

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to rule 11 of this Assembly to present a petition signed by more than 500 students from Kelsey Institute. They're expressing their concern about underfunding of the university, about elimination of the student positions at Kelsey and Wascana, about elimination of a student bursary program, and the need for at least 12,000 jobs in the student summer program.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Assembly, a group of 22 grade 8 students from the Turtleford School in the Turtleford constituency. They're seated in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker. They're accompanied by teacher Bill Kresowaty, chaperons, Don and Kristine Sylvester, and Lorna Chambers.

Welcome to Regina. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. I trust you'll enjoy the proceedings today. I look forward to discussion with you, refreshments and photographs immediately following question period. Have a safe trip home.

Please join me in welcoming the students.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the legislature, a group of 8 students from the Regina Christian School who are seated in the east gallery.

They're with us today to observe question period and to join with us after question period for some photos and meet us in the members' dining room afterwards.

So I would want all members to join with me, welcome the group here, and look forward to seeing you after question period.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you, and through you, a group of students from Vanscoy School — this is on behalf of my colleague, the member for Biggar. We have a group of grade 5, 6, 7 students, 84 in number in your gallery, visiting Regina today.

Certainly we want to wish them a very warm welcome and I look forward to meeting with the group. They are accompanied by Rick Gosslin, Gene Chovin and Barry Radcliffe. I'll be meeting with them at 3 o'clock. I would ask all members to give this group of students a very warm welcome today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure, a great deal of pleasure today, to welcome a group of students from St. Philip's Centre here in Regina. They're a native life skills group. I had the pleasure of having coffee and drinks with this group earlier this morning. We had a rather extensive meeting. They had some very good questions.

They're accompanied by Dan Danforth, Luwayne Missens and Angie Rush. The group is seated in the east gallery. Please join me in welcoming this group.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my colleague, the Minister of Justice and the hon. member from Kindersley, I have the privilege today of introducing to you, and through you to the members of this House, 22 grade 5 students from Eston, Saskatchewan.

For some of the members across the way, if they don't know where Eston is, it's just a little north of the South Saskatchewan River in the great south-west. And you must take the time to go to the great gopher derby in Eston, Saskatchewan. I assure you the hospitality is great and the races are interesting.

Mr. Speaker, these students with them today have their teacher Janet Ringheim, and they have adult companions in Trudy Sinclair, Janet Irvine, Don Jackson and Glenn Hartsook. And last, but not least, probably most important, Mr. Speaker, is the bus driver, Laurie Thompson. I will be meeting with this group for a question period, and I would ask all members to welcome on behalf of the member from Kindersley.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Free Trade Agreement and Provincial Rights

Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Deputy Premier. It concerns the legislation tabled in parliament this week, approving the provisions of the Mulroney-Reagan trade deal. And I want to question the minister about section 6 of that legislation which says:

For greater certainty, nothing in this Act, by specific mention or omission, limits in any manner the right of Parliament to enact legislation to implement any provision of the Agreement or fulfil any of the obligations of the Government of Canada under the Agreement.

Now, Mr. Minister, at least six provincial leaders, including such boosters of the deal as Premier Bourassa and Premier Getty, have expressed strong reservations about this clause. But as of the moment, Saskatchewan has not been heard from.

My question to you, Mr. Minister, is: where does Saskatchewan, which is a long-time champion of provincial rights, stand today on this issue? Have you expressed your concerns to the Prime Minister or to Mr. Crosbie?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan of course has been and continues to be a very strong supporter of provincial rights, and our minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . He doesn't want to hear the answer, Mr. Speaker.

Our Minister of Trade in fact at this very moment is in Ottawa and Quebec city — not both at the same time, obviously — but down there at a ministerial conference talking about this legislation and Justice matters, and I don't know which one is which today. But that's where he is, and I'm sure that he will deal with this in some detail when he returns.

Suffice it to say at this point, Mr. Speaker, that our view is that section 6 of the Bill does not give the federal government any residual power to interfere with provincial control of resources. Provincial control of resources is protected by the constitution, Mr. Speaker, and no federal legislation can unilaterally take away that protection.

Mr. Mitchell: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I did not understand the answer, Minister. Where does Saskatchewan stand? Are you going to express concern about section 6 to the federal government and ask that it be changed, or are you saying that that legislation is all right as far as you're concerned?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, we have always stood for Saskatchewan, four-square for Saskatchewan, and that has been the case. That will continue to be the case, and, Mr. Speaker, there can be no doubt about that.

If, Mr. Speaker, if members opposite think that section 6 can do something to Saskatchewan that we have guaranteed to us under the constitution, they are simply wrong, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — Well I interpret the minister's answer to be that Saskatchewan is not the least bit concerned about the provisions of section 6. A new question, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister.

In the 1970's, Saskatchewan went to court against an uncaring federal government to get control of our resources, and here we have another uncaring federal government that seems to want to take away those hard-won rights. Now giving control of things like our natural resources to the federal government would mean that decisions about their future would be based upon the political necessities of the central government, and more times than not, those political necessities would be those

of Ontario and Quebec.

My question is this: isn't that what we're getting out of this deal, control of our natural resources being dictated by the political needs of central Canada?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, coming from that party, the party that kept that uncaring government in office, the party that supported the national energy program that caused us to lose millions and millions and billions in western Canada in revenues to the benefit of central Canada, coming from that party — I don't need to be preached at by those people, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to protecting the rights of Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan Mr. Speaker, will be protected by this government through thick and thin. There is nothing in section 6 that can take away from us what is constitutionally ours, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The minister is obviously quoting from some sort of a legal document where he gets some reference. I wonder whether he would mind, after question period, tabling the document so all members could share in it.

I wonder if the minister would table the document that he refers to when he says that section 6 would cause no problem to the people of Saskatchewan in terms of rights and powers over their resources. Will you table that document?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, no, for two reasons. One, you can't table documents in question period, and that's the rule. Two, it's been long-standing practice that a briefing note that I just happened to get earlier today from the Minister of Trade who was in central Canada today, and it's not a legal document, it's a note — and I don't intend to table it, Mr. Speaker. I don't intend to table it, but I will say this, Mr. Speaker, and I'll say it again just for members opposite, to them. There is nothing in section 6 that can take away from us what is ours under the constitution.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — A new question to the minister. Since 1930 when the natural resources were transferred to the provinces from the federal government, the powers that that has given to the development of the province here in Saskatchewan has been phenomenal. I say to you, Mr. Minister, that article 20(10) of the agreement that deals with monopoly clearly, clearly would not allow Crown corporations, SaskPower and SaskTel, to be established in the day of Tommy Douglas.

I say to you, why are you so insistent on giving away that kind of rights that the province has worked for the last 50 years in order to be a lap dog of the federal government, your buddy Brian Mulroney?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the member doesn't understand what's in the agreement. We are getting rights, Mr. Speaker. We are getting rights in this agreement. We are getting the right to a very large market, access to the largest market, the largest market any place in the world — rights, Mr. Speaker, that Ontario has enjoyed for a very long time. Members opposite would deny us what Ontario has enjoyed for a very long time, and what is causing Ontario this very day to have a very significant economic boom, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Supplement to the minister. Mr. Minister, you will well know that it's been through the development of such agencies as SaskPower and SaskTel that we've developed a province here that has been unique and special throughout North America and throughout the world.

What could be more important, what could you possibly get out of a free trade agreement that would be more important than the development in the future of our province as designed by Saskatchewan people? What could you possibly get in the free trade deal that could be more important than that?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, the member is right. SaskTel and SaskPower have been very, very important to the people of Saskatchewan. And in recent years, SaskTel put in a single line service that people in rural Saskatchewan have been wanting for a very, very long time.

Well as late as yesterday, SaskPower announced a \$100 million contract, Mr. Speaker, that will bring a brand-new manufacturing plant to Saskatchewan, Babcock and Wilcox. Mr. Speaker, they will be manufacturing in Saskatchewan for the international market, and under this free trade agreement, they will have absolute access to that giant market south of us, Mr. Speaker.

In this agreement, Mr. Speaker, in this . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well then let's talk a little bit more about SaskPower since the member queries me on it.

We've brought other manufacturing plants to Saskatchewan that in . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm answering his question, Mr. Speaker.

Phillips Cable in Moose Jaw, Du Pont, SK Turbines. All of those people, Mr. Speaker, in our more diversified economy, will have access to that very large market south of the border because of this agreement. That, Mr. Speaker, in addition to access to those markets for our pork, for our potash, for our uranium, and the list goes on and on. Mr. Speaker, those people either don't understand the agreement, or they don't care about Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Shortcomings of Farm Land Security Act

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in

absence of the Minister of Agriculture, I will ask the acting minister a question that refers to the Saskatchewan Farm (Land) Security Act. Now I don't want to be talking about what's in the Bill, but I will want to talk about what's not in the Bill.

Mr. Minister, what is missing in this Bill is anything to do with the debt crisis that's facing Saskatchewan. In your own report on equity financing, you state that 11 per cent of Saskatchewan farmers are insolvent, another 28 per cent are having serious cash flow problems.

Now, Mr. Minister, again you have built up the expectations of the farmers, and again you have brought them down to their knees in disappointment. Mr. Minister, let's talk about the problem — debt. What are you going to do about this number one issue, debt restructuring?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Had the member, Mr. Speaker, had the member done his research thoroughly he would have gone to the next paragraph . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order. The member is trying to answer, and I'm sure hon. members will allow him to do so.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — He would have gone, Mr. Speaker, to the next . . . I believe it was the next paragraph, Mr. Speaker, in the *Leader-Post* article, which I heard about. And, Mr. Speaker, it says there, I believe quoting the Minister of Justice, that phase 2 of his strategy relative to the debt question in rural Saskatchewan in agriculture, Mr. Speaker, will be dealt with over the next six months. And that strategy will be set out at that time.

Mr. Upshall: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, our farmers can't wait any longer while your government flounders in its incompetence.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — You build up their hopes about talking about legislation that'll support farmers and then you come down with a piece of junk. Now, Mr. Minister, I ask you this: you said the recommendations come about as a result of your government talking to farmers. I ask you: is this really what those farmers asked for?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, I'll be taking that member's comments to the agricultural community of this province. He called this, Mr. Speaker, a piece of junk — a piece of junk, Mr. Speaker. That shows you how close in touch those people are with the farmers of Saskatchewan.

The farmers have asked for home quarter protection, Mr. Speaker. The farmers have asked for mediation. The farmers have asked for the things that are in this Bill that we can't talk about under the rule of anticipation because the legislation has been put on the Table, Mr. Speaker. These are the kinds of things that the farmers asked for and

he calls it a piece of junk.

Mr. Speaker, he doesn't have a clue about what the farmers want, need, or even what would fix the problem, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't even have a clue about what the requirements are in rural Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the reason he said the farmers can't wait that long, the very reason this Bill is on the Table, is because the farmers can't wait that long.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Well I'll tell you, Mr. Minister . . . a new question, Mr. Speaker. The farmers of Saskatchewan here are asking for a solution to the debt problem, and this doesn't address that. In 1986 you announced a study on farm input prices as farmers went broke. In September '87 you announced a symposium on an MLA task force and more farmers were forced off the land. December '87 you announced changes to the production loan and more farmers were in trouble. In your throne speech you talked about programs to aid farmers and more farmers had to leave the land. In April '88 you reported an equity financing and still more left. And yesterday . . . you say you are going to have some program in the fall.

Well, Mr. Minister, I tell you pretty soon we're going to have more program announcements than farmers. My question is this:

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — My question to you is this, Mr. Minister: why are you and your government unwilling to put forward sound solutions to solve the debt crisis?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, let me try to describe to you what junk is. Junk is, Mr. Speaker, the land bank and total debt moratorium as proposed by members opposite. Mr. Speaker, they were talking about that prior to '82; I never heard them talk about anything else. In 1982 they were thrown out of office because the only solution they had was land bank and total debt moratorium.

A more recent indication as to how western Canadian agriculture appreciates their agricultural policies is . . . the New Democratic agricultural policy was judged in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and it turfed those guys right out of office. They will be decades getting their heads up in that province again, Mr. Speaker, and Heaven forbid that they should ever get their head up any place in western Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Minister, a simple question, and I ask the same one. You've had all your announcements. You have not put forward a solution to solving the farm debt crisis, a solution . . . half the \$6 billion is in your hands and the federal government's hands. It needs no legislation. You can just go ahead and restructure it.

I ask you: why are you willing to do that?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — if the member is suggesting that we should spend \$6 billion to restructure debt from the provincial treasury, I don't accept that as a solution, but that would fall into the same category of land bank and total debt moratorium. It's another wingy idea from the New Democratic Party, and I think one that wouldn't be accepted, Mr. Speaker, by the people of Saskatchewan.

Waiting Period for Cancer Treatment

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Health, I'll direct my question to the Deputy Premier.

Mr. Deputy Premier, my question has to do with a woman by the name of Isabel Couch from Lucky Lake, Saskatchewan, who has contacted me by correspondence. And her letter begins like this, Mr. Deputy Premier:

Help, I need help. I need help right now. I am on a medicare waiting list in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mrs. Crouch found a lump on her breast, Mr. Deputy Premier, and her family got her an appointment with a cancer specialist on March 3. On March 17 the lump was removed and a biopsy showed it to be cancerous. The cancer has spread to the lymph gland and her specialist has told her that treatment is needed immediately.

On May 17 she was told that she would have to wait for treatment for approximately a month or two because all equipment and personnel are being used to capacity.

She was told to get in touch with her MLA. She did. I understand that it's the Minister of the Environment. And he advised her that the government would do whatever it could for her. But as of yesterday, she has heard nothing, Mr. Deputy Premier.

And I want to know, on her behalf, what you are intending to do to expedite Mrs. Couch receiving the very needed and urgent treatment that she requires.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, a couple of points. Number one, if the member will give me the detail that she has, I'd be happy to look at it this afternoon. That's number one.

Number two, Mr. Speaker, the suggestion that all of the equipment and personnel are being used to capacity simply is not true. The problem that we have — and it's an unfortunate situation — in a collective bargaining situation where there's an offer on the table; the people who worked in these particular facilities, Mr. Speaker, have chosen not to work overtime. They've chosen to work to rule, Mr. Speaker.

I think that's a very unfortunate situation, and I would urge, Mr. Speaker, I would urge those people to get back to work, to cover the backlog, so that people like this lady can get the treatment as quickly as possible, Mr. Speaker. I feel very strongly about this. I think it's terribly unfortunate to use people, Mr. Speaker, who are afflicted

in this way as a collective bargaining tool, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Simard: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, your response is just totally inadequate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — You know very well that the staff at the cancer clinic were working overtime and were over-extended because of a lack of funding on the part of your government to adequately staff the cancer clinic in Saskatoon. And you know that. The problem is not the problem of the workers; it's your problem, Mr. Minister.

Mrs. Couch advises in this correspondence that there's no reason why thousands of Canadian women should die of breast cancer. Early diagnosis and treatment results in a high percentage of breast cancer cures. She asks: "How can I get early treatment? Surely my case is an emergency." No emergency case should be put on a waiting list, Mr. Premier. No emergency should be put on a waiting list. Now we want to know, Mr. Premier, today, . . . Mr. Deputy Premier, what you're going to do for this emergency?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, I'd be very happy to take the detail of this particular situation and look into it.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that the situation as it relates to cancer treatment in this province is not a question of funding. If it were, if it were a question of funding, Mr. Speaker, do those people think that overtime doesn't cost money?

The reason, Mr. Speaker, for the overtime is the shortage, I'm told, of the qualified people to fill that particular category of health professional, and I don't know what that category is. And so we, you know, we are working to try and get more of them, Mr. Speaker, into the province and into these clinics, but funding is not the question. The real question though here, Mr. Speaker, is — and I feel very strongly about this — is it right that people who are so afflicted are used as a bargaining tool at the bargaining table in a collective agreement.

Ms. Simard: — People are used as a tool for collective bargaining by government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — New question, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . Mr. Speaker, rather. Mr. Deputy Premier, Mrs. Couch indicates that the specialist told her that there is nothing they can do. The personnel and equipment are being used to capacity. There are just too few technicians. Get in touch with your MLA. I would suggest, Mr. Deputy Premier, that that shows that the responsibility lies on your government.

Now I want to know, Mr. Deputy Premier, when we are going to hear back from you. I don't want you simply saying give us her name and address and we may hear from you a month from now. I want an answer tomorrow

or Monday, at the latest, as to what is going to be done with respect to Mrs. Couch's situation.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, let me say once again. There is a national shortage of technicians — a national shortage of technicians. We are . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Would the members please . . . Order.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — There is a national shortage of technicians; there's a shortage of technicians in Saskatchewan. We are quite prepared, Mr. Speaker, to pay overtime for these technicians that take care of the backlogs, Mr. Speaker, quite prepared. We can't get them. We can't persuade them to work that overtime, Mr. Speaker.

As it relates, Mr. Speaker, to how quickly I will get the information back to the member, Mr. Speaker, just as quick as I can get the information.

Cuts to Welfare Recipients' Travel Allowance

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, my question is the Minister of Social Services. Mr. Minister, a group of professionals in Saskatoon is criticizing your government's cuts to welfare recipients because it's meant that these people are not able to properly access health care services. Specifically the group charges that the loss of the transportation subsidy has meant people have missed visits to doctors, to specialists and, in some cases, have even missed surgery, Mr. Minister.

Now I know that your regulations do make provision in special cases for people to get travel money to the doctor. But the practical consequence, Mr. Minister, is that these people don't have the money up front, that many social assistance recipients aren't being told that they're eligible for the special travel funds, and that it would create a bureaucratic nightmare if in fact people phoned a social worker every time they had to get special permission to get 75 cents for bus fare to go to the doctor.

So my question to you simply, Mr. Minister, is this: will you not acknowledge that you've designed the cuts to the travel allowance in such a way that the poor, in effect, will not be able to properly access medicare services, and will you now restore the travel allowance fully, so that people are properly able to access medicare, Mr. Minister? Will you do that and give the House that commitment today?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, I have said on numerous occasions that we have special need travel, and we have medical travel, and we have travel for the disabled. And medical travel means that if you have to go to the doctor and you have to take a taxi to get to the doctor you should get a receipt, and then you take it into Social Services and you get reimbursed . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order, I'm sure hon.

members have difficulty hearing the minister, and many would, I'm sure, like to hear what his answer is, so please allow him to give his answer without interruption.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me that the members opposite do not wish to hear the truth. So therefore they don't want me to answer.

The answer is: if anyone who is on social services need transportation to a doctor by taxi in the city of Saskatoon or Regina or any other city, and it's all they have to do is take that taxi down there and get a receipt, take the receipt to social services and they will be reimburse. We reimburse them when their amount of fares are over a certain amount, I believe it's \$20. So that we don't reimburse every 75 cents or every \$2. We ask them to collect them, and when they've got the prescribed amount, they bring them in and they get reimbursement.

Mr. Speaker, I have read the article . . . Mr. Speaker, I don't wish to shout but there's no other way I could be heard here if the members opposite will not be quiet.

An Hon. Member: — Go ahead, shout.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — And the members opposite say, go ahead shout. Would the members opposite be quiet enough for me to answer the question. If anyone . . . No, they will not be quiet enough, Mr. Speaker, so therefore I cannot answer the question.

An Hon. Member: — So what's new?

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Before orders of the day, I would like to take this opportunity to lay on the Table the 19th annual report, 1987, of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Saskatchewan branch.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure

Education

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 5

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I want to ask some more questions about the Esterhazy shoe repair program.

Mr. Chairman, I want to begin, first of all, by saying that yesterday the Minister of Education confirmed, number one, that the course is being offered again in Esterhazy, the shoe repair course. Secondly, he confirmed that, I believe, there are eight students in the course at this time. And thirdly, he confirmed, Mr. Minister, that the instructor is once again, Mr. Harry Flander.

My first question to the minister relates to the number of students who took the course in the previous year. Mr. Minister, can you tell us how many people in 1987 completed the Esterhazy shoe repair course, and whether it's correct that at one point while the course was being taken, the only student who was in attendance was the daughter of Mr. Flander?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — My officials don't have the exact number, but they believe it's somewhere in the range of 14 or 15 two years ago.

The question about one person being enrolled in the course, and somehow that there's something unusual or flagrantly abusive about the fact that it was the instructor's daughter, one could interpret that as being somewhat persecutionist.

I wonder if the hon. member would ask the same question if there was one student left in a competency-based program at Parkland campus, or are you merely trying to persecute this daughter of this individual?

There are lots of competency-based programs where one person, because of the nature of a competency-based program, may end up in the final week, or their final week, to be the only student in that program. Is that so unusual, or do you want to continue on a witch-hunt, (a) against the town of Esterhazy and (b) against certain individuals?

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Chairman, to the minister, Mr. Minister, I'm not interested in persecuting the instructor's daughter at all. She's welcome to take the course, that's not the point. The point is whether there is sufficient demand for the course.

I note you didn't accurately answer my question about what the demand was last year. You gave me the figures for two years ago. I want to know how many students were enrolled in that course and completed that course last year, Mr. Minister. Will you give us that figure?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — My officials . . . (inaudible) . . . to me that it was 14 to 15.

Mr. Prebble: — I wonder if you could provide me with confirmation of that in writing, Mr. Minister?

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you another question now about this course, and that is: can you confirm that the Parkland community college in the Esterhazy area decided not to offer this course after offering it, I believe, in 1984, because there was not sufficient demand and because there was some dissatisfaction within the community of Estevan about the offering of the course and the way the course was being run. Can you confirm, Mr. Minister, that the Parkland community college was not prepared to offer the course again?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The program offered last year was a pilot project. Upon completion Wascana institute conducted a program review, including labour market

aid and student demand and 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.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, that's not what I asked you. And you're again intentionally avoiding the question, which makes me think that we have something here.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you again: is it correct that the Parkland community college decided not to offer the course again because there wasn't sufficient interest and because there was dissatisfaction in the community of Esterhazy about how the course was being put on and handled? Can you confirm that, Mr. Minister?

(1445)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The hon. member asks about how Parkland community college, or some individuals there, may have felt about the program. They, I think, and some others had some questions about the program. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that, at least in part, if not in large measure, was why there was a program review.

We are satisfied that this is a good program, and I might add that others are satisfied. They must see merit in the program as well. And I say that because the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission and the worker's compensation in Winnipeg, Manitoba have both asked to be contacted if the course is offered again. So they, too, must see some merit in it and as a possible place for placing some students from western Canada and/or the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, you've admitted now that the Parkland community college didn't think that the program has sufficient merit to continue it. Can you confirm, Mr. Minister, that the Esterhazy local council also recommended that the course not be offered again? Will you confirm that?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I don't know as I'm familiar with the position of the Esterhazy town council. What I can say is their economic development officer has been a big booster, that committee has been a big booster of this program because they see it as important to their town. I, on occasion, and I know my staff on several occasions have met relative to this program. They're big boosters of it.

In fact, I recall now a year or two ago, if there's some questions as to where the Main Street, Esterhazy, if you like, sits relative to this program, I think a couple of years ago in one of the local papers in Esterhazy, there was a two-page ad taken out by numerous merchants in Esterhazy in support of the program. So that tells me how important it is to . . . and I doubt that their support has diminished because of what it means to them in an economic sense.

So maybe you and I will have to agree to disagree on the importance of educational programming in rural Saskatchewan.

I'm telling you that this is no more than a witch-hunt. That's all his is by members opposite. Nothing less, nothing more. If it is not a witch-hunt, then the only other conclusion you could draw, is if they're not on a personal attack, Mr. Chairman, the only other conclusion you could draw is they are against educational programming in rural Saskatchewan. If they say this is not a witch-hunt, which we hear them denying, then that's the only other conclusion you can draw.

Why would they be against educational programming in Esterhazy or Filmore or Creelman or Nipawin or Pangman or Payton or Meadow Lake, or any other place in this province? That is a goal of this government and of this PC administration and under this Premier, and we will continue that goal, Mr. Chairman, because it is one that the people of Saskatchewan want to see more of.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, you don't need to get excited because we're not on a witch-hunt with respect anybody other than your own activities, Mr. Minister, and those of your department.

Mr. Minister, we on this side of the House fully support educational programming in rural Saskatchewan, and we want to see it decentralized. But what we don't want, Mr. Minister, is to see the putting on of courses for the particular benefit of individuals who have political connections to you. And what we don't want to see is the putting on of courses in a particular location where the demand simply isn't there for the course, where it would be better located somewhere else, Mr. Minister, and that may be somewhere else in rural Saskatchewan, but better located somewhere else so the taxpayers' money is spent wisely, Mr. Minister. That's the issue here and not the question of a personal witch-hunt.

So, Mr. Minister, we're going to come back to this question once again, because I note that you were well informed about the position of the economic development committee in the town of Esterhazy, and you're correct about that. That's not the question I asked you.

I asked you about the position of the town council in Esterhazy, and my question to you once again, Mr. Minister, is: will you confirm that the council of Esterhazy asked for the course not to be put on again?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well what I'm advised by the local MLA is the town council is 100 per cent in support of this training program in their town and I, frankly, would be surprised if it was otherwise. In fact, what I get most often is intense lobbying by communities across the entire province who want more of this kind of educational programming, not less.

You have a . . . I can say no more than that. I would add this one fact. It may not be relevant, but I will offer it up anyways, because one of your colleagues, someone who I think has gained the mutual respect of all in this legislature for some 25 or 30 years of service, your former leader, the Hon. Allan Blakeney, apparently, as I understand it — and I'll admit that this is on a

second-hand report — toured this facility in October of '86, and the report I have is he was favourably impressed and apparently said that he would do everything he could to keep that in operation in Esterhazy, Saskatchewan.

So one who's view, I suspect — unless you differ with his conclusions, and if you've in fact toured it yourself, then maybe we should hear your view — but he was favourably impressed, I'm told. I'd like to hear your view, if you've taken the time to be there.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, once again you didn't answer the question. Let me phrase it another way: do you deny that the council of Esterhazy has asked in the past for the course not to be offered again? Do you deny that?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I am not familiar at all with the issue the member raises, or else it's the mayor. What I do know, my best understanding and my most complete understanding, is that Esterhazy — the community, the town — see this as positive for them. Main Street Esterhazy likes it. Rural Saskatchewan likes the notion of more and more educational programming throughout rural Saskatchewan.

I don't know why you're against it. I mean, what conclusion would you draw if you had a newspaper hit your desk that said: "Welcome to our community, shoe service students?" and it's a two-page spread with how many business listed on that. Now what kind of conclusion would you draw if you were in my chair, about whether Esterhazy supports . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order. I'd ask the minister not to use displays.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Your point is well taken, Mr. Chairman. What kind of conclusion would you draw if you had that kind of newspaper hit your desk and . . . well who are some of the merchants that saw fit, because of the pride and what this meant to their community? We got Hypower Systems Inc., Len's IGA, Bank of Montreal, Welco Expediting Ltd., Esterhazy Medical Clinic, Town & Country Decorating, Tom-Boy Foods, Esterhazy Bakery, Metal Fabricating — I haven't even read one-tenth of them yet. And the hon. member opposite would try and lead us to believe that somehow the town of Esterhazy is against this program. This is unfathomable, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Chairman, the minister still has not answered the question. The question was not about whether merchants in the town of Esterhazy aren't happy to have students. Of course they are, Mr. Minister.

The question is with respect to this particular program. It's highly unusual that a council, who is obviously anxious to get new business into the community and new educational programs into the community, would be so upset about the way a program was being run and about the potential patronage involved in the program, that they would suggest that the program not be offered again.

Mr. Minister, you have still not answered the question. I don't believe, Mr. Minister, that you're familiar with the

position of the economic development committee, and that you're familiar with the position of the merchants in the community, but you're not familiar with the position of the council, and I ask you once again, do you deny that the council of Esterhazy asked for the course not to be put on again?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I have no knowledge of any such thing, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, you're just not being forthright with this Assembly. And for you to say you have no knowledge of the position of the council, when you know what the position of the development committee is, is ridiculous, Mr. Minister. You know full well and you're just not being forthright with this Assembly.

Mr. Minister, I'll move on then to another item related to this that perhaps you'll be a little more familiar with, and that is the report of the evaluation committee as reported in the December 18, 1987 *Leader-Post*. Two of the three members of the evaluation committee, Mr. Minister, agree that the program should continue, but question whether it should continue in Esterhazy.

Mr. Minister, I want to quote one of the members of the community in the December 18, 1987 *Leader-Post*. And he says, quote:

"There's no question in my mind that it was a decision based on politics," said Neil Clark of Clark's Luggage and Shoe Repair in Regina.

And I go on to quote:

"The question is, is the program being established to turn out several qualified people or is it being run to simply satisfy the Saskatchewan market for shoe specialists?"

Now, Mr. Minister, I want to make reference again to this article, the article states that Mr. Clark believes the program should be in a larger centre where demand would be higher and student services more accessible.

And then, Mr. Minister, the article goes on to quote a second member of the evaluation committee:

"I'm surprised it has managed to stay there (i.e., in Esterhazy)," said Gordon Naduriak, another committee member and a former graduate (of the course). "It would be nice to know how the department arrived at its decision (i.e., its decision to keep the course at Esterhazy)."

And, Mr. Minister, my question to you is: in light of the fact that two of the three members on the evaluation committee clearly believe that the course should not continue to operate in Esterhazy but should be located to a centre where there would be more demand from students, can you explain, Mr. Minister, why the course continued in Esterhazy? Could it be, Mr. Minister, that you wanted to continue to be able to assure the employment of the former business manager for your member of the legislature in Esterhazy, Mr. Flander? Could that be the reason why the course continued?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, the arguments get even more intriguing. The hon. member, I think, now has given ground and said that yes, maybe we need to have a shoe repair program; CEIC (Canada Employment and Immigration Commission) wants to know about it; workers' compensation wants to know about it. So maybe now he's conceded that much, that we ought to have a program.

So now he shifts his attack back on to the town of Esterhazy, and he's saying somehow that the town of Esterhazy, this small rural community, doesn't deserve to have an educational training facility. He's shifted his attack from saying, yes, we don't need the program — he's conceded that we do need it — but now he's shifted his attack to saying, no, you ought not have rural training . . . you ought not have training programs in rural Saskatchewan; you ought not have them in Esterhazy. Somehow Esterhazy should be black marked, okay, and not be allowed to have programming.

He says it's probably just political. Well if we were to buy that logic, then I suppose every location where we have regional college programs, every location where we have technical institute programs, every location where we have university programs, somehow that must be political too.

What he is really arguing for here, Mr. Chairman, is: don't give Esterhazy anything; that's part of rural Saskatchewan. For the NDP, rural Saskatchewan counts for nothing. Don't allow Esterhazy to have this. Whatever you do, the NDP philosophy would be, forget rural Saskatchewan, centralize training institutions in urban Saskatchewan and big urban Saskatchewan. That's the narrow, philosophical view of socialists. That's a classic socialist mentality, the centralization of power, Mr. Chairman. That's what that is.

(1500)

And it also flies in the face of the report he referred to. And the report's first recommendations were: number one, offer the program, beginning in early 1988. Industry advice and student demand indicate sufficient need to operate the program. The second recommendation was: locate the program in an area where there is no conflict with existing industry; that is, large urban centres or rural areas with no shoe service. And the third recommendation was, operate the program continuously.

Now everything he says flies in the face of what the recommendations are, and this is simply an attack on rural Saskatchewan. He is saying rural Saskatchewan doesn't deserve to have training opportunities, and I find that despicable and deplorable, Mr. Chairman, but not surprising, given who it's coming from.

Mr. Prebble: — Oh, Mr. Minister, you're going to great lengths to divert the issue, but we're not going to let you do that, Mr. Minister.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, members on this side of the House are committed to every person in Saskatchewan, in rural or urban Saskatchewan, to make sure that they obtain equal access to educational services. We want to see programs delivered in rural Saskatchewan. That's not the issue.

You're welcome any day of the week, Mr. Minister, to put another course into Esterhazy, where there is demand. But the issue has got nothing to do with what you've suggested, Mr. Minister. The issue is whether patronage is involved here, and the issue is whether you're not simply continuing this course to fulfil your patronage commitments, Mr. Minister. That's the issue.

And, Mr. Minister, my question comes back to you. Do you deny that two of the three members of the evaluation committee have state categorically that the course ought not to be offered in Esterhazy? Do you deny that?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I think it's time to call a spade a spade, Mr. Chairman, because while we were sitting here and this hon. member opposite was essentially attacking the credibility of the town council of Esterhazy and the town of Esterhazy and the community and the people and the merchants of Esterhazy, my colleague, the MLA for Esterhazy, made a quick phone call.

And what does he find out when he talks to the town councillors? What does he find out? He finds out this — the Mayor Scott Boreen and the town administration says there was no such request, no such request to terminate this program.

So I would suggest to the hon. member to do the honourable thing and apologize to the town of Esterhazy, the mayor and councillors of that town. Do the honourable thing right now. I think this legislature deserves an apology on this one, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, first of all I want to be very clear about what it is I said. I asked you whether or not that request had been made. You refused to answer my question. Admittedly, implied in the question was the fact that the town council may very well have made that request, and on that account, Mr. Minister, I do apologize. But I don't apologize for the basic issue here, which is the question of whether or not patronage is involved in your decision to keep this program in Esterhazy. And we're going to continue on with the questions, Mr. Minister.

You still have not asked my question about whether or not you deny that two of the three members of the evaluation committee have stated that the program ought not to be offered in Esterhazy, that that's not the appropriate location for it. Do you deny that?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member is flip-flopping in his arguments because he knows they are straw men, and he knows that really what he is doing is attacking rural Saskatchewan and Esterhazy.

A minute ago, I thought that he had decided that, based on what the report said, that he was satisfied there was good rationale to continue the course. And I will read again into the record what the report said. Recommendation number one was, "Offer the program beginning in early 1988." The second sentence was, "Industry advice and student demand indicates sufficient need to operate the program."

So if you're asking, is there rationale and justification for operating a program, the answer is yes. So let's put that one to bed for all time. We had done that once already. There is demand.

Now the issue is, do you want to put it in Regina, or are you prepared to put some training programs available in rural Saskatchewan. That becomes the question. If he's saying this is politics that it goes to Esterhazy or into rural Saskatchewan, well I'll say it's politics in that the publicly stated policy of this Progressive Conservative government, based on the blueprint that we set out last year, is to provide more programming to more people in more areas of this province.

And I'll tell you what. We stand by that, Mr. Chairman, and that means Esterhazy has the shoe program, and it will stay there as long as there is demand, Mr. Chairman. I want that on the record, and I challenge the member opposite to put it on the record that he wants to see the program in Esterhazy closed down. I want him to put that on the record for all to hear. It's been a scurrilous attack on the town.

That fizzled, Mr. Chairman, and when we put that one to bed, then he said, well there's no demand. The report clearly says there is demand, so I say he should apologize to this House, put it on the record that he wants this program closed down and not offered in rural Saskatchewan, specifically in Esterhazy, Mr. Chairman, one of two places in western Canada that offers it.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, what I'm asking you to do is justify the continuation of the program there, and we're going to keep asking questions about the justification until we get some complete answers.

Mr. Minister, I want you to next explain a comment, again from this December 18, 1987 article quoting Mr. Brendon Balon, who was formerly the instructor before he suddenly found he'd lost his job and Mr. Flander had replaced him. Mr. Balon comments, and I quote from that Leader-Post article, "He (i.e. Mr. Flander) was awarded the job purely on a patronage basis."

Mr. Minister, will you comment on that quotation by Mr. Balon?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Relative to the credentials of the individual who's the instructor, my department and the officials are satisfied that this instructor is well qualified. I don't have his curriculum vitae or his resume here, but we're well satisfied that he is an instructor, and in fact, for that matter, all other instructors that teach courses throughout this province are satisfactory, Mr. Chairman.

But I'm not going to let this member off the hook. I want

him to go on record as saying that he recommends that the program in Esterhazy be closed, not because there isn't demand, because there is demand; not because the town council is against it, because they are not. I want him to recommend that that program be discontinued and shut down in Esterhazy because that is indeed his position.

And I challenge him to be forthright with this Legislative Assembly and the people of Esterhazy, because the demand is there. Industry says it's there, the report says it's there, CEIC (Canada Employment and Immigration Commission) wants to know about the program, workers' compensation want to know about the program. So the demand is there, so get your view on the record and put it forthrightly.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, we're going to keep asking about these programs . . . about the continuation of this program for a number of very good reasons. First of all, because the Parkland community college, as you acknowledged, recommended that the course not be offered again.

Secondly, Mr. Minister, because the evaluation committee, whose reports you've acknowledged, two of the three members of the evaluation committee say that the course not be offered again in Esterhazy.

Thirdly, Mr. Minister, because there's some suspicion that's been created over this in light of the fact that the former instructor who had been hired, Mr. Balon, was suddenly laid off by your department and replaced by someone else, Mr. Minister, a Mr. Flander, who happened to be the former business manager or your MLA from that area, Mr. Minister.

Those are the reasons why we will continue to ask questions about the offering of this course, because the continuation of funding for this course, Mr. Minister, comes at a time when you've cut dozens of other courses across this province, when there've been massive lay-offs in the technical institutes and cut-backs to the community college program, Mr. Minister.

And so we're going to use this, this particular course offering, Mr. Minister, not to attack the town of Esterhazy and not to go on a witch hunt against anybody other than the policies of your government, because I want to justify the continuation of this program in the context of the questions that I've asked.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you another question, and that is: this shoe repair course is being offered in a facility . . . in a Quonset facility, as I understand it, and I wonder if you can tell us who owns the building where the shoe repair course is being offered and what the leasing arrangement is, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I'm advised that the arrangements for the lease would be those that Wascana would normally arrange for, and that the building is leased from Larry Chelle. And I have no more details over and above that, but if you wish, I can get them for you. I'd have to provide them at some later date, but I'm prepared to give you that undertaking.

We have nothing to hide here, so I'm quite prepared to get whatever information you want.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could then provide us in writing with information on the group of people who own the building, the group of people who own the equipment, the shoe repair equipment in the building, and the details on the leasing arrangement. Could you give us a commitment that you will provide all of that in writing?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I can give you a quick answer to one of them. The equipment's owned by Wascana. And any other questions that you raised there, we'll get the answers for you.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, can you tell us what the instructor's salary is, and what the cost of the lease on an annual basis is?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'll have to provide that for you. We don't have it with us.

Mr. Prebble: — Could you give us a commitment that you'll provide that in writing?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes.

Ms. Smart: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well we've already had a discussion of some of the patronage that the Minister of Education has been involved with in the Department of Education, and I want to take this opportunity again to underline my concern about the fact that the PC Party convention was being run out of the Wheatland Regional Library. We've had a discussion on this already in estimates.

I want to go back on it again, Mr. Minister, because The Public Libraries Act clearly holds you accountable for what goes on in the regional library systems. You're the minister in charge of the regional library systems, and you're the minister whose duty it is to see that the regional library systems provide library service. Running the PC Party convention out of the regional library system is not a public library service.

I want to give you one more opportunity to explain to this House what you, as the Minister of Education responsible for the Department of Education and for the library grants, intend to do about the fact that The Public Libraries Act has been contravened, and that your party has been running a party convention, using taxpayers' money on staff and on materials.

Mr. Minister, will you please address this issue again, in the light of this patronage issue in terms of courses.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, I think we've covered this in some detail, but I will restate my position. I do not condone the behaviour of the individual, at least as it was reported. And having said all of that, I have every confidence in the local board, locally elected board, elected and appointed board, to discharge the affairs and the management of that regional library board, and see no reason to interfere with their local autonomy.

(1515)

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Minister, this issue was not just reported. You saw the evidence. There was very clear evidence, for more than just a report. It's not a rumour; it's a fact. The evidence was there. The building on 806 Duchess Street, run by the Wheatland Regional Library, was used for the PC Party convention committee headquarters and a lot of staff time was used.

Now you are using the Department of Education, you, as Minister of Education, are using the public libraries and the Department of Education as a way to have patronage and as a way to have privilege for the PC Party. And that is not the role of the Minister of Education. It is not in The Public Libraries Act that you have the permission to do this. And I want to know what you intend to do about it — when the Wheatland Regional Library is not providing library services, they are allowing the PC Party convention committee to run out of the Wheatland Regional Library.

An Hon. Member: — He's got to answer the question.

Ms. Smart: — Well obviously he doesn't want to reply to this issue because he's fairly sensitive about it, Mr. Chairman. It is a very serious issue. It's an issue that I think is really quite immoral in terms of what's been happening. To run a political party out of a regional library building, and to say, as Minister of Education responsible for The Public Libraries Act, that you had nothing to do with it, it's just to totally deny the reality of the organization of government.

And it doesn't surprise me — because you believe in government by chaos — it doesn't surprise me a bit that you won't take responsibility for this, that you're quite prepared to sit back and let the PC Party run its party convention out of a regional library system, and that you won't take any action against it.

Now, Mr. Minister, I'm going on record as expressing my deep concern about this, and the deep concern of all of my colleagues about this issue. Particularly in the area of education and public libraries field — the area of information — the fact that you would let this happen, you as the Minister of Education, you as the minister responsible for libraries, become a joke. You're just a joke. It's absolutely ridiculous that you won't take this issue more seriously.

And when you become ridiculous, when you become a joke like this, it reflects very badly on the political process in this province.

An Hon. Member: — Just sits there reading the paper, not evening following his estimates.

Ms. Smart: — That's right. He's reading a list of his friends from Esterhazy that support patronage in the Department of Education.

An Hon. Member: — Ask him how much money the PC Party raised out of that library.

Ms. Smart: — Well there was a cheque for \$30,000. I'm sure there was a lot more money as well. Perhaps the PC Party was paying rent for the regional library building. Maybe I haven't asked that question. Did they pay rent? Did the PC Party pay the regional library system some money to allow them to run the party convention out of that building? Is that what happened, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Any actions that the board saw as appropriate, or any actions that the board saw as inappropriate, as I understand it, they've dealt with them. The member . . . the person in question has apologized for his injudicious . . . or his indiscretions, I suppose, if you like.

I'm satisfied that the board is satisfied, and I don't know as I can say much more on this. And I guess you can ask every possible question that you want and probe this from every angle you want, but all . . . and I would defend your right to do that, absolutely because that's what this place is all about.

If you're asking me if I know of any scurrilous behaviour other than what we've all read and heard and know; if you're asking me if I'm of the view that the board is satisfied that proper management is going on there, the answer is yes.

Ms. Smart: — Well the fact that you admit that something like running the PC Party convention committee out of the Wheatland Regional Library is proper management of the library, really confirms to me how low you're prepared to go in terms of assessing what's going on in the library and prepared to look at The Public Libraries Act and hold the library board accountable.

I'm not surprised to hear you say that you approve of the way the library board has handled the issue, because obviously you don't want to deal with it. The PC Party convention can run out of the Wheatland Regional Library and you basically wash your hands of it. You wash your hands of administering The Public Libraries Act and seeing that the library board is focused on library services.

And you accused me in the House the other day, Mr. Minister, of not supporting the autonomy of the regional library board. I want to go on record as saying I completely support the autonomy of the regional library board working within The Public Library Act. It is the duty of the regional library board to be left alone to administer library services, to rent space, and to organize the funding. It is not the mandate of the regional library to run the PC Party convention committee out of that space. That is contravening The Public Libraries Act; that is going beyond their mandate; it's a waste of public funds; the taxpayers' money's been used in that.

Those are the questions that you should be concerned about if you were a Minister of Education really concerned about maintaining the integrity of both the public library system and the Department of Education. You should be asking how much of that director's time was spent in running that PC Party convention, how much staff time, what materials were used, whether stamps were used to mail out those cheques, and all the other dimensions of running a PC Party convention

committee out of a Wheatland Regional Library. The issue is very clear. I stand completely committed to the autonomy of the public library system, far more than you do because you disestablished the Saskatchewan Library last year, and it's lost its autonomy, Mr. Minister.

I stand committed to the autonomy of the libraries as it's defined in The Public Libraries Act. I support government legislation. I don't support turning your back when that legislation is broken. And nothing can be more blatant in terms of breaking the commitment of The Public Libraries Act than to run a partisan political party out of a regional library building. That's immoral, it's unacceptable, and it's a total waste of the taxpayers' money that you think that you can not only provide patronage with the Department of Education budget but that you can also use it to support your particular political party.

And, Mr. Minister, I see you making notes. I will give you an opportunity to respond.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I think the hon. member has made a relatively serious charge here. She has accused the board of wrongdoing. If she has evidence of wrongdoing by the board, then I would ask her to bring it forward to me because that indeed is a serious accusation and one that I would be prepared to act on.

But relative to an employee of the board, that's quite another matter. The employees report to the board, not to me. I respect the board's autonomy and, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I have no reason at all to suspect wrongdoing by the board. Your accusation is a fairly serious one, and I think if you have some hard evidence to support it, then I would be very happy to receive it and I would be prepared to act on it if such was the case.

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Minister, first of all, let's be clear. We're not talking just about an employee of the Wheatland Regional Library. We are talking about the executive director of the Wheatland Regional Library. That person is in charge; that person is responsible to the board. There's a direct relationship between the director of the libraries and the library board. You have said that you have seen the evidence. You initially denied that it had anything to do with your responsibility. Now you're saying that perhaps it's a serious charge and perhaps you should look at it.

So we're beginning to agree. It is a serious charge. The evidence is there: "PC Party Political Convention Committee, 806 Duchess Street," the same address as the Wheatland Regional Library — a letter from the director of the Wheatland Regional Library to the president of the PC Party, talking about the money involved, talking about the organization of the committee, and talking about the need to try to put some pressure on the firms that have been supporting you to pay for this — free — and the cheque was for \$30,000.

Now my concern to you in the estimates here has been the use of the regional library system for the PC Party convention. There is absolutely no way that an employee, an ordinary employee, would be allowed to do anything like that. This employee is the director of the library and

has had, obviously, in terms of the library board saying they see nothing wrong with it, has the support of the library board in doing this, and that's where I see the really serious issue that you, as the Minister of Education, should take some responsibility for.

It's very clear, Mr. Minister. Now you've admitted that it's serious; I'm saying that it's serious. I'm saying, what are you going to do about it?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well the hon. member here is raising quite a serious point. My clear observation, Mr. Deputy Chairman, earlier was that she has now gone from accusing an individual of wrongdoing to now accusing the board. Now that's quite a different matter, because if in fact there was some wrongdoing, then I would clearly want to know about it, and I would clearly want to act on it.

But having said all that, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I have absolutely no reason to suspect any wrongdoing by the board. The hon. member must be clear on this because this is quite a serious point, albeit that you have a certain amount of immunity in this Chamber.

Are you accusing the board of not just — a publicly-appointed board — are you accusing them of being negligent in performing their duties? And if you are, then come forth with whatever evidence you would have to support that and I will investigate it.

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Minister, I will be absolutely clear with you, I am accusing you, as the Minister of Education, for not looking at The Public Libraries Act, for not holding the regional library board accountable for activities going on in the Wheatland Regional Library that had nothing to do with library services.

The Public Libraries Act is very clear that the regional library has autonomy in promoting library services. The fact that the PC Party convention committee was running out of the Wheatland Regional Library, using taxpayers' money — that fact has been established — that has nothing to do with library services.

The Public Libraries Act has been bypassed or contravened, and it's your responsibility to hold the library board accountable for that kind of activity going on in a regional library.

That's my position, as clearly as I can put it. I hold you accountable, Mr. Minister. I hold you accountable.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Your interpretation and my interpretation of the Act, indeed my officials' interpretation of the Act, are quite different. I'm accountable for the actions of the board. The actions of that individual, he is accountable to the board. And the board has dealt with the matter. I'm satisfied that the board has dealt with the matter, and I have no knowledge of any wrongdoing by the board itself.

Ms. Smart: — Well, Mr. Minister, that just demonstrates, I say, you're lack of integrity and your lack of willingness to deal with what is a very serious issue. And it also demonstrates your lack of concern about how the

taxpayers' money is being spent. And it's a very serious charge when a partisan political party is running out of a public institution.

Now you say you want more evidence than I've already given you. The cheques, the letters, you've got that material. You just are not recognizing the seriousness of the issue.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I was going to make a comment on this, Mr. Chairman, but I'll defer it to my colleague from Saskatoon.

Ms. Smart: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I have one other issue that I wanted to raise with you this afternoon. I want to raise with you, Mr. Minister, I want to raise with you the issue of the status of the Saskatchewan Library.

An Hon. Member: — He can't listen and talk at the same time.

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Minister, when you're finished talking to me, I will take the opportunity to question you.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you, in detail, the status of the Saskatchewan Library. It's an issue that I raised last year when you disestablished the Saskatchewan Library, and I realized, in re-reading *Hansard*, that I'm still not clear from you about the status of the Saskatchewan Library.

(1530)

Last year you told me that the administrator of the Saskatchewan Library, the Provincial Librarian, was paid for out of the administration budget of the Department of Education in the very first subvote, that that was the ... the money was under administration services in 1987-88. This year you told me in estimates that the money for the administration of the Saskatchewan Library is not coming out of vote 16. It's under the Saskatchewan Library.

Now I asked you in estimates last year what the status was of the Provincial Librarian. The Provincial Librarian used to be, when we had the autonomy of the provincial library, when we had autonomy of the Saskatchewan Library, the Provincial Librarian was a deputy minister status, reported directly to the minister in charge of libraries, and had the recognition and the respect at a deputy minister level.

Last year I asked you what the status was not that you've disestablished the Saskatchewan Library, and you said to me, she has the same status as she had previously, and that's on the estimates of August 7, '88. I asked you where the money for funding was for funding that administrative position, and you told me it was under the administrative services of the Department of Education, subvote 1.

Now, Mr. Minister, this year you told me that that money had been transferred under subvote 16. I would just like you to describe to me then, what the status of the Provincial Librarian is. Obviously the Provincial Librarian has lost deputy minister status; you have one deputy minister for the Department of Education. Now

the Provincial Librarian has been removed from the administrative services of the Department of Education and put under Saskatchewan Library, vote 16.

So what is the status of the Provincial Librarian in terms of the organizational chart of the Department of Education?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, her status is unchanged from last year.

Ms. Smart: — It's unchanged from last year. What is it then, please? It's changed from before; she's not a deputy minister any more.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Her status is as it was before. She is still the Provincial Librarian. I don't know if she was ever referred to as a deputy minister of public libraries. She is the Provincial Librarian and, I might add, a very good one.

That's been a very busy, busy, busy group over there. We talked the other day about the initiatives in northern Saskatchewan, which I'm particularly pleased about. They're very excited. I've just toured at the facility here in Regina. There seems to be very good chemistry. I like the integration.

I think it's good for Saskatchewan people to have the kind of integration that we have now with that person being part of a larger decision making process, relative to libraries and how it fits in with distance education and those kinds of things. So I think, (a) not only from a Provincial Librarian's standpoint is that people are being well served, but as well that person playing a larger role in even larger public decision making because of the new structure.

Ms. Smart: — Who then does the Provincial Librarian report to? Obviously she's not at a deputy minister's status. She was before. Does she report directly to you, or does she report to Mr. McFarlane?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, I think to answer that question, nominally, certainly — and as part of the department structure — nominally the Provincial Librarian reports to the deputy minister.

But having said all of that, if I was to suggest in saying that somehow there is an erosion of the Provincial Librarian's autonomy, I would be wrong, because the reality is, virtually on all issues, and certainly on all substantive issues, which virtually all are if they come to the minister's attention, the Provincial Librarian reports to me, almost in a direct-line relationship, if you like.

So we get the best of all worlds, nominal reporting through the deputy minister, because we have other initiatives going on laterally, if you like, where this person's knowledge and expertise has even greater value to us over and above her role as Provincial Librarian, if you like. And that's been extremely useful and valuable. And I referred earlier to things like distance education.

Ms. Smart: — Well I know the Provincial Librarian is a valuable resource for you, but the money that you have

for distance education, for literacy, is not within the public library funding; it's not within the grants to libraries; it's not within the amount of money that the Provincial Librarian has decision making over.

It's obvious, by removing her from a deputy minister status, that you've removed that job from a direct line to the minister. That's a lack of autonomy; that is a putting of the library within the Department of Education in a way that the Provincial Librarian is used in many other directions other than establishing and maintaining the Saskatchewan Library. That's a policy decision that you've made.

Librarians all around this province are interested in hearing more development of policy from you in terms of what your plans are for the Saskatchewan Library, now that the Provincial Librarian has lost the status that she had when we were government, and before you changed and disestablished the library last year.

You've mentioned already the services to the North. And I really . . . I'm very pleased to hear that northern library services will be developed, but it's coming out of the grants to the libraries which has not increased one bit to accommodate those other activities. What you're doing is you're talking about other activities, like the distance education and literacy, as if it was part of the funding of the public library system.

The public library system is a very important system to many people in this province. They would like to know the policies that you intend to implement in terms of developing it further. You talk a lot about the information age, and yet you cut back on the status of the Provincial Librarian, you run PC Party convention committees out of regional libraries and you cut back on their budget tremendously. Altogether, you've been quite destructive in terms of the library, I would say, and I know that many people support me in expressing this concern.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, last August I spoke to you in estimates, Education estimates, about the plight of dental therapists and their retraining, I would ask you to bring us up to date as to how many dental therapists have gone through the dental hygienist course in the last year, and whether or not this course will be available in the following year.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — In response to the library critic's question about our lack of commitment to libraries, it might be worth having on the record, Mr. Deputy Chairman, that on a per capita basis Saskatchewan spends \$5.14 on libraries per capita per person, ahead of Alberta at \$4.79, and nearly double Manitoba's commitment at \$2.63. And that doesn't count things like the educational development fund. It doesn't count things like the millions of dollars that we spend on library upgrading and library acquisitions.

And to be really honest with you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, when the NDP were in government, their commitment to post-secondary education, specifically universities and technical institutes and libraries, was nothing more than lip-service. And I say that absolutely, sincerely, and

without fear of contradiction.

Now relative to the dental hygiene program at Wascana Campus, and as a result of changes last year, a retraining program has been provided for dental therapists. We have expanded the existing seven-month dental hygiene program at Wascana Campus from 12 to 30 seats to retrain therapists as hygienists, and as I understand that, that program will go on again next year at the increased level.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, I asked you how many dental therapists, who were fired by your government last June, who have been trained by the people of this province to be dental therapists but who can no longer be dental therapists in this province because of your decision to eliminate the school-based children's dental program — I've asked you very clearly, how many of those fired dental therapists have been retrained in the dental hygienists program?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The answer is 28. And then now the hon. member, I think, based on that answer . . . And the commitment is to increase the expanded number again this next year, which was essentially our commitment, as I recall it, a year ago.

Now the hon. member, I have no doubt, Mr. Deputy Chairman, will say, here it is, here it is in black and white, 28 out of however many that were fired, to use her term, which is a wrong term, Mr. Chairman . . . Would you use the correct term? The positions were abolished. Because to suggest they were fired, to suggest they were fired is a black mark on their records, and I think you're doing them a disservice because they were not . . . You and the CBC continue to use the words "fired," and you use them incorrectly.

And the hon. member, the lawyer from Regina wherever, suggests I'm being semantic. Well you, as a lawyer, ought to know even better than that, because there is a significant difference in one's employment record as to whether they were fired or their position is abolished.

And if you think that is wrong, then you get up and say so in this legislature because I've had enough with simplistic rhetoric coming from the NDP. We've already had one member apologize in this legislature today, and I'm going to continue to keep people to the facts because this literary licence that people opposite take, the public deserve better, and I'm going to check you and call it on it every time.

And you can say I'm being obstructionist and all the rest of it. I'll tell you, I've had it with simplistic rhetoric and a twisting and warping of facts, not the least of which is referring to people as fired when they were not fired. And if I am wrong there, then I challenge the lawyer in that caucus to stand up and say I am wrong.

Having said all of that — and I apologize for that diversion, Mr. Deputy Chairman — the hon. member no doubt will try and make the case then, out of however many dental therapists that were laid off, we have infinitesimally trained only this small number.

Well how many dental therapists indicated a desire to retrain as dental hygienists? And the answer is 70. To date we've accomplished 28, and we're well on our way to accomplishing a similar commitment this next year, Mr. Chairman. Not perfect, not ideal, nobody necessarily happy that we have this situation where we have anybody laid off in this province, but, Mr. Chairman, we're doing everything we can to deal with the issue as best we can through retraining.

Ms. Atkinson: — Yes. Mr. Minister, you say that 28 people have been retrained. I would like to know whether or not you are paying for their living accommodations in the city of Regina, whether they are receiving a training allowance for retraining, and whether in fact you're paying for their courses.

Can you give me the details as to the kind of commitment your government has made to these people who have applied for entrance into your dental hygienist program, people who you fired, Mr. Minister? I will use "fired," not "laid off," not "abolished," — none of that stuff. They were fired; they were summarily dismissed, Mr. Minister.

Those workers have very, very narrow ability to get work in their field in this province. Dental therapy was a two-year course designed by the people of this province specifically in order that the school-based children's dental program could be delivered in this province. Those people were dismissed by your government.

(1545)

There is no opportunity, or very few opportunities, for them to work in this province. Less than 50 of them, Mr. Minister, have received employment. There are women working part-time in stores; there are women who have no jobs, and your government is responsible for that. Your government fired them.

And I'm asking you: what kind of a commitment do you have to these people who spent two years of their lives getting trained, whose training is still a need in this province? We still have children who need their training. We have people who want the school-based children's dental program. Even some of the members in your own Conservative Party want a school-based children's dental program. And I'm simply asking you: what commitment have you made to these fired workers, most of whom are women, in order that they can be retrained, not necessarily in the field of dental hygienistry, but in other fields as well. What commitment have you made to them?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — In terms of what has gone on and what we will attempt to do in the future . . . and I gave you an incorrect number as it relates to those therapists that were employed with the dental plan before, the ones who became the hygienists; it's 18. The other number I used was the global number. It's the 18 extra seats. And they're funded for by Health.

And as well, in terms of how we're trying to help them, we're also — or at least the Health department picked up the costs relative to books and equipment. As well there was the unemployment insurance benefits, and my officials advise me that they are negotiating to have the

unemployment insurance benefits extended for another year.

Now as I said before, not perfect, not ideal, not necessarily even desirable. And for that individual who is without employment or even maybe without immediate training prospects, not a desirable situation.

But it's not as though we've wanted to just drop them off the edge of the world, if you like. We're putting in place additional spaces for training. We're extending UI benefits, or attempting to negotiate that, and as well picking up some of their educational costs that might not normally be picked up did we not face this particular situation.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, for many of those women their UI benefits run out in August. Only 18 of those women have had an opportunity to be retrained by your government. You have not picked up their living expenses. You have not done that. You've picked up their books and equipment. You have not said you've picked up their tuition fees.

Now many of those women are single parents with children. They do not have the resources to go to school and retrain themselves. They do not have the resources to get themselves into a program and pay for all of the costs associated with that program, particularly when they've already gone through that. They've already paid for their course; they've already spent two years being trained.

And I'm simply asking you: your government fired over 400 people. Over 200 of those people were dental therapists who have two years training which they bought and paid for. As a result of your government policies, they will have to be retrained in some other field of endeavour. And I'm simply asking you, their UI (unemployment insurance) runs out at the end of August, you can't possibly retrain them all in the field of dental hygiene.

So I'm asking you: are you going to give them the opportunity to be retrained in other fields and will you pick up their living costs, their tuition, their books and all of those other things that are necessary in order for students to get training in this province?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The point that I think I can add over and above what I have said earlier about extending UI benefits for those in training, etc., is that in addition to books and instruments, as well, the Department of Health paid for their tuitions. And I apologize for not having all that right at my fingertips — but because it's not out of our budget but from the Department of Health. So all I can say is we're trying to be as helpful as we can.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, you didn't pay for their living allowance and that is one of the most expensive parts of education. In fact, that is the expensive part of education . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Disagree. Disagree. What I am saying is this: in August their UI benefits run out and you're trying to negotiate an extension — an extension for 18 people, but there are over 200 people who lost their jobs. Your government has not offered them retraining in any field other than becoming a dental hygienist.

And I'm asking you this as a result of the tremendous toll that has been taken on those women's lives, because a vast majority are not employed and the ones that are employed at not working in the field that they have been trained for. Many of them who are working are working in substantially reduced jobs in terms of level of pay and, Mr. Minister, they cannot afford to come to Regina and be retrained in a dental hygienist course and they can't get in. And you say that there are 70 people who've applied and 18 have been trained thus far, there are another 18 people who will be retrained next year, and you say you're trying to get extended UI benefits for those people for next year.

But what about the other people? What about the other 32 people who've applied? And what about all of those people who haven't applied because they don't have a hope of getting into the course? Because the people who are getting into the course are doing so on the basis of seniority and on the basis of their ability to move to Regina and be retrained.

Now there are many people — and you said last year that they can't all possibly be retrained in the field of dental hygiene, and that is true, they can't. The market doesn't need 70 or 200 dental hygienists.

An Hon. Member: — I think we're getting somewhere, but I don't know where.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay, I understand that point, Mr. Minister. But there are lots of areas in those province that do need people — physiotherapy, for instance, occupational therapy. There are a whole host of fields in this province where we have a shortage. We need radio-therapists to do work at the cancer clinic in the city of Saskatoon.

What I'm saying, Mr. Minister, is that if your government has the will, if you had the will and if you were prepared to put some money along with your commitment to health care in this province, there are lots of fields where these women could be retrained.

And I'm simply asking you: you've made a commitment to 18 people next year; you say that you're trying to get their U.I. benefits extended, but you may not. In the meantime there are over 200 people that don't have work. And I'm asking you: is your government prepared to make the same kind of commitment to them in other fields where we need people highly trained in this province in order that we can deliver a whole host of other services that are important? Are you prepared to do that?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The fact of the matter is, Mr. Deputy Chairman, is that these young people, these adults certainly could undertake training in a whole host of areas, some of which the hon. member mentioned.

I have every reason to believe that some of them entertained that. I suspect probably some did look at other training programs outside the dental health sciences. I don't know. I don't have a complete breakdown on an individual-by-individual basis.

Certainly the hon. member has no trouble in generalizing about who's doing what. I don't know; maybe she has a breakdown, individual by individual. If she does, I, quite frankly, would be interested to see it.

And of course that's why we have the wide variety of training programs that we do throughout technical institutes and as well other post-secondary institutions in this province, so that they themselves, who probably do have a sense of the market-place as well . . . And I have no doubt that some of them did avail themselves of other training opportunities.

I suspect as well, although I don't know, unemployment insurance maybe helped some of them. You and I might differ on what unemployment insurance benefits are. I thought that was to pick up living costs. I'm not saying it's a wonderful or a delightful situation, because it is not. Are people doing the best they can, whether it be institutes or others, to accommodate, including licensing bodies, to increase our space allocation, sort of thing, without jeopardizing accreditation? I'm saying yes, we did have quite good co-operation.

If you're asking me if I have all the details, I do not in some areas, and I apologize for that, because it's a Health initiative by large measure. But certainly, where the post-secondary system could help, they have tried to help.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, it's not good enough. You have not done a good enough job. Your government fired 411 people in this province, highly skilled people who delivered a program that was considered to be the best in North America, if not the best in the world. People from all over the world came to Saskatchewan to see how we delivered and trained people — how we delivered a program in the field of children's dentistry, and how we trained people.

We were able to develop a model of dental health in this province that has become known the world over. With the stroke of a pen, you summarily fired 411 people. Of those people, and I think government should be aware of this, there were over 200 dental therapists who had taken a two-year course. They took that two-year course because the government of Saskatchewan in the early 1970s set up a school-based children's dental program. They had every reason to believe, Mr. Minister, because of the popularity of the program, because of the quality of the program, that that program was entrenched in Saskatchewan and would be here for a good long time to come, until your government came along. Your government, last June, rounded up all of these women around Saskatchewan, into hotel rooms or whatever, and summarily fired them. They were fired. Their jobs were taken over by dentists.

Now, Mr. Minister, we have over 200 dental therapists who were fired. You say you've retrained 18; you say there'll be a further 18 retrained next year — that's 38. The dental therapists tell us that less than 50 people have obtained full-time employment in this province.

Mr. Minister, as the minister responsible for advanced education and training in this province, as a minister of

the Crown who fired 411 people, wrecked and ruined their careers, I'm asking you: what are you prepared to do to ensure that these people, most of whom are women, many of whom are single parents, will be retrained in other areas of endeavour, areas that are important to the overall well-being of Saskatchewan?

There are lots of opportunities. I'm asking you: are you prepared to retrain those women in nursing at the University of Saskatchewan or at Kelsey Institute? Are you prepared to fund their tuition and books and fund a training allowance — because UI runs out in August — are you prepared to do that?

If they wish to go into physiotherapy, are you prepared to fund the tuition, the books and a training allowance? Because they've already paid to be trained in the field of dental therapy. They shouldn't have to pay again, because they had every reason to believe that they would have a job for a good long time. Are you prepared to fund them in physiotherapy, occupational therapy, gerontology? There are all kinds of fields in Saskatchewan.

We had an example here where the Deputy Premier this afternoon said we don't have enough radio-therapists in Saskatchewan, radio-therapy technicians, and that's why we've got a waiting list at the cancer clinic. Are you prepared to train them in that area if we need . . . if there's a shortage in that area?

The minister responsible at the federal level has done a manpower survey of the kinds of jobs that we in this country, in this province, are going to need in the future. There are lots of areas of opportunity for people. I'm simply asking you: you fired them; you were a member of the cabinet that fired them, and I'm asking you, are you prepared to retrain them in other areas besides becoming a dental hygienist.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, I don't know as I can say any more than I've said on this issue without being unnecessarily repetitive. We try to be as helpful as we can; we've had co-operation of licensing bodies, etc. The Health Department has picked up some additional costs, etc., etc., and I can't . . . I'm sorry to repeat myself, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well I'm not afraid to repeat myself.

Mr. Minister, your government has done a great deal of damage to the lives of some women in this province — 411 people were fired by your government. Over 200 of those people were dental therapists who had a two-year training course that they bought and paid for. Your government fired them.

A vast majority of those women have not got alternate employment, and that is a fact. Their unemployment insurance runs out at the end of August. That is a fact. You say you've retrained 18 — big deal. You say you're going to retrain another 18 — big deal. There are still over 100 people who have no jobs and no hopes of being retrained.

(1600)

You have no compassion, Mr. Minister. You are quite prepared, with the stroke of a pen, to devastate people, to harm their future, to harm their family's future. Many of those people live in rural Saskatchewan, and with the economic crisis facing our province in rural Saskatchewan those jobs were needed.

Mr. Minister, the answer to my question is no, the Conservative government will not retrain those people, the people they rounded up and put in hotel rooms and told them they were fired. That's the answer, Mr. Minister, but you don't have the gumption to say it. You talk about honesty and integrity; you have none. You have no ability to stand in this legislature and say, no, member from Saskatoon Nutana, we will not retrain those 411 fired workers. We will not retrain those dental therapists. You don't have the jam to do it.

Mr. Minister, you were elected by the people of this province to provide some leadership. You were appointed as the advanced education minister. We have people who need retraining, but your government's not prepared to do a single solitary thing. That's how you feel about people. It's evident to the people of this province, that's how you feel about them.

You have no compassion. Your policies are hurtful; they're harmful. And, Mr. Minister, I say to you that the dental therapists that you fired and that you're now refusing to retrain in other fields of endeavour will become the symbol of everything that's wrong with your government.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question for the minister is: does he still have a Mr. Rene Archambault in his employ?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Oui.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Can the minister advise the House and the people of Saskatchewan what Mr. Archambault's job is?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — M. Archambault is the director of French minority education.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Could you tell the House approximately what Mr. Archambault's salary is for this job?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Archambault is classified at the professional 7 level with the management and professional plan. He currently draws a monthly salary of \$4,533.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Could the minister tell us, is Rene Archambault, is this the same Rene Archambault that is the Premier's brother-in-law?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well Mr. Archambault, the one we're referring to, is the one who has been the principal of Gravelbourg High School and director general of College Mathieu.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — I wonder if this is the same Mr. Archambault who is also the Premier's brother-in-law.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I believe it is. But to me that matters not, it is his teaching and administrative experience that is important.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Can the minister tell the House when Mr. Archambault was first hired by his department?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Archambault was seconded from College Mathieu from October '82 to June 30, '84, and since that time he assumed the responsibilities of director of French minority education, July 1, '84.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — What you're saying then that Mr. Archambault, in effect, was first employed by the government, whether it's under secondment or directly, in October of 1982.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — This would be some six months or so following the 1982 general election where your government was first elected.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Can the minister tell the House where Mr. Archambault's office is located?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — He works in Gravelbourg, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Can the minister advise us of any other offices that his department has that ostensibly fulfils some central function, in this case, French minority language education, that are located in centres such as that throughout Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, we have a French programming office in Saskatoon as well.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Saskatoon hardly relates as one of the minor centres in Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister. At least one could say for Saskatoon, not only is there a high resident population, but it's also central for many people in the province. And I'm wondering how it is that for a job that's as vital as this for the department, how it is that Mr. Archambault's office comes to be located in that particular town as opposed to being located out of your central offices here in Regina. How did that come to be?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — You know, Mr. Deputy Chairman, if you look at the line of questioning that we've had this afternoon, it's a systematic attack on rural Saskatchewan essentially is what it is.

First of all we had one opposition member, one NDP member, berating the fact that Esterhazy had a training program. Now we've got a member from Regina Victoria who has called now, referred to Gravelbourg as a minor centre, and that somehow Gravelbourg ought not have any government services. And yet everyone in this Chamber, I'm sure, except obviously the opposite member, has viewed Gravelbourg as certainly being a

French, a francophone cultural and educational centre in this entire province. And in fact the entire citizenry of this province shared in their grief as a result of the tragic fire in that community just a couple of weeks ago.

Now he wants to write Gravelbourg off as a minority centre simply because he has difficulty with the fact that a person, yes, related to the Premier, the Premier . . . I mean, I guess . . . I don't know what one does about, you know, the fact that if you get married, yes, you have certain relatives that come with that fact.

The fact that the man has been a director general of College Mathieu, whom all members in this legislature supported the fact that we ought to do something to help rebuild College Mathieu — and we will — he's on a witch-hunt against College Mathieu, against Gravelbourg and specifically against Rene Archambault.

I find it incredible and deplorable, and I think that hon. member ought to apologize to the town of Gravelbourg as well, just as his colleague this afternoon had to apologize to the town council of Esterhazy. These personal attacks, Mr. Chairman, have absolutely no place in this legislature.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I don't think that I've really offered my opinions; I've simply asked some questions. But it seems to me that if we asked the wrong questions, we have a case of touchy-touchy here. We ask the wrong questions, it seems like, and you've given to rhetorical flights of fancy, the likes we don't see unless it's a dandelion after a spring rain blossoming forth. It's just simply incredible that we would ask a question and you stand up and accuse us of saying things. I'm just simply asking you why you wouldn't have a person who's important as this located to Regina?

Was this request to be located in Gravelbourg, was this a departmental decision based on advice from your employees and from your staff, or was this at the request of Mr. Archambault?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Departmental decision. This side of the legislature, the Progressive Conservative Party, the Progressive Conservative Party government of this province are interested in decentralizing, in providing more government services outside the major urban centres. That strategy has been clear. That's why we've moved crop insurance to Melville; that's why the Minister of Energy and Mines has agricultural credit corporation in Swift Current; that's why, just like . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . and I hear the hon. member talking about perhaps northern Saskatchewan. I would suspect that's the same theory that the Northern Lights board is operating on when they're going to move their board out of P.A. into northern Saskatchewan, closer to the people. That's our view: have services closer to the people.

And in this case . . . and the hon. member suggested, Mr. Deputy Chairman, that he'd only ask questions and not rendered an opinion, and yet I heard him distinctly say that why would we have a person like . . . that Rene Archambault is placed in a minor centre. Now that's certainly an opinion, in my books.

And if he wants to write Gravelbourg off as a minor centre, we will not. It's a major centre when it comes to francophone education and francophone culture in this province. It's important to have the services close to the people, and that is where he is. And as I'm concerned, if that makes good sense for francophone education, that's where he shall stay.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — We shall have to talk sometime, Mr. Minister, about decentralization. I'm a very strong believer that people in local communities should be given the assistance that they can to run their own affairs to the extent that is possible.

When I look at you and we talk about decentralization, I see a minister that has done away with local boards when it comes to technical institutes and post-secondary education in this province, and has set up one large, central board to administer those affairs in Saskatchewan. That to me is a highly centralizing move, and that is something that I cannot support because I think there is a great deal of scope to involve the people in Saskatchewan in their own education. That's something that you don't seem to believe.

When you talk about decentralization, as I listened to the questions and answers earlier about Esterhazy and now about Gravelbourg, it seems to me that you equate decentralization with serving your own narrow, partisan political interests. And I draw a distinction between doing that and true decentralization.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you a little bit about the funding of this particular office as it's evolved over the years. Now I note that in the 1986-87 budget some \$1.3 million was budgeted for something called the Official Minority Language Office, and I'm assuming that this is the same office that Mr. Archambault works out of. Am I correct in that?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — In the 1986-87 budget, unless it escaped people's notice, this was the year that a provincial election was held; in 1986, the budget was \$1.3 million. The actual expenditure that year for that particular office was \$2 million.

Now this is an increase of \$700,000 in the course of one year, something that was not budgeted for, but was spent. In 1987-88 the estimated expenditure is \$1.2 million, and I note this year that you're proposing to spend again \$1.3 million.

Can you explain to this House and to the people of Saskatchewan how it came to be that, notwithstanding a provision of \$1.3 million, which would seem to be reasonable given your expenditures last year, your proposed expenditures in this coming year, that your actual expenditures in an election year jumped from \$1.3 million to over \$2 million. Can you explain that to the people of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, we as a government are criticized very often for government cut-backs, or so-called cut-backs, decreasing budgets or

not increasing budgets enough. Now we're being criticized for a budget increase, and he says it's too big. The reality is on this one . . . and he says it's too big when it comes to the question of francophone education in this province, which is an incredible statement by itself.

(1615)

The truth of the matter is, on this, and quite frankly I suppose I wish I personally could take credit for his budget increase, but I cannot. I must defer to my officials and the francophone community in this province, the Official Minority Languages Office for their judicious and very productive and fruitful negotiation with the federal government, because this is what this additional money represents. It is as a result of negotiations with the federal government. It come from them to us and it flows through our budget out into the francophone community. And it's 100 per cent recoverable from the federal government, albeit that the accounting has to show it through our accounts or our estimates, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well is the minister refusing to answer the question, or what?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well all the increase is a result of federal negotiations. It's federal money that flows from them to us and out from our office. It's not provincial money per se.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — So you're saying, miraculously in 1986, an election year, there was an increase in funding from the federal government to the extent of \$700,000. Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm saying that as a result of some very good negotiations with the federal government. If it happened to be an election year, so be it, but I'm also led to believe that it's happened before. And I've also come to know that the officials do a very good job of negotiating, and if they can get more money from the federal government as opposed to us having to go to our taxpayers, then I think that's welcome news. We ought to be congratulating these people for their negotiating skills because it's good news for the francophone community.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Minister, could you give us some inkling, at least, under what particular program you were able to obtain \$700,000, an additional \$700,000 from the federal government, and to what particular purposes that \$700,000 was put?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — There's an agreement and a protocol as a result of the Canada-Saskatchewan agreement — I don't have the official title for it — and in that protocol it states what these moneys can be used for, and it ranges everything from grants to school boards to teacher training to bursaries for students, and all of those kinds of things and more.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Can you . . . I just want to back up here now, Mr. Minister; I'm getting a lot of non-answers.

You budgeted \$1.3 million; that's what you put in the

budget because you believed that you would be spending \$1.3 million during the course of that particular year. Yet your actual expenditures come out to be \$2 million, and these are rough figures. There's a difference of \$700,000 million.

Are you trying to tell me that at the point that you prepared the budget and brought it to this House that you did not know, were not aware of an extra \$700,000 in expenditures that would be undertaken during the course of that particular year? Is that what you're trying to tell us?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well every year we do have to put in a budget estimation, which we do. Over the course of the year negotiations go on, in this case some very successful negotiations. It hasn't happened before. We could document it and detail it for you in years previous, if you so wish, if you think this is some kind of clandestine activity.

As I understand it, if you end up with a windfall in some years, it's because, for example, that some other provinces might not use all of the money that's allocated in that budget. And so if you're making a good case, then you might get some of that extra money, if I could use that term.

I find it incredible that you're somehow having difficulty with the fact that officials did a very good job of negotiating extra money from the federal government. Most often you criticize us: (a) for not spending enough, or (b) for not negotiating well with the federal government. And in this case we are 180 degrees at the opposite end of those arguments. And I, quite frankly, am inclined to congratulate the officials for this kind of performance.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well, Mr. Minister, I didn't undertake to ask you about these expenditures because I thought that there was something clandestine about, you know, those particular expenditures; I'm trying to understand your estimates. I'm trying to gain an appreciation, as a member of the legislature, as to whether or not there is sufficient moneys in the budget for education. Certainly we have concerns about areas where we think you need to spend more.

I note that in the same year that we're talking about, 1986-87, you budgeted \$333 million in grants to schools, but spent \$1 million less. And certainly we have concerns about those kinds of things, about whether or not schools are being adequately funded in Saskatchewan. And therefore we would have great concerns about your estimating an expenditure of a certain level, but not spending enough on where we think the money needs to be spent.

Now I'm trying to gain an appreciation of the funding that you have for the Official Minority Language Office, and other aspects of your budget, and especially with respect to official minorities, because this is a subject of great interest lately to the people of Saskatchewan because of the Bill that our government put forward.

This is a matter of great interest to us, and we want to ensure that there's adequate funding at all levels. Yet we

see here a history of funding that, to say the least, is erratic. And I saw nothing clandestine in the figures that we were able to pull out, but I'm beginning to suspect something clandestine when I listen to your very erratic answers.

Are you trying to tell this House, and are you trying to tell the people of Saskatchewan, that you are so incompetent, sir, and so ill-informed that when you put forward a budget of \$1.3 million in this case, you don't know whether you're going to spend \$1.3 million or whether you're going to spend \$2 million? Are you so incompetent as that?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — That number is . . . over and above the 700,000 that you questioned, is a result of negotiations. We don't . . . We have no way of knowing how successful those negotiations will be. They've been very successful.

In fact, what I'm prepared to do, because the hon. member says that he has a deep desire to have a full understanding of this, is I'm prepared to make my hon. officials available to you for a full briefing on this, how the money is negotiated, what the protocol looks like, what the agreement looks like, the terms of the agreements that we've had — I think they are one or two or three-year agreements, something like that — how the money flows through from the feds to ourselves, out to school boards, francophone groups, etc., etc., on behalf of francophone education in this province.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — I appreciate that offer, Mr. Minister, but now I'm even more curious. You talk about one, two, three-year agreements with the federal government, about a flow of funds from the federal government to the province, yet in making up your own budget you say we're going to spend \$1.3 million, and it turns out to be a \$2 million expenditure, and you say it's entirely coincidental that it's an election year.

I'm asking you again: didn't you know . . . did you not know when you drew up the budget for 1986-87 that you would in fact be spending \$2 million? And I'd also like an answer to the other question that I asked you, and that is: for what particular purposes was this money spent? What did you spend it on during the course of that year, that additional money?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Methinks the hon. member protests so much we ought to send it back, Mr. Chairman. That's the only conclusion I can come to.

What was the money spent on? The major portion — B.Ed. degree program at the University of Regina, actually which is quite a unique program. In fact, I'm happy to say even that I have one of the students in that program working as a summer student in my office.

Teacher training program, U of S; resource centre, College Mathieu; adult education centre, College Mathieu; joint school board department projects for developing instructional materials for designated schools, extra funds for learning resource centres in designated French schools.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Are you saying that all those particular expenditures were not budgeted for in that particular year; you found money and therefore you were able to put money into those specific items, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Many were budgeted for. What we were able to do was get extra money through the negotiations, almost a windfall I suppose one might argue.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — There certainly were a lot of windfalls in 1986, Mr. Minister.

I'm trying to gain some appreciation as to whether or not your budget is adequate for the coming year and I'm wondering if you're undertaking any negotiations at this point that would lead us to conclude that the budget item that you have is adequate, or whether it should be increased to reflect negotiations and other potential windfalls.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member, I think, is trying to prove or show that 1986 was a "peculiar" year — something like that, I think, was the word he used. It was not. It was a good year in terms of negotiations, but I'm advised that we've had other fruitful years. And I am prepared to provide him with the evidence to show that there was nothing particularly unusual about 1986.

And I would suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, despite all the hon. member's protestations to the opposite, that he is simply probing that to try and make the case that somehow this was a politically-motivated cheque for 700,000, and the opposite is true, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that there's one way to dispatch with that particular notion, and that is for you to table any and all documents that you have which would substantiate your claim: one, that you did not know prior to the estimates being approved in the House that particular year that that \$700,000 was coming; secondly, which shows clearly that it was \$700,000 in new, additional money from the federal government.

If you can provide those kinds of documents . . . I would ask you, Mr. Minister: are you prepared to table those documents for this House to settle that particular argument? Are you prepared to do that?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I've already given the commitment to you, and if you want it to the entire House, I suppose I would take that into consideration. At a minimum, I will provide you with a full accounting. We have nothing to hide.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well you use the words "consideration" and then "nothing to hide." Now I just want to get it clear: that you are prepared to table in this House all the documentation in this instance, including correspondence with the federal government, which would clearly show, clearly show, that prior to the estimates being settled that particular year, you had no knowledge of any additional funds, and which will clearly show the \$700,000 was forthcoming to your

particular department for certain uses dealing with official minority languages, that those funds were coming to you after the estimates and the budgets were set for that particular year. I want to make it clear, Mr. Minister, that is the information that you will be providing to this House.

(1630)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I have already given a commitment to the hon. member. I will provide it to him, and if he wishes that all members should have it, then he can table it for the House. But I'll provide it to him and he can do as he wishes from that point.

Normally, if I thought the issue was substantive enough and of a report nature, I suppose, I would table it for the entire legislature. But given that not all members may all want to go into it in this detail, I'll make it available to the hon. member, Mr. Chairman, and then if he wishes, he can table it with the legislature.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well it is a substantive issue, Mr. Minister, when the people of Saskatchewan see a budgeting process that more resembles a yo-yo than anything else, where you budget one thing, you end up with actual expenditures up here.

I think the people of Saskatchewan are anxious and curious to know how these things happen and want to get some answers to that. And they want to know these things so that they can better appreciate the estimates that we have before you.

Let me just ask one other question with respect to the minority language office. Given the Premier's announcements, and other ministers' announcements, during the time that the French language Bill was discussed, about the need for further funds and so on for language education, could you tell us where this is reflected in your budget to deal with those additional challenges?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — There are no numbers in this budget estimates relative to that.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well, Mr. Minister, I want to say that this has been a period of frustration for me to ask you questions, to be rewarded by rhetoric, to have you talk grandly about decentralization, yet the experience, at least while you're in office, shows something else.

I want to ask you one or two more questions about Mr. Archambault. Is Mr. Archambault the same one that was reported to be active in the Prince Albert-Duck Lake area in the French language communities in that particular constituency in the 1983 by-election? Was Mr. Archambault active up there, and could you briefly tell us what kinds of job activities he was undertaking in that area at that time?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — To be honest with you, I don't have a clue.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Chairman, it's hard for me to believe some of the remarks that I heard from the minister

this afternoon. And I want to summarize them for you, Mr. Chairman, and after that I intend to move a motion.

In the course of the afternoon, what happened is the minister was asked, was asked very pointed and very specific questions, about one Bruce Cameron and why he refused to act and to discipline and to look into the situation of blatant patronage of a blatant political use of an office, of a public office. And I suggest he's not doing it because it's a case of patronage. It's a person who belongs to the PC Party, and if it had happened from any other party, he would have acted on it. He didn't do it. He refused even to apologize for it. He said he doesn't condone it, but he refuses to exercise any discipline on it.

Then he was asked about one Harry Flander and asked to explain how he could carry on in this one particular instance — one instructor. One PC instructor with PC connections, one student. Nowhere else in Saskatchewan have we ever had one instructor, one student run by our institutions, even against the recommendation of the community college. Why? I suggest to you once again, patronage. This place, this department, is becoming politicized, Mr. Chairman.

Then he was asked about one Rene Archambault who, again a PC and a relative of the Premier, appointed politically, doing political work during the time of his employment, doing political work in Prince Albert-Duck Lake in the by-election. And again the minister refused to acknowledge it.

Now what I see happening here this year, Mr. Chairman, what I see happening here is a continuation of something that we saw previously. Last year this minister appointed one Gordon Dirks to run a survey — Gordon Dirks, a former member of this government. Once again, I would be able to name a hundred or 300 other people who were capable of doing the job. But why did he get it? Because it was a PC connection.

Why was Bruce Cameron allowed without discipline to operate PC stuff or of a library headquarters? Because he was a PC connection. Why is Harry Flander allowed to take one course with one person? Because he is a PC connection.

Now we've had patronage of other kinds. We've heard about George Hill and about Peter Pocklington, and Paul Schoenhals and Tim Embury, but now we've got it entering the Department of Education. And I think that's despicable, Mr. Chairman, — I think that's despicable.

Gordon Dirks, Bruce Cameron, Harry Flander, and now Rene Archambault. Now I want to tell you, Mr. Chairman, that we on this side do not stand for that. We do not condone that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — And I say that the minister has not lived up to the requirements of his office in this respect, and I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the minister should be disciplined for it. And I therefore move, seconded by the member from Regina Victoria:

That this committee condemns the Minister of Education for having politicized the education system in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. I find the motion not in order. On page 64 of the handbook, “Committees of the Whole House:”

That the practice of permitting substantive motions in Committee of the Whole or Committee of Finance be discontinued. (Adopted December 10, 1980)

Mr. Goulet: — My first question to the minister will relate, first of all, to the issue of parents and parental involvement in education. I specifically refer to the document, *Partners at School*, a handbook on how to involve Indian and Metis parents in school activities, and it's done by Saskatchewan Education in collaboration with the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) and the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association).

The issue of parental involvement in education, of course, has a long history, and I think that the development of the handbook points to that.

When I was raised in my home area, I always knew that there was a very strong feeling from the parents in regards to the issue of having a successful education for their children. And from time to time, the parents would come to school and discuss issues with the teachers and the principals in many of the schools in the North, to discuss the various issues that their children were concerned with at the school level.

And as I've travelled around through the years, there have been many issues that have been talked about by Indian and Metis parents. I specifically refer to the handbook which deals with the involvement of Indian and Metis parents, although I recognize that there is also non-Indian and Metis parents who are involved in educational process as well. And I well recognize the development of the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) system, you know, not only in the province but also in northern Saskatchewan.

The issues that parents raise, of course, are in, on the most part, those that concern the high drop-out rate, you know, the over 90 per cent drop-out rate in general throughout the province. And also the fact that although, to a certain extent, that they've gotten control of their own school system in northern Saskatchewan, that the high drop-out rate is still there. A lot of the parents will raise issues in relation to the curriculum, that in fact although a bit of improvement has been made, it still has a long ways to go in regards to the cultural heritage and also the language at the community level.

Parents have also raised the issue of the need for the improved aspect of instructional methods in the way where people . . . the children would be excited to go to school. And the other issue that parents always relate back to me is the issue of discipline procedures and the importance of, you know, their involvement in discipline

aspect of the school.

But I want to focus in on the issue of parental involvement, because it's been raised also by the Speaker in his report, referred to as the Tusa report, which looked at the very strong importance of getting parents involved, not only in discipline areas but also in areas of curriculum as well.

And when we looked at the ministers' committee, the Indian and Metis curriculum advisory committee, much the same recommendations were also made there.

When I look at the minister's special request for a report, the government report that came out last year, one of the main concerns in the government's report was the degree of parental involvement in the school system.

(1645)

So when I look at a handbook by the department called *partners in education*, I would like therefore to find clarification directly from the minister on what his position is in regards to parental involvement.

So maybe I will start out by asking him to state whether or not the handbook on *Partners at School* is indeed the policy of the department in regards to parental involvement. And could the minister let us know that?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Goulet: — Could you, Mr. Minister, summarize for us your understanding then, of the handbook. I mean, could you tell us what it entails in regards to the involvement of parents? What do you see as very important? Why do you need parental involvement? What is the summary position of this policy that you are recommending and approving?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, as I understand it, and I think the point that we should put on the record first of all, again, so clearly, as I understand, this was developed in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, and it was that it was intended to be, at least my understanding of it was that it was intended to be a helpful compendium, if you like, or a helpful resource book, relative to native education.

What has worked in some schools, it was designed to provide perhaps directions and suggestions in terms of having larger parent involvement in this area in their children's education. I think it's a worthwhile exercise and one that I was happy to see all the players in education participating in.

Mr. Goulet: — While you did mention the different people who were involved in the process, the question that I asked was: what is the general policy position of the minister in regards to this handbook? What aspects do you see as key in regards to the issue of the parental involvement? What issues would you see as very important in that whole issue of parental involvement? What would you cover in it?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — You and I, I think, would both agree the drop-out rate relative to native children is higher than we would like. And of course as part of addressing that question, we have a northern education task force established now.

The research as well has shown, when it comes to addressing the question of drop-outs, that the greater the parental involvement with the school system and with their children in the school system, the more likely you are to see that drop-out rate decrease. And so anything that we can do in conjunction with the teachers and in conjunction with the trustees in that regard, we would like to do, or we would like to encourage, and that is part and parcel of that approach.

Mr. Goulet: — There are various issues relating to the drop-out rate and parental involvement that parents do bring up from time to time. And there are issues such as improved levels of counselling, and I mentioned before the issue of curriculum materials, the issue of language development — Cree language and Dene language development — and also the issue of instructional methods, and also in discipline, discipline procedures.

Would you agree, Mr. Minister, that these are some of the major issues that would help in resolving some of the main issues of drop-out rates that you mentioned?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The book that you referred to addresses one area that's important to us — that's parental involvement relative to native education. In terms of what is being done relative to some of the other issues as well, particularly around curriculum, curriculum development, the committee is established and has published two annual reports detailing its work.

A curriculum development team has been established in the . . . (inaudible) . . . education branch. Work is proceeding in social studies, arts education, science, and teacher in-service. We have, in fact, increased numbers of developers working on Indian and Metis curriculum development, work has begun on Indian languages development booklet. We've already talked about the booklet on increased parental participation. So in the area of curriculum as well, I think you can see that it's a very busy agenda with more resources dedicated to that area as well.

Mr. Goulet: — Could I get it clear from you, Mr. Minister, as to whether or not you agree that parental involvement also includes curriculum development and also includes language development and also includes counselling. Do you believe, Mr. Minister, that it's important for the parents to be involved in the direction that each one of these issues has to take into the future?

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

Mr. Goulet: — So I take it from your comment, Mr. Minister, that you are very committed to the idea of parental involvement to deal with the language issue, with the counselling issue, with the curriculum issue, and also the discipline systems and the drop-out system with the parents. Mr. Minister, could I say very clearly then that

you are committed to these goals?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I, in fact, I might even go further than what the hon. member is suggesting. In terms of parental involvement, yes, very important relative to native education, but I would say it's important . . . I view that as important across the entire province and not just a geographical issue, if you like.

In fact I think the trustees have expressed the same views, some concern on their part as to why are so many of the positions that are filled at the local board levels are filled by acclamation and there are no elections, you know. Is this a sign or a symptoms of disinterest? I don't think they're uninterested. So I'm concerned about that issue across the entire piece, and certainly as it relates to native education.

Mr. Goulet: — So I take it, Mr. Minister, that you mean that you are more committed, therefore, to parental involvement, not only on the issues that I raise but also on the other issues as well that parents bring to the minister's attention from time to time.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Very much so.

Mr. Goulet: — In regards then to the question of parental involvement and your commitment. Right now you've mentioned, basically, one staff person in the area of languages, you know, that you will be hiring in the area of Indian language development in the province; there will be one staff person for that to cover the whole province.

Mr. Minister, the resources seem to be, you know, very limited in regards to just that one issue that parents will deal with. Do you foresee any commitment in the future for staff time from your department to deal with that issue of parental involvement; do you foresee that commitment, you know, from your staff to be able to, let's say, deploy your commitment on parental involvement. Could we see that in the future then, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, yes we do. And I guess the most immediate and visible example is the fact that we have set extra money aside for the northern education task force. We have established a task force that has a mandate, and there's the money there for them to carry out their investigation.

And as I said when I announced this, and certainly in some of the media interviews I did — I did in Prince Albert and perhaps elsewhere in the province, but certainly in Prince Albert, I recall — I didn't view this as another exercise in paralysis by analysis, but was sincerely intentioned.

And I would repeat again that I appreciate the co-operation we've had from you as an MLA who has obviously a good understanding and a keen desire to help in this area, and as well your colleague from Athabasca. And I appreciate the help that you've given us over the years, over this past year relative to the Northern Lights governance question and some of those, and I look forward to your continued co-operation, advice and input, as we work through these issues in a non-partisan sense over the next year.

Mr. Goulet: — In regards, Mr. Minister . . . you mentioned the task force. Could you outline for me the names of those people that are in the task force.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, my officials just don't have that list at this very moment, but I can certainly provide that to you within the next couple hours if that suits.

Just in response to your earlier question about, you know, resources dollars-wise and people-wise to native and northern education, I should advise you, and other members of this Assembly, that we have about six people now in the community schools branch and in the northern division. I think that's a substantive commitment, if you like, not only in terms of dollars but as well in terms of human resources.

Mr. Goulet: — Could we get . . . you should be able to get those lists of names fairly quick. Could you get them for me by seven this evening? Is that possible?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, Mr. Chairman.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.