.1 per cent. And that's why I have consistently said in this House that our increases have exceeded those of any other province in western Canada, and that's something that were proud of. That doesn't mean to say we're going to rest on our laurels or stop here.

And another fact, Mr. Chairman, that I'm proud of is the number of children who are now attending, who have the opportunity to now attend university in this province, and the number that even have the opportunity now to attend a post-secondary institution of some sort has increased dramatically.

But relative to the university specifically, when we formed government in 1982 there were something less than 15,000 young people, on the basis of full-time students, attending universities in this province, Mr. Chairman, and now that number, as of '87-88, has swelled to over 20,000. You know, it's gone from under 15,000 to over 20,000.

And I say, how fantastic that is that that many young people — youngsters, young students, young adults — have the chance to take university post-secondary education. I think what a tremendous comment on how society views the importance of furthering our education.

Some will see it as a problem. I see that as a very, very positive step. And in fact some of the schools that I visited in boast records of where their grade 12 classes, 70 per cent go on to post-secondary education, 57 per cent going on to university, those kinds of numbers. I think how far we have come in the last two or three or four

decades.

So the numbers, Mr. Chairman, whether it's enrolments or increases in the budget to universities, are substantive by every measure. And the hon. member will say, well these are just . . . the Department of Education, the minister is cooking up some numbers.

And that's why I would read again into the record what some others are saying about Saskatchewan and what we spend on universities. In fact, I believe I sent this article across to the hon. member, *Toronto Star*, April 17, 1988, a chart in there, and this article, Mr. Chairman, entitled, "What we spend on universities; estimates for full-time students." And the source of this is the Council of Ontario Universities.

(1615)

And who's in second place, Mr. Chairman? Saskatchewan. We're not in 10th or 9th or 8th or 7th place across the province, or across the county; we're in second. I guess I wish that we were in first. Maybe what that means is that we do a little more with a little less dollars than Alberta, who's in first place.

And these are '86-87 numbers. But I think that that assessment by an independent third party, Council of Ontario Universities, put Saskatchewan in second place, Mr. Chairman. I'm proud of it. I'm proud that our Premier sees fit to ensure that commitment to education, and I'm proud of our party's commitment to education in this province, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Kowalsky: — How fantastic it is, Mr. Minister, that our students and our universities have made that progress. How unfantastic it is that the very university that makes that particular progress finds itself being penalized financially for doing so.

I agree with the figures that you give me in terms of what's happened to the student body. And you know and I know that the universities, any university is not built in one year or one term of government; that it's a progressive thing and you develop an attitude towards university and you provide funding for it. And it's your duty and it's the duty of this government to provide funding for the universities so that the university has a good reputation five, 10 years from now.

And that's my particular concern. Because what happened with the University of Regina is as they went into these new programs, journalism and systems engineering, as I mentioned, and as they increased their credit hours, that's when their funding was cut. That's when they were told that they had zero budgets and that's when they were told that they had to put up and get that 4.1 million deficit taken care of internally. They were penalized for the progress that they were making. I would think that we should be proud of the work that they had done.

Now you see when I looked at the credit hours, which is a good indicator of whether this institute . . . whether the university is progressing or not, when you look at the credit hours which is proportional to the amount of

production, I suppose one aspect of the production of a university that is over and above the research and the community service, is the amount of teaching that they do. And the credit hours at the University of Regina increased from 66,000 to 90,000 from '79 to '82. And then it increased again to 97,000 by 1985, and then to over 100,000 credit hours in 1987, which is a phenomenal increase — a phenomenal increase.

Now the problem is, I would expect that this kind of increase could continue not without limit until our population increases, but it would continue if the program offerings and the conditions of education were allowed to expand at the same time. And I'm wondering, as they got crowded up in the University of Regina here, and there are times that it's extremely difficult to get a hold of a class-room. You can try and get a class-room any time from 9 till 2, and I don't think you'll be able to book one there. They're over-utilized. If you want a class-room on an *ad hoc* basis after 4 o'clock, you might be able to get one, but even then they're quite tightly booked.

The number of student . . . the student-professor ratio is increased; the number of people that are taking full-time credit hours is increasing. And what I have a difficult time understanding, is almost how come this strike didn't end up here; it ended up in Saskatoon? And I have a difficult time understanding why you didn't react to the positive things that were happening here, instead of penalizing them with a directive, financial directive, which is your prerogative, that the 4.1 million has got to be cut internally.

Well, Mr. Minister, let me repeat this. What I've seen here is the credit hours from 1979 to 1985 rose by 69 per cent. That's from the university's own statement. And since this government took over, since from '82 to '85, it rose by 29 per cent. Now the government grants to that university rose by the same amounts, either whether you take the times from '79-80 to '84-85, it rose by the same amount, as did the credit hours. They were proportional to 29 per cent.

But what did happen is that during that same period of time there was a tremendous amount of inflation, probably averaging 7 or 8 per cent a year. What that did is it really eroded the value of the operating grant, and the university ended up in a position where it had to fund the \$4.1 million into the deficit internally. Not only that, but the promised building which I discussed earlier had been postponed twice now by you.

And my question, and I repeat: why was it that you rewarded the university in this particular way?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I think your essential question there, if I heard correctly, is have we kept pace with inflation? And I would just point out to you again that total funding over the last six years increased by 36.4 per cent. I think you'll find that that's pretty close to inflation.

The other observation I would make, Mr. Deputy Chairman, is that the indices that you might like to pick on to try and make a case for underfunding, you know, you

pick them at random, would be my observation. And I would suggest to you that, I mean, universities, education, health care, I mean you can always use more money, but you must remember we get it from one place, and that's the people.

And I think compared to other jurisdictions in western Canada, compared to the inflation rate, compared to the amount of money we spend on full-time equivalents here and across the country, by virtually every measure we stack up very, very well I would argue.

That doesn't mean to say that we have some kind of a perfect world. But I would suggest to you that the board of governors at both universities, along with the administration, turn out high quality graduates, and will continue to turn out high quality graduates that find work and set up businesses the world over.

In fact tonight I'm looking forward to going back to my old Alma Mater to be at their convocation banquet, Mr. Chairman, and I think many of us who have graduated from one of these universities or in this province, either one of the universities, are very proud of them.

And I would remind you of some remarks that President Kristjanson made to me when I presented him with the brief about a year ago now, bemoaning the fact that because of falling wheat prices and falling potash prices and falling oil prices, that the amount of money that we had was less than we wished. And I was going on and on and on and bemoaning this fact, and he looked at me and didn't say it, but I suppose he parenthetically could have added "young men," but he did not.

You know, we here at the university spend our time looking at what we can do with what we do have, as opposed to what we can't do with what we don't have. And I thought that's a pretty good attitude to take, not only into your job but maybe into your life. And I see that happening at our universities.

Mr. Kowalsky: — The trend that I . . . the difficulty that I see with the universities as it relates to government funding is that when you argue the figures you either argue, well we kept up with the student enrolment, or we kept up with inflation. And either one of those in themselves are true. But when you take and put both of those together, that is when you end up in a negative position, in a decline in terms of government funding going to universities.

And as a result, what the universities have had to do is to increase the amount of funding that they collect from students. They've had to increase the tuition fees. Now that is something that is clearly under the control of the government, and that is that you can decide, by the amount of funding that you give, as to what the level of tuition fees are going to be in Saskatchewan at the Saskatchewan universities.

And when I look at that, at those numbers, as to what proportion of the universities' funding comes from the students and what proportion comes from the government, I find that the student proportion is increasing. And quite specifically, in '79-80, students

used to pay 11 per cent, 11 per cent of a total revenue of the universities. And right now they are paying 18-plus per cent. Now that's a dangerous trend. And I understand, Mr. Minister, that it's your government's opinion that this figure should go up to approximately 20 per cent.

Would you confirm those figures, and would you confirm that intent?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well just to share with you some of, I guess, my government's thinking on tuition fees, recognizing that it's the university and the board of governors that ultimately must grapple with the issue, in the blueprint we put out last year, *Preparing for the Year 2000* — I don't know as my view is any different than it was last year — we point out there that:

No defined policy has existed in recent time with respect to the appropriate contribution an individual should make towards the cost of his or her education.

One consequence of this lack of a defined policy has been a gradual decline in the cost of adult education borne by students. Twenty years ago, tuition fees at University of Saskatchewan accounted for about 25 per cent of operating costs. Today they account for only 15 per cent. Fees at the technical institutes represent only 4 per cent of the operating cost, the lowest in the country.

And I'm quoting that from *Preparing for the Year 2000*.

The approach that I have taken as minister, and as well, my officials, who I would commend, has been to work in a very collaborative basis with the students — whether it be technical institutes, the SIAST student bodies, or the university student bodies — to go at this in a collaborative approach, as I said earlier, recognizing the autonomy of the board of governors in the case of the universities.

And this last year, for example, at the University of Saskatchewan, the student president argued the case persuasively. The board was considering a 10 per cent increase, but because of the intervention of the student president, were convinced that perhaps 8 per cent would be more appropriate.

What I intend to generally find is that we have a new kind of student, if you like, at these post-secondary institutions. They don't accept the old sort of gibberish some of the classic old arguments that you or I might make as politicians.

(1630)

They want high quality education; they want that degree to mean something; they just don't want to be seen part of an assembly line. Yes, they want it accessible, but they do want that high standard maintained.

And it's been intriguing to me that over this last year we've in fact had more than one story emerge where university students have taken it upon themselves to put in place funds and trust funds to buy equipment and those

kinds of things that they think are important to their education.

What that tells me is that (a) you know, we ought not unfairly expect student bodies to, or students to contribute more than their fair share or to solve deficits at universities. But it tells me that they're genuinely interested in doing their part and that's been, I suppose, a very heartening initiative on their part, and it's a relatively new phenomenon over this last year or so.

I find students, student bodies, students as individuals, their representatives, their presidents, for example, for the most part I find them extremely articulate young people. I find them very sensible and rational, unlike, I think, maybe the days when you and I maybe went to college. You know, if you didn't have a love-in or a sit-in or a march on something on a weekly basis with 2 or 3,000 people out, you sort of felt like you weren't going to university.

They're not into that kind of stuff these days. They're a very serious student with some pretty well-defined goals. They don't buy sort of baffle-gab and political rhetoric from you or I or anybody else. They draw their own conclusions, and I find them very frank and forthcoming and common sense in their approach to matters at the university.

Mr. Kowalsky: — My question, Mr. Minister, is: to what extent are you and your government willing to do in terms of switching the funding for university funding from the government to student tuition fees? As I mentioned, I've seen it rise from 11 per cent in 1980 to over 18 per cent now. Are you targeting it for 20?

Are you willing, are you aiming in a different direction, or just what's . . . where are you going in this? How far are you willing to take it?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I don't know as I want to handcuff boards of governors at either university with a policy, if you like. We have some expectation and, as we raise with them in our briefs, that they ought to have some clear definition relative to that.

The other point that's germane here, I would suggest to you, is rather than just necessarily look to the student to contribute more — although the share has fallen over the years — whether one should look to the student to pay more or to the government, that is to say, the taxpayer to pay more.

One other area that we raised in the blueprint last year is for the universities to look to the private sector for fund raising to a larger degree than they had perhaps in the past, perhaps maybe to enjoy some of the kinds of success that we see, for example, in some of the American colleges.

And I'm pleased to report to the House that both universities are undertaking and/or are in the midst of very aggressive campaigns in that area. I think specifically — and I've had a meeting with the University of Regina — some of their board officials and executive officers, a very ambitious project they have under way.

I think specifically of meetings I've had with President Kristjanson and Don Whiteman, the chairman of the University of Saskatchewan. I think particularly of the success that they have enjoyed in the private sector in raising funds for the University of Saskatchewan agriculture college. It's been very heart-warming, and it's tickled me to see the president so pleased with the response. It's been very invigorating for all who've been involved, not only in western Canada but as well with the corporate fund raising in central Canada, and I think of donations like — to that Ag college — donations from United Grain Growers, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, even the Weyburn Inland Terminal in my own constituency made a substantial contribution like something in the order of \$10,000. I think it speaks well, not only for the university and for agriculture and its importance here but in fact for the corporate citizens of this province indeed are interested in seeing the continued well-being of that institution or those institutions.

Mr. Kowalsky: — The fact that there are an increasing number of corporations and companies in Saskatchewan making contributions to the university really speaks well for the university, Mr. Minister. It doesn't answer the question that I posed to you and that is, and I'm starting to read between the lines as to some of the materials you're . . . some of the statements that you're making about what's happening in the States and what's happening with respect to corporations.

Are you saying that you want government paying less and less into the proportion that's spent on universities? Are you saying that students can expect to pay more and more of the percentage? Are you saying that the students' tuition is going to go up here in Saskatchewan comparable to what it is in many of the colleges in the States? Because if that's what you're saying, there's a strong concern. I would have a very strong concern about that, Mr. Minister. I would have a very strong concern if the proportion of the funding for universities that the province was funding was to change, because that just . . . particularly in Saskatchewan. I just wouldn't feel that the universities could function without having a steady commitment from the province. And the signals that I see coming is the signal . . . is the amount of tuition that the students are paying.

Now you know what's happening right now — too many students; that in order to take four or five years of education they're going to have to end up with 20 to \$30,000 worth of debt, whereas . . . and that's because of the way the student loan program has been changed. So sure, the university is getting more money from it, but it's not ending up . . . You're creating another problem while you're doing this.

And that's why I'm concerned that the funding not switch in any more, so that you're not increasing it to that ratio of 20 per cent; and I still haven't had an answer from you on that. Have you got any kind of a target figure, or . . . Because if you don't have a target figure, am I to assume that there is no limit?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Our position . . . I guess the only

expectation I have is that the board of governors would continue to manage the affairs of the university. And I don't know if I can say anything more, Mr. Deputy Chairman, without being unnecessarily repetitive.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I'd like to deal briefly, Mr. Minister, with the topic of student loans and student bursaries and what's happened in that. A quick look at some of the numbers, and the students who are now applying for loans find that loans are quite accessible; they're able to get the loan right now, and they appreciate it. And it's not till about two or three years later the students find that the amount that they've been lent is building up to quite an amount.

And they're finding . . . Furthermore when they compare with what happened to . . . compare with their brothers or sisters previous to that, or their classmates previous to that, that they aren't eligible for any kind of loan write-off until they've borrowed close to \$6,000 a year — \$5,940 per year to be more specific.

And just two years ago, they used to get part . . . they used to get bursaries. They were eligible for bursaries once they had borrowed only 2,640, and in the year previous to that the figure was 2,230, and the year previous to that was 1,100.

So quite clearly the direction that we're going in is that students are ending up with a greater and greater debt. Now they are able to go to universities because they've got these particular loans, but as a result we are creating a group of students, or the system is putting students into a situation where I question their ability to repay.

If you end up with a \$24,000 debt after you've gone to university or to any four-year course, you've got a bit of a debt hanging over your head. And I'm wondering whether that student will be eligible for any kind of credit at that time.

Now there's two major problems that I see with that. First, is the thing I've been talking about, which is the debt load; secondly, that as students look at this and saying, \$24,000 is what I have to repay, that it may serve as a deterrent.

Mr. Minister, is there any effort at all on the part of your government to go back to a scheme of a bursary program where you wouldn't have to borrow up to \$6,000 before the bursary provision popped in, but would go back to the vicinity of, say, what it was three or four years ago where it would be a little more realistic. The debt the student ended up with would be a little more realistic, and it would be easier for them to handle after they're out of the university or their chosen institution.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I don't know if I can add a lot to this debate over and above the time we spent on it last year. I think Saskatchewan continues to be a leader across the country in terms the assistance we make available, whether it's 6 per cent loans, forgivable loans, special assistance for those who have special needs — single parents, natives, disabled, those kinds of categories, Mr. Chairman.

I know the NDP continue to try and make the case as though it's always the case that somehow you have to borrow \$6,000 before you get any forgivable portion, but of course that's not true because it depends on the length of the course. For example, I could find numbers right at the opposite end of the scale to what they're using which would be equally an exaggeration and a generalization.

For example, if you had a 12-week course and a total loan of \$3,000, well, 2,160 would be payable and 840 would be forgivable. So they can find their example to make their point; I can find other examples to make quite another point relative to that.

But the point that I think I would want members to be clear on is that the numbers, in a way, speak for themselves. More and more young people are gaining access to post-secondary education. I read you the numbers. Full-time students at our universities went from 14,000 to over 20,000. I have to think that some of the student assistance and programs that we have put in place have helped see that any more young people enter our colleges and our institutes. And I have no plans on . . . immediate plans on changing that, other than to say that the ministers of Education nationally are looking at this whole question of student aid rather vigorously.

(1645)

I, as well, am advised that I probably should make some clarifications relative to an earlier point raised by the member from Moose Jaw North, relative to who must join unions and who must pay dues and what some of the processed are. They were rather technical, or legal-technical questions, and I think some clarification is in order because I want to be as crystal clear — to use his words — as I can, and it's unfortunate that he can't be in the House right at this very moment.

And it would be this, Mr. Chairman, that all new employees, and I'm referring now to SIAST, all new employees must join the union, and all new employees must authorize union due deductions within 30 days of employment, as it is a condition of employment, and that may not necessarily be any new news. All individuals employed at the date of certification — and this might be the new news — all individuals who are employed at the date of certification have a choice of whether to join the union or not; however, all must pay union dues.

And I think that's where the confusion could come in, that you have a choice. All the individuals who are employed at the date of certification have a choice of whether they will join the union or not, but they do not have a choice on whether they will pay union dues or not. They must pay union dues, and I suspect the only exemption would be the one I talked about, on religious grounds.

Those who become members of the union sign a card that authorizes deduction for dues. I think we went through that. Those who do not wish to become union members do not sign a card, but they send a letter to the employer to authorize deduction of union dues. Yes, they don't have . . . if you were employed at the date of certification, you don't have to join the union, but you must pay dues; and rather than sign a card, you send a letter to the employer

authorizing deduction of union dues.

So I read that correction or clarification into the record, Mr. Deputy Chairman, so that I can be as correct as I can possibly be before this committee.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Will the minister supply me with the figures with respect to the number of students who accessed the student loan program last year, and this year, and the year previous to last year — for the last three years?

I take it . . .

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Have you got another question? I'm just getting that.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Yes, I will go on to one other topic here that I wanted to cover with you this evening . . . this afternoon, Mr. Minister, and that is to deal, to talk briefly about the relationship between the role of government and the role of the board of governors of a university, and I guess as it applies to university autonomy.

Now you know, Mr. Minister, that one of the two main characteristics of any university is the academic freedom, and another one is the autonomy of the institution itself. We must look very carefully to protect the autonomy of any institution, as particularly in a relationship that the government has with it, that the government does not become . . . or does not infringe upon university autonomy.

It has to be that way, Mr. Minister, in order for the university to be able to do its function, that is to search freely for truth and reality without any kinds of feelings of repercussion from the government, or any kind of feeling from repercussion of anybody else that might be contributing to the university as opposed to, say, business or some other — perhaps an army in some other country.

We want to make sure that the purpose of the universities stays pure, and that is that they can use their time, without fear, to search for knowledge, and that they can critically analyse and argue publicly about government policy, about business policy, about social policy, and that they feel that they can do so without any kind of repercussion whatsoever.

Now it's only through that kind of relationship, if the university can have that kind of a relationship, that old absolutes can be challenged — and I think you would agree with me on that, Mr. Minister — whether the old absolutes be scientific, whether it's old superstitions in medicine about mundane things like having warts removed, or hair replaced or whether it's old population theories like Malthus' theory which has to be challenged, or whether they're sociological questions — that is even question like, do we need wars to maintain our economies.

Now I'm just using these as examples, Mr. Minister, to indicate that over the past it's been our universities and through our universities, that myths have been, or things have been proven myths that were, one time, absolutes. And the only way that that can be done and continued at a

university is if the university continues to maintain its complete autonomy and that academic freedom is insured.

Now in our university structure, the board of governors there has 12 people, six of which are appointed by government, and that's the way it's been for a while. The deputy minister, I understand, sits as an observer to some of the meetings. In addition to that there are six other people; one is a chancellor who is elected; two are elected by the senate; there is a faculty rep, a student rep, and then there's a president.

Now when we were in a situation, as we have been in my lifetime, where the universities have consistently been expanding programs, it has been the job of this university board of governors to choose between positive priorities: should we add to this college or add to this college or add to this college.

Now we could be entering an era of deflation. That's already happened in some cases. It's already happened in some industries. And we're into a situation where the universities may be forced to make cuts.

The question that I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, with respect to university autonomy and decisions that the universities may have to make in the future, God forbid, is: what instructions are you giving to your appointees and the people that contact the university with respect to university autonomy so that the universities do not feel the long arm of government in their decision making and priorities with respect to what should be offered and what shouldn't be offered?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The hon. member has gone on at some length about autonomy, which I do respect. I think he's mixed the question of administrative autonomy as opposed to an individual's autonomy at a university to . . . and the academic freedom at university.

I guess my view is this, is that it's your job and mine, the government's job, to determine, if you like, how big the cheque will be that we send to the university or to SIAST on a yearly basis. And it's their job — and our job stops there, essentially — and it's their job to take that cheque and to spend it prudently and wisely to administer to those funds on behalf of you and I. I suppose as long as I don't cross that line to their territory, autonomy is respected, and I suppose provided they don't step over this line into our territory, you and I will be happy. And I think that's . . . I mean, I think that's historically been the case. I would . . . and I think you and I have come to know that as the case and respect it as so.

Relative to the numbers you asked for, the number of recipients of student assistance, in 1981-82 there were 5,400 students receiving assistance; in '87-88 there were 17,600; the year before that, 17,000; the year before that 10,500. So you can see, there's been an increase every year, and a dramatic increase over the last six years.

To put it another way, in our universities six years ago, we had 14,000 full-time students; last year we had 20,000. In our institutes six years ago we had 20,000 by one measure or another; now we have 40,000. Or another

way of putting it, we saw a 50 per cent increase in student enrolment at universities, 100 per cent increase in enrolment at technical institutes, but the number of students receiving assistance did more than double or did more than increase by 50 per cent — in fact, it increased — it trebled.

So I think by using that measure you can see that indeed if there were 5,400 students receiving assistance six years ago, as a relative percentage of the total student population, that's a lower number than it is today. And so by that measure as well, I think you can see that our commitment is there to help students access and indeed gain a post-secondary education.

Another number you might be interested in is the average student assistance — or the average assistance per student, rather, has approximately doubled over the last six years from about 2,380 to 4,720, and those numbers don't even include the interest write-down, the 6 per cent program or the cost of providing provincial loans at no interest while the student is in school because those aren't "expensed" until the student enters into repayment. So one could argue correctly that our commitment, or the average assistance per student over the last six years, has indeed more than doubled.

I think by every measure, as I said earlier, I think the numbers make the point: Saskatchewan has a lot to be proud of in terms of student assistance relative to the rest of the country.

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the minister a question with respect to the shoe repair course in Esterhazy. First of all, Mr. Minister, I'd like to ask you if I could, if you could indicate . . . if you could in fact confirm that the course is being offered again this year? Could you tell us when it started, and how many students are currently enrolled in that 38-week course; and whether or not the instructor is once again, Mr. Harry Flander?

(1700)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Relative to the shoe repair program at Esterhazy, the program began on March 14, 1988, with eight students in attendance. Two additional students are in the process of registering for the course, and Harry Flander is the current instructor.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Chairman, I wonder, first, if the minister could tell me why it is that the course is being offered again in Esterhazy in light of two points. First of all, Mr. Chairman, I point out to the minister that the Parkland community college offered that shoe repair course in 1983-84 and made a decision not to re-offer it for a number of reasons: one being lack of demand; a second being a request, as I understand it, from the local Esterhazy council not to offer it again because of a number of problems that it had created in the local community.

It's rather unusual, Mr. Minister, that a local council would request that a course not be offered again, partly because of the obvious patronage that appeared to be associated with the offering of the course. So the first part

of my question to you is: why it is that that course then was put on by your local campus at Wascana?

And secondly, Mr. Minister, I want to ask you why the course is being held at Esterhazy again in light of the fact that the evaluation committee that was set up to assess the course suggested to you that Esterhazy was not the appropriate location, and suggested to you — and I'm quoting here an article from the December 1988 Leader-Post in which committee members from the evaluation committee are quoted as saying that politics played a larger role in the decision to locate that course in Esterhazy than did any sound educational planning.

So perhaps you could explain, Mr. Minister, why it is that despite the recommendation of the evaluation committee that the course not be held in Esterhazy and despite the suggestion from the local council that the course not be re-offered and despite the fact that last year the only person who was attending the course in its final days was the daughter of Mr. Flander, why it is, Mr. Minister, that, in light of all of those decisions, you have continued to offer the course in Esterhazy when, on the other hand, you've been making massive cuts throughout the technical institute and community college system?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, the program offered last year at Esterhazy was a pilot project. On completion, Wascana institute conducted a program review, including labour-market need and student demand. It was decided, based on the review, that the program was needed and should continue on a year-to-year basis with an annual labour-market review.

And quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, I take objection to opposition members continually harassing the town of Esterhazy. He tries to suggest that it doesn't have any support there. We are interested in providing more programming to rural Saskatchewan; this fits in with that mandate, Mr. Chairman. I don't know why they continue to pick on Esterhazy, or indeed, why would you pick on an individual, albeit the daughter? I thought this country had freedom from persecution based on who you were.

You see, in a competency-based program, as the hon. member would know, is that individuals finish courses at different times. Why would you pick on her if in fact she was the last student to leave that program because — as other students leave their program in a competency-based program?

I think it's regrettable that you continue to pick on the town of Esterhazy and some of the individuals who are involved in this program.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:08 p.m.