

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Urban Affairs
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 24

Item 1 (continued)

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Prior to our dinner recess, the member from Regina North East asked for me to announce our decision on the ward system, and I should . . . I advise him this: following my consultation with SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) last week, we made certain recommendations. And the member knows and is fully aware of various committee structures that are in place and exist in government, and one or more are probably in discussion as I speak concerning our recommendations.

Hopefully, the final decision will have been made by the time we meet in this Assembly tomorrow. Whether the recommendations are altered or indeed accepted or not will dictate the content of the announcement that will follow.

The member also knows that it is against the rules of this Assembly to anticipate a Bill and debate it, and as such, I ask him now to leave this matter and proceed with Committee of Finance of the Department of Urban Affairs as we had originally agreed and anticipated this discussion would be this evening.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I was going to allow, and I still will, some of my colleagues to pursue some other questioning, but the minister has tempted me to get into this matter, again, simply because he continues to avoid answering a very important fundamental question which is important to urban municipalities in Saskatchewan.

He says a decision will be made and will be announced tomorrow, and I am glad. I asked him just before supper whether he would announce it tomorrow as he had committed it. We'll hold him to his word.

The thing is, Mr. Chairman, that the government has already made a decision. For the minister to say that no decision has been made is not correct because the government has already given notice to the two pieces of legislation which are necessary to have introduced to this House in order to make changes to the municipal electoral system.

So the minister knows what the decision has been, but he doesn't want to come forth and indicate that in the House. Fine. There's no way I can make him do that, and I just want to point out to the minister that it may be that we don't debate the Bill during Committee of Finance because the Bill isn't here. I accept that.

But we're here to debate government policy, and government policy will determine whether, in fact, the minister arbitrarily, against all of the advice that he's got

from every sector in Saskatchewan, brings in legislation to abolish the ward system from urban municipal elections. That's the issue here. And why the minister cannot come forward and give us an answer today is beyond me, other than once again he has dug in his heels even though he's knows very well that the position he took earlier is the wrong one. He's become extremely stubborn on that count and therefore will not say, so that the public will know, what his position will be.

Now he mentions that he has met with SUMA and had a discussion about the issue. I know that. I also know that after that meeting, the president of SUMA, one of the vice-presidents of SUMA, came out of that meeting and said to the media that they advised the minister that he should not proceed with what he had announced, and that is, the abolition of the ward system.

I simply want to ask the minister this, this question: did you listen to the president of SUMA and are you going to take his advice?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Chairman, certainly I listen to SUMA, as I always do, and if and when the announcement concerning the ward system is made, I will be prepared at that time to debate it fully.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Okay, then. That's obviously . . . The minister refuses to answer so I won't pursue it for now, but I will leave this in reserve — I want to debate with the minister all of the merits of the ward system.

I have here a document presented to the city council of Regina at which time I think it's very well stated — it's a speech in itself — why the minister is wrong and why the cities of Regina and Saskatoon and Weyburn and Estevan and Prince Albert and Melville and Yorkton have all said to the minister that he should not interfere with the democratic rights of the people of those urban communities to determine what their municipal electoral system ought to be. I'm quite prepared to debate that when ever the time is right.

I have here letters written to the minister, many of them from a number of municipalities, telling him that he's wrong, and as the newspaper story in the Star-Phoenix of May 17 says, that he should stop flogging the dead horse.

Well I hope tomorrow the minister will be able to stand up in this House, or wherever he's going to make this announcement, and make it clear to the public of Saskatchewan that he's no longer going to flog the dead horse. I'm sure that there will be an awful lot of people out there who will be relieved and will be appreciative of him if he were to shore up his courage and make that kind of decision, in spite of his desire to insert Conservative political party politics into the electoral system, and in order to try to elect some of his friends to municipal politics, and take away a very good system in which there is a high level of public participation. I guess we'll just have to wait until tomorrow though.

I have some other colleagues of mine who want to pursue some questions with the minister at this time, and I shall bow to them for awhile and come back to this.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to address some questions to the minister in regard to funding for the Wakamow Valley Authority, which falls under his jurisdiction, and not only the level of that funding, but the fairness of that funding.

And I know, Mr. Minister, we currently have a Bill before this legislature which will freeze the funding to the Wakamow Valley Authority, and I know in committee we'll have a chance to discuss these issues again, but I want to raise them with you tonight.

I want to ask very simply, Mr. Minister, why you consider it to be important to fund the Wakamow Valley Authority at something less than all of the other like authorities in the province of Saskatchewan? You can correct me if I'm wrong, Mr. Minister, but following your 20 per cent across the board cut in funding to the valley authorities in 1983, my understanding now is that the Meewasin authority in Saskatoon is funded at a level of 4 mills; the Wascana Authority here in Regina at a level of 4 mills; the Chinook Authority in Swift Current at a level of 1.85 mills; and Wakamow in Moose Jaw at a level of 1.6 mills.

So, Mr. Minister, I would ask you why you think the Wakamow Valley Authority deserves less per capita funding than the other valley authorities in the province?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I guess about the only thing that I can tell you is that the original funding formula was established by the NDP with Wakamow. So why don't you ask your new leader why he set it up the way he did? He was part of it; we weren't. That's number one.

Number two: trying to help Wakamow Authority as we do — I've met with them on several occasions, and we recognize the terrific job that Wakamow in particular does with volunteers and with fund raising and the like — we, too, then try to get them to qualify for other programs of government. And we've been successful in that regard as it relates to getting them to use the New Careers to help them with some of those projects.

If you start adding some of those programs into it, it gets their level of funding pretty near on a par, or higher than the others.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, on your first point, you indicate that the funding was established in 1981 under a New Democratic Party government — you're absolutely right. It was under a New Democratic Party government that the Wakamow Valley Authority was established to the delight of the Moose Jaw people. The funding was established at 2 mills, initially, for the developmental stage, and you know well that that was intended for the developmental stage, and that once the valley authority was operational, that funding level would be increased. That was the intention, and you know that, Mr. Minister.

Now you've had seven years to do something about it, so let's not be blaming it on something that happened in 1981. You've had seven years to bring Wakamow's funding more in line with the other valley authorities. You've not done that. In fact you applied to Wakamow

the 20 per cent across-the-board cut as you did to every other valley authority.

I want you to answer the question, Mr. Minister: why you consider it to be fair that Wakamow should be funded significantly differently than the other like valley authorities in the province.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, for that member to tell me that I should be aware of NDP intention, I'm sorry, but I can't take that seriously. You know, why didn't the NDP have it in line as the first place, in what the question is. Why didn't they set it up properly in the first place? And if it was an intention, why didn't they set it up for more than an intention? So that's boloney.

As far as the actual budget is concerned, the funding for it right now, and forgetting about the intention and all the rest of it, the funding to it now has been across the board, equally applied to all the urban parks, Wakamow included, with the exception that we try to do a little bit extra for Wakamow as it relates to qualifying them for other government programs.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I'm not hearing an answer to my question. If you are the minister responsible — I think that's true, Mr. Minister — why do you consider that Wakamow should have a lower per capita funding base than the other valley authorities, including Chinook in Swift Current? Why should that be, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I think it's fair to say that if our government found ourself in the position to restructure the funding formula, we would probably do that regardless of what your intent was. Because I don't believe what you intent was, or you would have protected it in some other manner. So what we're doing now is going along at the best we can, keeping in mind the entire government budget.

I believe that we have a real good working relationship with Wakamow; we will continue to have that. And as soon as the government's fiscal situation improves that we can deal with it and, in fact, enter new negotiations with Wakamow, we would like to do that.

Mr. Calvert: — Well then, Mr. Minister, will you answer why it is then that the Chinook, the Chinook Parkway in Swift Current, which was established by your government, was established at a higher funding, per capita funding rate? Why did you find it important to have Chinook have a higher level than Wakamow? It's 1.85, I understand now, as opposed to Wakamow's 1.6. What's the difference?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, the member's right. But when we consult with people — as is our habit on this side of the House — and negotiate a deal with them — that happens to be the deal that was negotiated — and so we followed through with it and gave them that funding on that basis.

As I said, we didn't negotiate the deal; you did with Wakamow. And you can stand up here and gloriously say, oh yeah, but our intent was . . . We put our money

where our mouth is. We talked to them; we listened; we negotiated, and we established the funding formula on that basis. Don't blame your problems on us.

(1915)

But having said that, we will continue to work with Wakamow as we have in the past. They understand our situation. They're not bellyaching and crying and complaining. They think that we've been pretty fair and reasonable under the circumstances, and they know that one day they will have the opportunity to come with us and negotiate a new situation for them that they'll just be pleased with, that they couldn't arrive at with the NDP.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, every time you write a budget, you renegotiate. Now it's not fixed in stone, the funding, that's clear. In 1983 you cut it 20 per cent. Now that means that in this year you could have raised it 20 per cent. Now let's not try and suggest that what was established in 1981 as a developmental base of funding was intended to last for ever and ever.

You say that Moose Jaw people and Wakamow people have not lobbied you for some change in this, that somehow we're all very satisfied with it. Well let me quote you from a letter that was widely distributed in Moose Jaw from the then board chairman of the Wakamow Valley Authority. He says:

Among the existing urban park authorities, Wakamow has always received the lowest tax base support. We have tried in the past to convince the province to at least return to its original funding base and preferably to match the city of Moose Jaw's contribution. Simply stated, we have not been successful.

Mr. Minister, you know full well that you've been lobbied by the Wakamow board and Moose Jaw people, individuals and groups, to at least restore the funding to the original 2 mills. You've not done that.

Mr. Minister, would you consider, if you're not going to change the funding level, would you consider the arrangement that you've made with the city of Swift Current? Whereas in Moose Jaw we face a 40-60 split — 40 from the province, 60 locally — in Swift Current you've gone on a 50-50 — 50 from the province, 50 from the city. Would you at least consider then matching the city of Moose Jaw's contribution?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, renegotiation of a deal with Wakamow is not the point of debate tonight. They know the situation. I've met with them. They know that we're going to be responsive. They know that we're prepared to enter renegotiations at a time that we can afford it. Presently, and they understand it and they think it's fair, all of the urban park budgets are dealt with unilaterally. And if one gets more, the other will get more. If one's cut back, the other one is cut back. They understand that; they recognize it; they're prepared to deal with that. They're still mad at you guys for getting the short end of the stick originally.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, that you persist in

suggesting that the problem faced today is somehow related to the developmental funding that was started in 1981 is just ridiculous. You know that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — You have a responsibility to the Wakamow Valley Authority and to the three other authorities in this province and I want to know why Wakamow has been singled out for this unfair treatment, because that's what it is.

Since 1983 you started the Chinook. You started it. You started it at a better funding level than you're prepared to give to Wakamow. I want to know why Wakamow receives this unfair kind of treatment from you and your government.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, it wasn't us that singled out the unfair treatments, to quote the member. It was your government of the day, the NDP government, that singled out the so-called unfair treatment to Wakamow Valley. So don't try to saddle my horse in some saddle that I don't want to wear. I'm wearing enough saddles right now.

So that when you talk about renegotiation, that's one thing. When you're talking about budgets, that's another. And I speak very often with the members of Wakamow. They know exactly what the situation is. They know how they received unfair treatment at the outset from the NDP, in so far as they got a little and a promise, and the promise never did materialize. So now they recognize what the situation is. They're prepared to wait, and as soon as our fiscal plan improves, we'll be in a situation to renegotiate with them.

But in the meantime, don't think for a moment that they're not pleased as all get out when we can get them to qualify for an additional program through government that they take advantage of. And they're just tickled when we're able to put a deal like that together. And you, being a member from Moose Jaw, should know that better than anybody. I don't hear any complaints about the Wakamow funding when I walk the streets of Moose Jaw and when I visit with my friends and all the rest of it. They're happy with what's going on over there.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister; one, I am sure, without a word of a lie, that I speak to those folks involved on the Wakamow board much more frequently than you do.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Two, I am certain that I speak to people on the streets in Moose Jaw much more frequently than you do. So trust me, Mr. Minister, when I tell you that Moose Jaw people are not happy with this inequity in funding that has gone on.

Now you, yourself, a few minutes ago . . . Let's take your position, all right? The funding at the beginning was unfair. You just said that. It is within your power, I assume, to change that unfairness. What I'm asking you tonight is, why will you not change it, then? And if we're going to wait — if we're going to wait for your

government to somehow become fiscally responsible, we'll be waiting a long time, Mr. Minister. So will you commit to addressing this inequity in the funding to Wakamow?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, we're finally getting somewhere tonight in this Committee of Finance in so far as the member admitted that at the outset there was unfair funding — for that, congratulate you.

Now having said that, we are trying to deal with this matter of unfair funding as best we can. Wakamow authority knows that and as soon as we're in the position to renegotiate their agreement we will. They know that. Until then they're treated as all the rest of the urban parks in the province are treated. They're satisfied with that. Coupled with the fact that wherever possible they can implement another government program, they are able to do that. So I think that you're flogging a dead horse. And they understand exactly where we're coming from.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, let me reiterate. In 1981, Wakamow Valley was founded by a New Democratic Party government. The funding rate was established at 2 city mills. The intention was, and it's widely known and widely recognized, that once operational that funding level would be increased.

In 1983 your government came along — and those weren't such tough years yet, Mr. Minister. Remember, oil prices were world high. You hadn't yet run up the huge deficit. Times weren't so tough in 1983 — across the board 20 per cent cut. At that time your government said, now when conditions improve we'll readdress the funding — when conditions improve. It's gone on and on and on. Every year you say to Wakamow, you say to the people of Moose Jaw, well when conditions get better, we'll look at this. The city of Moose Jaw has maintained their share of 2 mills. If you're not going to change your 1.6, would you then at least match dollar for dollar the city of Moose Jaw contribution? Would you go to a 50-50? Would you change that arrangement?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, if I'm going to renegotiate a new agreement, it's certainly not going to be with him, because I can tell what their intentions are, you know. They do one thing and say another. And oh yes, but we're going to do this; we're going to do this. We've lived with your intentions and they understand that. They heard about all of your intentions. So as a result, when the time comes for us to renegotiate, we will be able to renegotiate that.

And if the member from Saskatoon Nutana has anything to say, instead of yipping and interrupting the conversation, just stand up and say something. But in the meantime, just be good enough to sit there and stay quiet for a minute.

I'm talking to the member from Moose Jaw who's concerned with the funding level at Wakamow. If you've got something to ask about Meewasin or anything, stand up and ask it. Don't just yip from your chair.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I'm not sure what you had for supper, but something seems to have upset you

tonight.

Mr. Minister, you've spoken about other programs that your government may be willing to avail to Wakamow. You have an interest in the Wakamow Valley Authority. What programs are you speaking about for this funding year, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, we're always in consultation with the urban park authorities, as we are with Wakamow. And in the event that we're able to make a proposition with them and something that they can qualify for in another government agency, we will do that and they will be notified and they'll just be tickled.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I don't want to belabour this because I can see we're not going to move very far, and I know some of my colleagues have other concerns about other valley authorities and many other issues under your jurisdiction.

Let me just emphasize with you that I speak on behalf of many Moose Jaw people when they see that the Wakamow Valley Authority, which we very much appreciate, which is one of the most exciting developments to happen in our community in the last number of years, which holds great potential for our city . . . Mr. Minister, may I urge you, if you won't do it this year, to next year look at addressing the unfairness in funding to the Wakamow Valley Authority. Would you at least give us a commitment that you'll be willing to look at it next year and take some positive steps instead of just coming to this House year after year after year and saying, well when times get better, we'll look at it.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, if and when we have the opportunity to renegotiate a different situation with Wakamow Valley, we will do that, and it certainly won't be any credit to you.

Mr. Shillington: — The minister, who is so long on charm and diplomacy this evening . . . Mr. Minister, I would like to return to the subject of the Wascana Centre, something we discussed the other night.

Mr. Minister, you made the suggestion that the situation as I described it was not accurate. Just for your benefit, I want to review what has happened in the Wascana Centre. In the Wascana Centre, Mr. Minister, I may say that from your own estimates, you are spending less now than you were . . . than was budgeted for that development in 1981-82 when we left office.

Mr. Minister, the Wascana Act itself sets out the level of funding, and has set out the level of funding. As the member from Moose Jaw correctly pointed out, it was 4 mills. You then reduced it, reduced the level of funding, in 1985. You're now spending just a mill and a half, the equivalent of a mill and a half. Bill 23, which we dealt with the other day, froze the level of funding for last year and this year.

Mr. Minister, since 1982, since you took office, the CPI (consumer price index), cost of living, consumer price index, has gone from 107 to 139.5. That's a 30 per cent increase. Your spending, level of spending in this

government, Mr. Minister, has increased by 50 per cent. It's gone from 2.4 billion to 3.6 billion. During that period of time, Mr. Minister, the level of funding at the Wascana Centre has actually gone down.

Mr. Minister, if you refer to the estimates for the department of government services in that year, you'll find that there was budgeted in '81-82, \$893,330,100. You're actually spending less now that you were when you took office. This at a time, Mr. Minister, when cost of living has gone up by 30 per cent, the level of government spending has gone up by 50 per cent.

Mr. Minister, the underfunding in the Wascana Centre is beginning to show. Mr. Minister, this centre was for many years a centre of . . . source of great pride to the people in the city of Regina and, as the member from Regina North East pointed out, to people from around the province a place of great beauty.

Mr. Minister, it's just one more, one more success story which has degenerated under this government. This place, Mr. Minister, is simply not in the condition it once was.

In some parts of Wascana Centre, the weeds are a disgrace. Mr. Minister, I refer in particular to the area in front of the Legislative Building and between the walk and the lake. The area got so badly infested with weeds last year that it was all torn up. That, Mr. Minister, is just simply neglect.

Mr. Minister, there are areas of this Wascana Centre, which used to be as green as a carpet, which are now brown. I know the minister is going to inform me the one thing he may know, that that is a drought. I recognize that, Mr. Minister, but there have been dry periods before and this centre has never got into the condition that it is.

(1930)

Mr. Minister, this is not a large sum of money. It would not have taken a great sum of money to keep this Wascana Centre in the condition it was. You haven't done it. You have cut funding, cut funding very severely, and it's showing. The place has deteriorated. It is either brown from lack of care, or green from being infested with weeds. I don't mean to overdo it. It is still an area that is appreciated by the people from Regina and the people of Saskatchewan but it has deteriorated rather badly. Just one reason for it, Mr. Minister, is because you won't pay for its upkeep.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, if you won't redress this problem, provide this centre with the sort of funding that it needs to maintain it in the first class condition which it once was. The additional funding, Mr. Minister, wouldn't produce a noticeable dent in the government's advertising budget. In fact that additional funding that's needed wouldn't produce a noticeable dent in the cost of flying ministers from one end of this globe to the other. Mr. Minister . . .

An Hon. Member: — Not me.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, the Minister of Urban Affairs

says he never left his backyard. Well, Mr. Minister, if you take a drive through the Wascana Centre, I think you would see what I mean if you are honest with yourself. This place, Mr. Minister, needs additional funding if it's going to be maintained in the condition that it once was. I ask you: will you not increase the funding so that this place can be restored to the place of great beauty it once was?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I don't know if I should get upset with the member from Regina Centre on behalf of his constituents, and on behalf of all the tourists, the people of this city, and indeed the people of the province, for how he . . . and for that matter, the employees of Wascana Centre. You know very, very little about the operation of the Wascana Centre, and when you make outrageous statements that you have just made, you should be ashamed of yourself and offer an apology to the Wascana Centre Authority.

I can tell you this, and this is actual fact, so if in your mind — and I believe that's where it is — you see deterioration, it is in your mind and your mind only, or else you are faulting the employees that work so hard in trying to maintain that landscaping and the irrigated areas of this Legislative Building and other areas of the centre.

Current practice, landscape maintenance standards which have not been changed since the centre began 25 years ago, have never been changed in 25 years — the same standards. I can read you the technical data that I have been supplied with by the authority as to how that relates in the applications of the fertilizers and the mowing and the watering and the weed and the chemical and all the rest of that stuff. And, I suppose, offer an apology in some areas, rightfully so because this year the building lights work will have certainly a short-term effect on irrigation of the lawns in front of this legislature because as those lights are installed, the irrigation system must be kept off. So as a result, and coupled with the drought, it may very well be that a watering was missed. But recent improvements that have been done, that have absolutely nothing to do with the funding.

The funding was done by the three levels, the three partners, and agreed to. And I can show you and tell you what areas we have cut back on and are saving the dollars on, and those are basically undeveloped areas that are still waiting in various stages of development that don't have irrigation systems, and as a result of the drought, probably won't need any cutting this year in any event, but are still maintained to the degree that they can be maintained with regard to noxious weeds and all the rest of it.

But Wascana Centre Authority has done turf renovations along Lakeshore Drive last year. That might be the brown grass that you saw. Maybe the turf that was replaced, 4,200 square yards of it, didn't catch. Don't fault the employees that laboured very hard to put that down.

Over 400 trees planted in the legislative area last summer; perennial flower-beds replaced on the east side and on the west side. I mean, you've see it if you walk around this building. And to stand here and to slam those workers for Wascana Centre Authority, that aren't

employed by government, that belong to a third-party independent contractor, I think you should be ashamed of yourself.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, I don't think the employees of the Wascana Centre will believe for a moment that I was faulting them. Mr. Minister, if that's the best defence you can offer, I think I can simply rest my case and say that the allegation's been admitted.

Mr. Minister, back in another era, when governments used to disclose information rather than try to conceal it, the budget for the Wascana Centre grounds maintenance was set out. Of course, it no longer appears anywhere in the estimates and we simply have to take your word for it, Mr. Minister. And frankly, I don't believe you. I am not going to express myself any further than that. Just suffice it to say that I just don't believe you.

Mr. Minister, the grounds are simply not in the condition that they once were. Now for you to stand here and say that they are in the same . . . that exactly the same maintenance and care takes place, I just simply don't believe it. I just simply don't believe it, Mr. Minister.

I walk through these grounds several times a week, Mr. Minister. I have an opportunity to observe it. I ask the minister: when was the last time you walked around the lake? Because I do it several time a week as part of a regular exercise program, I see it and I have seen those grounds deteriorate, and deteriorate rather badly. There's no question, Mr. Minister, but what it's underfunding.

As I say, I gave you the figures on the statutory grant. I can't of course, give you the direct figures on maintenance because you no longer will give us the facts. You just want us to take your word for it.

Mr. Minister, it ought to be apparent from the results of my colleague in Regina Elphinstone and the results of my other colleague from Saskatoon Eastview, the public in Saskatchewan are tired of this approach of you saying, I'm not going to give you the facts but just trust me. They don't trust you. They do not trust you in urban Saskatchewan and I quite frankly think that they trust you a lot less in rural Saskatchewan as well. So don't stand up, Mr. Minister, and say, we're doing exactly what we did, trust us. I don't trust you and neither does anyone else.

Mr. Minister, the figure for the grounds maintenance which was set out, as I say, subvote 18 in the 1983 *Estimates*; the figure for '81-82 was \$1,608,460. I ask you, Mr. Minister, if you have the figure for the maintenance, if you have the equivalent figures for 1988.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, you don't have to trust me. The member from Regina Centre doesn't have to trust me at all. This is fact: I will have a letter that I would sure like to get published from the Wascana Centre Authority on exactly those standards and how they have been maintained, because it's not me misleading the public on this one, my friend. I can tell you that that is fact — that maintenance standards have not changed one iota.

And it's a figment of your imagination or else a degrading slam to the employees of the Wascana Centre when you

emphatically state that you see deterioration on the grounds. And if there are any, it has nothing to do with the funding or the maintenance schedule of that maintenance. So you're way off base there.

As I mentioned before, and I can't give you that figure that you asked because it's not in my estimates, but rather in the government property management Crown that takes care of the lands and that has the deal with the Wascana Centre Authority, who act as an independent third-party contractor to them. And when they set out the fact of their budget and they're going to spend this 8 or \$900,000 — whatever that figure is — they agree with the authority as to what areas of land will be maintained, so that as a result if they either apply it to one of several areas. They can do it with regard to snow removal; they can do it with regard to undeveloped areas of the centre, or whatever. Not what you stand and try to get the people of Regina Centre and others to believe.

And you're unbelievable because what I state is fact and it's not a matter of trust. And I can establish that fact and you can't — other than slam the workers for doing a poor job. That's your only statement, and I won't do that because they are doing a good job and they are living up to the same standards that have been in existence and have never changed. So you're off base.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm giving you facts. I'm giving you facts. I'm saying that the statutory grant has actually decreased by about 1 per cent. I am saying that you no longer give us the figure for maintenance. Mr. Minister. . . and your comment, by the way, that the level of funding is established independent of government, that brings me to my second complaint about the way the Wascana Centre has developed over the years which is not directly related to maintenance, although it is indirectly.

Mr. Minister, for many years . . . the member from Moose Jaw centre was right. For many years the level of funding in the Wascana Centre was set at 4 mills and thus governments had the . . . the two levels of government and the university paid their share. It was kept out of the political realm and the grounds showed it. They were kept up in good shape.

You people took over. You couldn't leave anything alone. You immediately changed the funding system to suit yourself. In 1984 or '85 session, I'm not sure which, you introduced legislation which arbitrarily changed the level of funding and arbitrarily reduced it. You said at that time, Mr. Minister, that it was a temporary thing. Well here we are four budgets later and it's still being kept at that artificially low level.

So, Mr. Minister, my second complaint with respect to the Wascana Centre is that this centre, and the level of funding used to be beyond political debate, and that was true for 25 years. You people came along; you changed it. Now this government arbitrarily sets the level of funding. You do it by legislation, Mr. Minister, and the results out on the grounds show it.

I know the minister is going to get back up and pretend that I have somehow or other defamed the workers. I don't think you believe that, Mr. Minister, and if you do,

you're all alone. Nobody else does, neither your colleagues nor the workers nor the public of Saskatchewan. I am not, of course, talking about the job the workers are doing. I'm talking about the job you're doing in providing this centre with adequate funds.

I say again, Mr. Minister, that CPI (consumer price index) has gone up by 30 per cent, the level of expenditure by this government has gone up by 50 per cent since you've taken office, and the funding in the Wascana Centre appears to have dropped and it's starting to show.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, if you'd leave aside the area that you patently refuse to deal with anyway — that's the level of funding. I want to deal in facts; you simply want to give me inflamed rhetoric. Leave that aside, Mr. Minister, and address yourself to the system which has developed with respect to the funding, whereby this government arbitrarily sets the level of funding of their own volition.

Mr. Minister, you have brought the Wascana Centre back into the realm of public debate. And I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that if you don't revert to the system we had, this centre is going to go on deteriorating until you people finally run out of time and have to call an election and another government comes in which is prepared to do a more competent job.

(1945)

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't want belabour this, and I suppose we could argue on it all night. But first of all again, he doesn't know where to look. And it's, I think, \$1.9 million — not in my department, never has been in my department — and it's 1.9 million. You mentioned a figure of 800,000. I don't know where you got that from. It's 1.9 million, I believe, or 1.6.

In any event, ours that we show in our department is basically for statutory funding. Although it includes a portion of maintenance that is administered equally between the three parties, the bulk of it is set aside — the bulk of the statutory funding is set aside for developmental purposes.

And right now we are in the throes of doing a new developmental plan for the Wascana Centre Authority; you might have seen the advertising. Here again we're going out for public input — first time ever in 25 years. That's never occurred before. We believe in outside consultation, and that's occurring. So we're getting input from all over.

We're not behind on our developmental stages, and it's proceeding, and the plans are there, and there's nothing being delayed. And in spite of that, the last two years — compliments to all of the management and staff at the Wascana Centre Authority — they have a surplus of funds and have had for the last two years.

So, you know, you're arguing something that . . . You're really not familiar with the internal workings of how the Wascana Centre Authority operates, and the relationship that I have with it and as chairman of that authority. And as far as the maintenance part is concerned, it never was in Urban Affairs; it's not part of our funding. It appears in

another line, and it's quite a bit more than what you had said earlier in the day.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, you patently have the figure. What is it? What is the figure for the maintenance of the Wascana Centre. You patently have the figure; you just gave it to me in round terms.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I'm just going by memory now, and I'd have to look. I'd have to get my . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm sorry that the members laugh at me, but my mind is just not capable of assuming all these figures, and you want me to be accurate. And I'm trying to be accurate, but I believe that the government contracts with Wascana Centre Authority to do certain maintenance on government grounds, and it's in the area of 1.6 or \$1.9 million, and it's somewhere in there.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, I believe it's 1.6. That's exactly what was budgeted in 1982. I rest my case, Mr. Minister. You are spending almost precisely this amount now on maintenance that you spent in 1982.

The figure in 1982 — incidentally, I have it before me — was \$1,608,460. Mr. Minister, I believe that's still the figure today. You are spending no more on maintenance now than you were in 1982. Inflation has eroded the value of a dollar by 30 per cent, Mr. Minister, and I suggest to you that you are . . . Well if the minister can find within the current *Estimates* an equivalent figure for maintenance, I'd appreciate seeing it.

An Hon. Member: — I found it.

Mr. Shillington: — All right. I'll sit down and let you give it to me.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Thank you. I'd like to thank the member from Regina Centre, because I don't want him to inadvertently dig himself into a hole that he can't get out of. But it's in Finance; it's on page 41, and it's subvote 15, and it's slightly over \$1.9 million — a significant increase from the 1.6 of 1982 that you were talking about. And it's for maintenance of grounds.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, that's approximately a 13 per cent increase. Mr. Minister, if that's accurate and it appears to, that is a 13 per cent increase during a period of time that inflation has decreased the value of the dollar by 30 per cent. As someone behind me points out, it's approximately 1 to 1.5 percentage points a year. It hasn't kept pace with inflation, Mr. Minister, and I rest my case that you have not adequately funded the Wascana Centre — that appears from your own figures. One or one and a half percentage points per year will . . . does not keep pace with inflation. The Wascana Centre shows it.

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Minister, I would like to ask you a couple of questions in relation to the communities. First of all, just some basic questions in regards to The Northern Municipalities Act. How many communities are being served by The Northern Municipalities Act?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I understand, Mr. Chairman, that there are 36 communities.

Mr. Goulet: — Out of those 36 communities, how many of the communities have a sewer and water system?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Now, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to tell the member from Cumberland that we don't have an exact figure but it's half — either a couple of under or a couple of over half. The water and sewer is primarily a water Crown corporation responsibility, as he knows.

Mr. Goulet: — Yes, I recognize that it comes through water corporation. I know that you've been visiting the northern communities in SUMA and so I just wanted to put it on the record that you knew about the situations about sewer and water systems.

What about the area of . . . Out of those 36 communities, how many have a community hall and also a fire hall and fire trucks?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, the member is asking some questions of an exacting nature that it's difficult for me, as much as I'd like to give exact numbers that I can't. I would guess, again, that about half of the communities would have a fire truck of one type or another.

Regarding community halls, again the majority would have a community hall of one fashion or another that would be combined with their town hall requirements or the community hall or indeed maybe perhaps a community hall and fire hall combination. They use all of those facilities as best they can to get them through their needs.

Mr. Goulet: — So in regards to the information you've given me, Mr. Minister, only about half or a little over half of the communities have basic services in the area of sewer and water, and also in the area of fire hall and fire trucks.

Mr. Minister, shifting off into another area. This past year there was transfer of Crown land to the municipalities within the radius of the communities or municipalities. For a long time now . . . And you've heard it probably every year, that there was resource development occurring close by the communities. And we know that, whether it's the forestry operations beside Pinehouse or other communities and so on. The communities wanted to extend their boundaries so that, in fact, they could get part of the revenue base that was going to the corporations that were developing — let's say, as a example, a forestry base.

I was wondering whether or not the minister is intending to deal with this particular issue in the future with the northern municipalities.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, the member brings up a question that, in my frequent visits to my northern communities, is quite a commonplace question. I'll give him the same response that indeed I give to the mayors and alderman of my northern communities, and that is that the forest management licence agreements are not my responsibility, and as a result, I can't respond for the minister in charge.

Regarding the boundaries and the Crown lands within

their boundaries, yes, I can respond to that. We have been working with the communities for a long time. They have their boundaries established. And I have told them, and we are now in the process of transferring all vacant Crown land within their boundaries indeed to the community. And they're all pretty excited about that because now, as a result of them having access to those lands, they will have lands that they can set aside for development areas of residential or even of a commercial nature should the occasion arise. And they're very excited about having those lands transferred. So we're just in the middle of that transition phase right now.

Mr. Goulet: — How many of those communities are getting how much Crown land? Which communities are getting what amount of Crown land?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I'll expand a little further on my last answer. All communities with their existing boundaries now will be having transferred to them all vacant Crown lands. Because all of the surveys on those are not yet complete, we are not in a position to give you a total acreage involvement except to say that this could be calculated roughly, I guess.

If you were to measure all of the boundary sizes of each community and apply an average, I guess, you could get some kind of a figure that way, but then you'd have to recognize that the lands would still have to be vacant lands and so there'd be some allowances for that.

I suppose as this legal process and survey process continues, then we'll be in a point to determine the total amount of land that has been transferred.

Mr. Goulet: — Well we've been using approximations this evening because you didn't have the information at hand. Approximately how many communities does that entail?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Once we get through the legal process, all of the communities will benefit.

Mr. Goulet: — In regards to the . . . Can you get me an approximation then on the amount of acreage that might entail on the few that you know already?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — You, know, Mr. Chairman, we don't have that information here, and if you're testing my memory, I guess I'd have to go back to when the announcement was made. And we had a meeting in La Ronge at which most of the communities along the east side, certainly, were represented. And we had visual aids that we were using to show approximate acreages as best we could figure them out.

(2000)

And it would be in the thousands of acres, but that would be about the best accurate description that I could give you right now, because my mind is so fuzzy on it. It might be six or 7,000 acres in total. Somewhere . . . You know, it's not like a 100,000 acres or anything of that magnitude but somewhere in that smaller area.

Mr. Goulet: — Is the minister prepared to forward me that

information, then, as soon as he gets all the specific information into those areas?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I don't have any trouble supplying that to you at all, because it's a far different issue than land entitlement and all the rest that's going on with the federal government. This is just a straight northern municipal situation, dealing with the boundaries of the communities and the lands therein, and it was well accepted and our people in the North are very excited about it.

And I certainly don't mind keeping you informed to the best of my ability as time goes by. We might even have some preliminary information that we could send you, of boundaries of existing municipalities, that we could forward to you that would at least outline to you where the boundary is. And the lands therein would be transferred, but keep in mind that not necessarily 100 per cent, because they have to be vacant or unoccupied or whatever lands. Those would be transferred. But it would give you some idea of the total size of the area that we're prepared to transfer these Crown lands to.

Mr. Goulet: — One of the issues that's more exciting for the people is a possibility still of the expansion of boundaries. And while I know that the forestry aspect is outside of your jurisdiction, what is within your jurisdiction is the expansion of boundaries, you know, at the community level.

What can you say at this time in regards to the possibilities of expanding, you know, the boundaries outward from the community level?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, as I explained to the communities when I was there and they asked that question, as well, along with the expansion of the boundaries comes the legal responsibility of maintaining those. So that means all kinds of things. That means serviceability; that means possible roadways; it certainly means fire-fighting and the like, so that if they wanted to expand their boundaries to an area — you know, using any community that you choose, to an area 20 miles by 20 miles — they would then have to assume the responsibility for that area, and whether or not they could deliver and still stay a viable community would be questionable.

They understand that, and I think what they're more concerned now with, rather than expanding their boundaries, is completing this initial situation of getting all the land within their boundaries, which is something that they've never had before, and to give them a land base with which to work. That's what they're looking forward to receiving now. I think that their discussions of expanding their boundaries have come to an end. I believe that they have concerns and are questioning the FMLA (forestry management licensing agreements) agreements, and that's fair game. But I don't believe that it entails their boundary sites.

Mr. Goulet: — Getting now to the overall operating grants. Last year the operating grant was about 5.2, and this year is was again 5.2, which was increased with your special meeting to 5.6 million in La Ronge, when you met with the municipalities. So there was about a \$400,000

increase. The question is, exactly where did the slightly over \$400,000 come from?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — That increase comes from the northern revenue sharing trust account and it's not a budgetary item so we took that increase from there to provide to the communities. So that with the new formula that's in place, we were able to provide a zero safety net for the communities. In other words, in spite of the fact that the formula might dictate a lesser revenue sharing, we have maintained a zero base for them so no community will be allowed to go below last year's revenue sharing and in the meantime those communities that grew and expanded will be able to get their typical increases with affecting any of the other communities.

Mr. Goulet: — So in other words there was really no increase in the overall budget but was actually only taken out from the northern revenue trust account then.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well they're certainly going to receive that money but it's not a budgetary item because we deal with the northern revenue trust account in a different fashion and as a result, that money is accumulating there for us to be able to use that for this special kind of a purpose.

Mr. Goulet: — Where does money for the northern revenue trust come from?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — The revenues basically come from the property taxes, leases, permits, and the sale of Crown land, so that as that money goes in there we keep it in trust for these purposes.

That's also where another non-budgetary item appears and as you know I was able to announce a new capital program for the North and that won't appear in the book either because that also comes from the same fund.

Mr. Goulet: — In other words, the money that was increased was definitely not from the provincial budget then, and it was just money that has been revolving in the North, you know, from the collection of leases and from the leases, for example, that trappers pay into, and also the assessments and the taxation systems from the municipalities. That's where the revenue comes from, then.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well you're not quite right because it is like provincial money that goes in there. Because it's tax dollars generated from outside of those boundaries, of the boundaries of the local communities up there, and the Crown lands and the Crown land sales and the like, which is basically provincial funding that, rather than going into the Consolidated Fund, we've set up the northern revenue sharing trust account. And it's kept and maintained there so that we can continue to build on that, as we are, and be able to supply, you know, an endless source of funding, we hope, if it's maintained and not spent. And that's what our attitude is so that the communities of the North will always have a very stable source of income as a result of the interest that is generated from that trust account.

Mr. Goulet: — When there is an increase in the amount

of money from the trust account, is there a corresponding decrease in the amount going to the operating grants? In the long run, do you see that happening?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — No, I don't believe so because that trust account continues to grow. And as the outside taxes come in and are put in there, and as the Crown land is sold and the like, and all those moneys accumulate there, what we would like to see is a little bit of a nest-egg, if you like to call it that, that we can sit there and deposit.

We might have some long-term plans for the communities in that regard a well, but in any event, if it's entrusted as it is to sit there and grow, we would be able to fund the communities from the interest of that fund which would give them a stable base on and on and on if nobody ever spent, you know, if the government of the day didn't take and deplete the funds of that trust account agreement.

Mr. Goulet: — After the meeting that was held in La Ronge, a lot of the people were waiting, of course, for the capital grants announcement. But a lot of the people were saying that the money that's being revolved around, you know, comes a lot from the community level, outside the community level in regards to the leases, and so on.

Now a lot of them were saying that the revenue base, let's say from the mine and from the forestry, is not accessible to the same rates of profit that the large-scale corporations make. As I talked, people talked about the fact that — well even for the record — SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) makes \$60 million this year. And there's about \$700 million taken out from northern Saskatchewan.

And what the municipalities were saying — and the same holds true in regards to education — but rural municipalities are saying that if there is a rise in the area of profitability and the exploitation of resources in the North, there should be a corresponding rise in the level to build the infrastructure on the community level so that the sewer and water systems and everything like that, that are not half there, and also in regards to the fact that half the places don't have fire trucks and so on, and the fact that you can build a better community infrastructure could be utilized. What can the minister, you know, say in regards to the hopes of the people in northern Saskatchewan in that particular regard?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I suppose that all I can tell the member is that there there's two accounts up there, one that I'm familiar with from my prior portfolio. That's the northern revolving account. That's the one that the communities could have the opportunity of getting involved in.

But the northern trust account has no community money in it. The money from that comes from the taxes that are collected from the mines, comes from the other taxes that are collected from outside of the boundaries, and as a result of that, overall, there are an awful lot more dollars per capita spent on our northern communities — a lot more dollars, both in the area of revenue sharing per capita and in the area of capital per capita, than in the South.

So what you're getting into is the old discussion up there of the royalties from the mines and the tree leases and all the rest of it. Well that's Consolidated Fund money the same way as in the South we have oil revenues and we have potash revenues, and that's distributed provincially, as is the other money distributed provincially.

And I don't think that it's fair to say, or to expect to say, that these dollars belong to the North and those dollars belong to the South. They go into the Consolidated Fund, and that's what keeps this province viable. And that's part of our resource base, the same as the grain farmers and agriculture being the number one industry in this province.

And all of those moneys . . . That's why we're in a position to give the hospitals, to give the schools, and to give everything else to the North that they require to enjoy a good life-style; that we try to be fair with, and keeping in mind the special needs that they have in our northern communities, is why we provide a greater per capita situation from my department in so far as it relates to both capital and revenue sharing.

Mr. Goulet: — Since you've gone in on a general provincial revenue and expenditures, one has to look a bit at the facts in regards to the North. I mean, it's your government who cut off the food subsidy program that was around, while there is still subsidy for booze and the like. And we raised that issue, you know, many times in the legislature.

We also, you know, talked about the fact of the housing . . . You know, in regards to Sask Housing, there was a tremendous number of houses that were built in the North, you know, prior to the '82 period, that did not get a corresponding amount of increase when you government came into play.

But, in fact, I could go on and mention other facts. But what the people are saying is that the Consolidated Fund remained exactly the same, 5.2 — 5.2 million last year; 5.2 million this year. And that there was also a rate of inflation to consider.

You know the costs of building a road, the costs of storing water in northern Saskatchewan, is way higher than in southern Saskatchewan. You cannot apply exactly the same standards, and that's why you've got a bit of a corresponding level of expenditures that are slightly greater.

(2015)

But what the expenditures are in the past six years is that they have been narrowed back again. They've gone down. Were there was a great degree of difference in expenditures during prior to the '82 period in regards to the North, overall that expenditure has shrunk more between '82 to the present.

And what the people are saying is this. They would like to see a formula. This year you . . . They said you created a formula which was basically one where you robbed Peter to pay Paul; where you basically shifted the expenditures from the larger communities, from Creighton and La

Ronge, to the smaller communities, which creates friction between the smaller communities against the larger communities.

But what the people did say is that there was really no long-term strategy; that while the revenue trust fund account resolves a problem for a year, the new formula does not take into consideration a more long-term approach. And a few people were worried about that aspect. They said, what will happen next year, and they wanted your reassurance in that particular regard to say, okay, this formula is not only fair this year, but it will be fair in the future — that there will be no corresponding aspect where the larger communities have to suffer for the standards that they have helped build up in northern Saskatchewan. And that was a concern that they had.

What does the minister have to say in regards to this concern by the municipalities — that indeed you will see a great degree of fairness on especially the larger towns who have set standards in the North before? And what can be said in terms of a more longer term strategy?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think the member from Cumberland is raising an issue that is not true. I don't believe that you have discussed enough with the elected councils of the North. Maybe in some selected seats of . . . or some selected communities of your constituency, you may have.

But I can tell you that the long-term outlook for the North is in very good shape right now. And I consult with all of the communities, not just a select few, but I consult with all of the communities and regularly. And I think you're prepared to admit that.

And I can tell you that the new revenue-sharing formula that was implemented this year included many, many, many ideas that originated from a proposal put forward by the west side mayors' association, that maybe some members on the east side didn't particularly see eye to eye with, but the majority did. So we used some of their ideas. We used many others from the east side included.

There is a long-term strategy in place already for the capital program. We were able to renew for another five years the capital program that had been in effect for five years that was just expiring.

The transfer of the Crown land that has been in the works for a long, long time is now coming forward to fruition with other long-term plans. I know, speaking in my other portfolio of housing, we have long-term plans there. And as far as it relates, Mr. Chairman, to the actual expenditures, for instance on revenue-sharing side, certainly we recognize the additional costs involved with our northern communities. And that's why our northern communities receive in the area of \$225 per capita on revenue sharing — \$225, while in the southern communities they're only receiving 90. Now that's over twice as much. That recognizes, to a great degree, the difference that exists between North and South.

Mr. Goulet: — I guess what they're saying is, and the reference points here, Mr. Minister, is this: there is about a \$700 million revenue base in northern Saskatchewan.

There is, even for one corporation, Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation, it made \$60 million last year — \$60 million. There's a lot of corporations that make a tremendous amount of profit from northern Saskatchewan development.

What you have not really talked about in your presentation is the fact that you will not move to try and even get one-quarter of a per cent of that which would help out build more fire halls, another quarter per cent which would put in a lot more sewer and water systems. That in fact you refuse to get some of the money that is put in by the largest corporations, and instead try and get more money from the trappers who have to pay their leases and so on.

And that's a point — I don't want to belabour the problem, so I'll just make that point, and because I know we will disagree on exactly that point, and maybe pass it on to another member.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I too don't want to belabour it, and I appreciate the questions. I suppose I'll just stick to my original response, because I see it all the time and I get asked it all the time by the mayors. And where they talk about that, you know, I just simply say, well what about the potash; what about the oil royalties that go into the same fund, you know, and are shared equally throughout the province; what about agriculture, our number one industry, of which doesn't exist in the North?

So I think that, all in all, fairness is the key, and if we can be fair with all the citizens of the province, I think that that's something to look forward to. And we have a good rapport going now with the communities in the North. I'm very pleased about that. We seem to be on the right track. The councils up there are working diligently, and I believe that we have a good understanding and things will continue to work out well for our friends in the North.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some easy questions for the minister for a while.

Mr. Minister, I want to clean up a couple or three small items here so that those officials that may be responsible for this — I will deal with the questions and then they won't have to either stay or come back. And then if it's okay with you — I notice you've got your housing corporation people here. If we can treat both departments together, we can ask some questions about the housing corporation and hopefully get that done tonight as well. They might as well start coming down if they wish.

Now I'm not sure whether you're the minister responsible here, but I'll give you the information on this one topic, and if you are, then please provide the answers; if not, then I will certainly have simply provided this for you as information so that maybe, as the Minister of Urban Affairs, you might follow up.

Now it is my understanding that all municipal employees — or certain municipal employees except those in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert — are members of the Municipal Employees' Superannuation Commission. That's their umbrella, okay?

Now my information has been, and there's been a concern expressed to me, that about a year ago the provincial government, by order in council, took over all of their finances but left the commission in place. And this is an order in council that was brought forward apparently by the Minister of Finance. That was at the time questioned by the employees and by the commission because they were fearful that some of their ability to influence the plan and the legislation would be reduced. It seems that prior to this, and from the times that I can recall back in the days when I sat on that side of the House and you weren't here yet, that when the superintendent of pensions recommended amendments, they were pretty well automatically brought in as changes.

I want to know, Mr. Minister: why was this change made? Are you familiar with the change, and can you explain why the change was made? And if you can't, were you cognizant of the fact that this was happening when it happened a year ago?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I suppose that I could tell the member from Regina North East that this does come under the Department of Finance and the Minister of Finance is aware of what you've brought up. So I suppose all I'll say is I can take this information to him and you'll have the opportunity to ask him those questions.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you. I will most certainly want to do that or my colleague, the Finance critic, will; but somebody will. I want to raise this with you while I'm doing this because as the Urban Affairs minister, you no doubt will have some interest. And I'm sure that . . . I don't know whether you have been contacted but if you haven't been, you may be.

But I am told that some amendments were proposed, quite a list of them, at least four categories, four or five, and the Minister of Finance has declined to introduce those amendments in the spring session. Now would you be so good as to consult with the Minister of Finance, find out what the problem is, and see if you can jack him up a little bit so that he will at least do what has always been done in the past and pay attention to recommendations that have been brought. There are no financial implications. This is one of those pension plans that not only is fully funded but it has a surplus in it, which is I think quite commendable and that should be encouraged. And as a matter of fact, I'm told that — this is back a little ways so maybe things have changed, but at the time I received this — the minister had refused, not categorically, but seemed to show no interest in bringing those amendments. So will you undertake to discuss this with the Minister of Finance on behalf of these employees? And we will do the same when the Minister of Finance is here in these estimates. If you do that, I have no further questions on this item.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I can assure the member that I will take this information directly to the Minister of Finance, and when the opportunity presents itself, either in question period or at some other point in time in this Assembly, you could ask the same questions of him then.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. If only you had been so co-operative when we talked about the ward system.

An Hon. Member: — I think he's backing off.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — It seems to me that maybe he has softened up some.

I want to ask you, not many, but a few questions on the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency. And I understand that this agency is now fully functioning. Can you tell the House and report to the House whether the agency has caught up on the backlog of reassessment. I can recall a few years ago, there was a very extensive backlog. What stage is all this at, and what is happening to make sure that it is caught up, if it hasn't been?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, yes, SAMA (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency) is off and running, and as we all know, SAMA was set up in an Act of this legislature. The board consists of two members of SUMA, two members of SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), one from SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), two government appointees.

They've been established just a little over a year now. They are in the process of starting a new assessment manual which will begin the new assessment procedure in the province of Saskatchewan. It is an independent third party. I have an awful lot of . . . I hold an awful lot of hope that they will be able to solve or go a long way in solving assessment problems that exist in our province. The assessment problems are not unique to Saskatchewan. They exist all over this Dominion of Canada. We hope that this new form of assessment, taking it out of the realm of government and into an independent body, will certainly go a long way in establishing what will be seen as fair assessments equally throughout the province.

As far as it relates to the backlog, and you mentioned assessments, and I believe that what you might be referring to is there was a . . . The only backlog that I'm familiar with was a backlog on appeals of assessments. And I am pleased to tell you that the entire backlog of the appeals have now been heard. Decisions will be rendered shortly.

There are a bunch of appeals that are outstanding on one particular issue that they are dealing with to try to resolve, because when those one or two that they are getting opinions on now are resolved, it will then reflect on the balance. But I believe that all of the appeals have been heard to the end of March of 1988. They've caught up pretty well, and they hope to stay on target now, if that's what you were referring to.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I was referring to both. You've answered my next question which was going to be on the appeals, when I last checked, and I . . . This was not official information but it was reported to me some time in February or January that there was something like 300 assessment appeals backlogged. And if you're telling me

that that has now been caught up, then I certainly want to say to the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency a word of commendation for having done that because, as you know, some of these things left over a long period of time are not very helpful to anyone.

(2030)

Now can you tell me . . . There is this board which is appointed, and I know the representation on it, but there is also representation from the government. Can you tell me how often it meets? Does it meet regularly, on a regular basis, or as required?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I can't give you the precise date because I don't have any control over their meetings. But I can tell you that they met pretty regularly, and I would suspect that it's more than just scheduled meetings, and that they indeed go through regular meetings — particularly right now — being that they're involved in this whole new assessment manual.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Can you report to the House how — there must be a way to pay for the costs of these people- they travel. Are the members of this board on a retainer? If so, what's the retainer? Is there a per diem that is paid? How does the system work? And how much is it?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Being that it is an independent agency, I would like to advise the hon. member, Mr. Chairman, that they, in fact, did establish their own fees, their own remuneration, agreed to at the board level. And I don't have that information with me as to indeed what they set that up at.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — They do report to the legislature; I have the annual report here. The government does provide funding. One would think that one of your officials might have that information. If they don't, maybe they could get it for me and provide it. And I don't need that now, Mr. Minister. If they can discover that and provide it for me, by letter, before the beginning of the next session, I would be appreciative and we would let that go.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — What I'll do . . . I will take this undertaking, Mr. Chairman, and I hope that it doesn't lead to questions at this point that I can't respond to. If the information that the member is asking for is or should be public knowledge regarding the remuneration of the board, I will undertake to have that information sent very, very quickly.

If, in the event that that is not public information, just as perhaps some of the information that might be withheld by a city from me is not available, then of course, my hands would be tied, but there might be some other way that you could get them. But I will undertake to look into that for you, and if possible, I will provide you with that and I'll do it pretty quickly.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I appreciate that, Mr. Minister, and I will leave it for you to pursue that. I do recognize the new arrangement under which the municipal assessment management, Saskatchewan Assessment Agency exists, and I respect that. But because there is

government money involved, one would think that there is therefore some responsibility on the part of the government to ask these kinds of questions, not in the negative or derogatory way, but simply as a responsible act of government who must then report to the legislature.

I have no further questions on that, and I won't have; so if you have officials who were particularly responsible for that, there's no need for them to remain or come back.

We have some questions that we want to ask on the housing corporation, so if you want to have your officials handy . . . I noticed they were coming down the stairs.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Just a question to the minister on SAMA before the officials leave. My understanding is that the assessment has been recently done, I think, within the last three or four years in the resort villages area. How soon would you expect the next reassessment to come? How often would you expect this cycle to come there again, particularly, say, in the Emma Lake, Candle Lake areas?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — According to the Act right now, as it's spelled out, they have to do the cycle every seven years or no later than nine. It's my understanding that SAMA has a little difficulty with that schedule in legislation and they may be recommending a change. And they may indeed, because it's a new functioning group, as you know, have some other recommendations that they will bring forward to me to bring to the Assembly.

So certainly if there are any changes requested by them with relationship to their operation, it would require legislative amendments, and at that point, obviously, I would have people with me that would explain the reasoning behind it and the why's and the wherefore's.

So that all I can tell you right now is that the legislation stipulates seven years, no later than nine, and the assessment manuals are always in a constant revolving process to be maintained.

So when it is related to a specific concern . . . I'm not in a position to tell you, but I know that the area that you mentioned of Candle Lake, is . . . I received a lot of letters from residents of Candle Lake, or property owners, concerning their assessment. I have brought it to the attention of SAMA. The board is presently looking at it.

So that's why I have so much hope that SAMA does indeed work out, because as these letters come forward we have an independent agency to take them to, to deal with, and hopefully they'll be able to resolve some of these problems. Or if not, then at least you have an independent third party that says, here's how it is, and it compares to this and this and this, and it will be set forth in that fashion. So I'm familiar with the — and so is SAMA — with the problem that you just brought up.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Just to confirm, then, SAMA does not have to wait for the entire seven-year cycle to pass before they can take some type of action — either a reassessment or to make recommendations to the minister.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — It's not that they would make recommendations to me, because they indeed control the

assessment, so it all depends on where they reach in that cycle. I would suspect . . . And again I can't put words in their mouth. If they choose to become involved in the middle of a cycle, I suppose being that they're the agency responsible, so long as they're living within the legislation that dictates how it must work, then they would be able to resolve these problems. If not, that's when they would then come to me and ask for a change in legislation, so that they indeed could deal with any specific problems that might arise that they could do something with.

Mr. Chairman: — The Urban Affairs and Sask Housing votes are two separate votes in the estimates. Unless it's mutually agreed by the minister and the opposition, it would be easier for the Chair to deal with them separately in the estimates. The member from Regina North East.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — We're prepared, under subvote 1 to in general cover the whole field, and because I think housing will take less time, we would like to deal with it now and not have to call the officials back again another day if we can finish it today. So, if it's mutually agreeable, fine.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Yes, I have my officials here. I have Larry Little, to your right, president of Sask Housing, and other housing officials behind. So you could just ask the general questions that you'd like to ask and following that, for the chair, the chairman could call for the votes and subvotes in an orderly fashion as per each department, if that'll help facilitate.

Mr. Chairman: — Would the minister introduce his new officials?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — To my right Larry Little, president of Sask Housing; behind Mr. Little is Ron Styles, the vice-president of program operations. Right behind me is Ron Sotski, the executive director, property management and field services; and to Mr. Little's right, we have Larry Boys, the vice-president of finance and administration.

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to the officials in this year's issue or the edition of the estimates on Sask Housing Corporation.

A number of issues I'd like to raise with the minister tonight and with the housing policies of the Sask Housing Corporation under the rubric of this first subvote.

The first issues I'd like to talk about is the question of privatization and the minister's plans vis-a-vis privatization and the Sask Housing Corporation. I noticed in last year's estimates the minister made some mention that in fact there were plans afoot to dispose of some of the assets of Sask Housing Corporation and I wonder if you would care to tell the Assembly tonight precisely what assets were disposed of and what are the plans in the coming years for the disposal of assets from Sask Housing through the privatization schemes.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I think that about the only area of any significance is the area as it relates to staff housing. And it's fair to say that that particular area, if you want to put the word "privatize" to it, has been ongoing for the last few years. We inherited a portfolio of staff

housing from the other departments of government into Sask Housing because we were capable of administering it and renting them and repairing them and the like.

But what's happened over a period of time is that we have more staff housing than we have staff. They're primarily in northern Saskatchewan. They were set up in communities that housing would have been difficult for them to have access to and now that is not as dominant. So that we will continue an effort to privatize the staff housing where the staff housing is in direct competition to the private market-place, in any given community if that in fact exists.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Minister, the question was: how many units of staff housing or how many units of housing have you sold off in the last year and could you tell us how many more units you plan to put on the market-place? And maybe you'd like to tell us in what communities those units exist.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, in 1985 there was a total of 31 units that were sold; 1986 a total of 26 units; 1987 a total of 23; and as the member is probably aware, these figures are based on a calendar year because that's the housing corporation's operation is on a calendar year. So that that would be up to the end of December.

And then recently a major one, that I'll point out to you because it was major, was that we sold a 72-unit apartment building in La Ronge and we did that primarily because, Mr. Deputy Chairman, it was in a market community where there are several privately owned apartment buildings that the government was in direct competition to and this ownership was no longer needed to support government programming, in a nut shell.

(2045)

So the sale was done by public tender, advertised in February of 1988. Seven bids were received and it was sold for a price that was within the price range provided by an independent appraisal. And also a condition of the sale was that the owner was required to enter into a lease to provide the government with long-term access to the apartment block at reasonable rents to cover the students that required space in our northern college.

So that was all taken care of. It was discussed with all of the players at the time that would have been directly involved in it and there was no particular problem that was brought to light by anybody that was involved in the sale of that project.

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I wonder . . . Two questions out of that. First of all, in regard to the 72-apartment building, would you tell us who the successful bidder was and also the tender price paid for that. Also would you tell us whether it was the low bid. And thirdly, in regards to the long-term arrangement with the government as to access for people who are going to use that particular facility, could you provide us with the documentation as to what has been signed which will guarantee a rent cap on the units.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, Deputy Chairman, the

property was sold to the high bidder. I think you just inadvertently used the low bid by mistake, but the high bidder for the building received it. It was sold to Reisinger Developments Ltd., of Saskatoon — and I don't have the foggiest idea who the principals of Reisinger developments are — for \$1.1 million.

And I've been advised that the arrangement has been concluded and is satisfactory, but we don't have copy of that documentation. I don't know whether the Department of Education would have access to it or not. I believe that's who the lease would be signed with — wasn't it? The Department of Education? I don't even know what government agency signed the document, but I don't have it, so that I can't obviously supply you with that.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Minister, just on that last point, you made the assertion that there was guarantees built into an agreement that had been signed. You don't appear to be aware of this agreement. And all we're requesting is the documentation which will guarantee, as you say, the students who are attending the colleges in La Ronge access is at a reasonable rate given that the apartment building has now been privatized.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well I don't choose to get into an argument, Mr. Deputy Chairman, and it's with the property management Crown. If we're in a position to get that document on behalf of the member and send it over to him, I certainly have no problem with that. And if that document is available to us for that purpose, we'd be glad to supply it.

Mr. Lyons: — Okay. In regards to the original question I asked on privatization, you talked about the staff housing as being the housing stock which was going to be put up for a bid and put up for privatization. Have you had any discussions with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation in regards to selling off the existing housing stock owned by the Sask Housing Corporation, outside of that designated as staff housing? Have you entered into any of those discussions with the CMHC (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation)?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I've been advised that about the only privatization — if that's the word that you want to apply to it — is the normal. There is no abnormal form of discussions going on that you have been alluding to. The only normal thing, that I would call normal, is where Sask Housing has huge land holdings throughout the province, and if we're able to sell a block of land to a developer, most of the time it's done in agreement with the local municipality, where they have a partnership agreement with us. And, you know, if somebody comes along and wants to buy a parcel of land or something like that, the it's sold and obviously it would be privatized, but it would be done in that fashion. But there is no large wholesale attempt of any kind to dispose to a bunch of Sask Housing Corporation assets, no.

Mr. Lyons: — The question, Mr. Minister, to be clear is that I just wanted to know, because there had been some discussion earlier on that one of the major reasons that you weren't going to sell off the stock of Sask Housing was that CMHC had objected to it, and I allude to the . . . or I

refer to your comments made in the last year's estimates. I just wanted to know whether or not you have, in fact, entered into discussion with Canada . . . CMHC so that you, in fact, can go ahead with plans to privatize housing stock, or is, in fact, that your objective? Do you now admit that public house stock for social objectives is the way to go?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well I think that what I pointed out last year was, I said, even if we had visions of privatizing a lot of our housing stock, that CMHC, who was our major partner, would have to agree with any of the propositions we had, and probably that's the remark that you're alluding to.

But my opinion hasn't changed. I think wherever we can, either make renters owners, that that would be ideal, or where we have a problem with some housing where payments are so far in arrears that people will never be in a position to catch up and become an owner. And if that required a write-down by governments to make them a real honest-to-goodness, 100 per cent owner of housing that they could afford rather than never getting anywhere, I believe that it would only be common sense. And I think that you would even agree that wherever we could make that kind of a transition so that these people could become real, live home owners, that that would be the ideal situation for us to get to.

Mr. Lyons: — Well that may all be well provided that there is, in fact, adequate housing available for those who are not in the position to put together the capital necessary to either make the down payment or to have the long-term financial commitment needed.

While we're on that, because there is certain other forms of home ownership which have been developed in this province — and I speak specifically of co-operative forms of home ownership and some of the housing co-ops that had been developed in this province up until recently — has the department plans to develop other forms other than single family, single dwelling home ownerships? Are you, for example, now considering putting back into place the co-operative home ownership program and co-operative building program so that housing co-ops can once again flourish in the province?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well I think that we're always looking for ways to improve housing in our province. And as a result we're in constant consultation with the home builders of this province. And I believe that through consultations with them, in the event that particular industry, Mr. Deputy Chairman, would ever require a boost and that they asked us to consider implementing some type of a home program or home building program, that we would probably entertain that request. But we don't want to artificially inflate the market, so that we have to be awful cautious if and when we introduce any new kind of a building program.

Right now our efforts are certainly concentrated on enriched housing for seniors. We introduced last year, as was discussed, the innovative housing program which will help to maintain an independent living style for the seniors of our province. That innovative housing program has worked extremely well, and because of getting

involved with communities and various third-party groups, we find the government isn't building these homes all alone, but rather the communities and other organizations come into play with us. And because of the partnership arrangement that's involved between Sask Housing and these other various communities, what we find we were able to trigger many, many more units than government alone could ever hope to build by themselves.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, once again we get into the debate where you say that housing has to be a totally market-oriented development, that the development of housing must be based on market needs and not on social needs. And we'll disagree on that, and we'll disagree for time immemorial on that, because this side of the House believes that the government has to take a leading role in providing housing to those people who need housing and has to take a leading role in providing different kinds of housing, flexible and innovative kinds of housing.

Unfortunately — and you've mentioned your innovative program and we'll get to that in due course — unfortunately what's happened is that your blind faith in the market-place to provide housing for people in this province has resulted in a whole strata of people, particularly in urban Saskatchewan, who are now without adequate housing. And I speak specifically of low income families, a great many of whom are single-parent families, and a great many of those who are headed by women who are put in the position of not having adequate and decent housing. I also speak of native people in this province who are in a position of not being able to live in adequate housing because of your blind adherence to some so-called magic hand that operates in the so-called mythical market-place.

And I submit, Mr. Minister, that what we're talking about here is that there are social needs and it's a question of how you develop a housing program for Saskatchewan to meet those social needs. And I would also submit that when we get to examine your innovative program, you will see that, in fact, that there are a great many loopholes, loopholes caused — and gaps in your program — caused by that blind adherence to the market-place. However that is not the intent of my question at this point.

I want to ask you a question concerning privatization because I still haven't gotten an answer in regards to your relationship between Sask Housing Corporation and CMHC. And the longer you sort of not answer the question, the more suspicious we on this side of the House get that you have engaged in some kind of discussions with CMHC in order to begin a process of privatizing the public housing in this province.

Now would you please put my mind to rest and say that those discussions are not ongoing, that you have not had those discussion, and that it is not going to be corporation policy to privatize public housing, public housing in this province? Can you tell us that that, in fact, is your policy — that you do not intend to privatize public housing in this province?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I don't know why the member is getting all excited and worked up about it. We have no

discussions going on with CMHC about the privatization of public housing. And he started talking philosophies and market-place and all the rest. I really don't know where he is getting to, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

All the public housing that the corporation is involved in now is going to low income people, and that's exactly what we're doing. So obviously the housing program that I was referring to — and that's to create new starts for the people that want to have their own first home or something. We came off a very successful first home program and the like, which was brought into force a couple of years ago, and was done at the urging of the home builders. That's what I was talking about — about a home program. But for housing starts . . .

When you talk about the rest of our programming that Sask Housing is into now, it is public housing, and it's all designed for low income families. It's being done with the help of communities and church groups and all the rest of it that address exactly that kind of people. And, you know, the member can see where our housing went to in Regina last year. We had one project — the old boy's home as it's fondly known in Regina, that was done with the Salvation Army, 40 units. We had 46 units built last year in family income in Regina, or for low family income in Regina, and these efforts will continue. So I think all in all the corporation's activities are still the same; nothing is changed. We're still involved in all of that area.

(2100)

There are other program delivery areas that we got involved with, with our estimates last year that have worked out very well, where we transferred some programs back to CMHC because what happened was that it was a duplication of work and there were two government agencies to deal with instead of one and people found that they were getting the run-around from the governments by going from one to the other.

So that in this fashion, all of the programs, that at the time we decided it would be a good idea to transfer back to CMHC, has indeed worked out to be just that. And the interest groups that work alone with CMHC are simply delighted that they have only one government agency to deal with now.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, I will take it that it's going to be the policy of the department that you don't intend to privatize public housing. I believe that's what you said, although in an extremely obtuse and roundabout way. But we won't press that issue any more.

But we will press the second issue, which to raise is that in your little speech there, you talked about how the department or how Sask Housing Corporation was meeting the needs, the legitimate, social needs of people in this province. I want to beg to differ with that analysis because I think quite frankly, sir, that a document such as the mayor's task force on women's issues, which identified housing in Regina as a key need, is not being met. In fact, not only is it not being met, we are facing a situation where the need for low income housing, particularly for single-parent families, and particularly for single parent families headed by women, is growing and

that Sask Housing has not put that priority — it has not placed that kind of thrust in meeting what is a growing social need in this province. I wonder, sir, whether in fact Sask Housing had read the report, and if, having read it, whether it has begun to initiate any research of its own in regards to some of the recommendations and some of the findings of that report, and whether or not that Sask Housing is getting off its butt and looking around the province to see in fact there and how this growing social crisis can be dealt with through government initiative, through government leadership, and through a public housing program which meets the needs of poor people in this province.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, certainly Sask Housing keeps a pulse of all the various recommendations and statistics that are brought forth by various interest groups, and it's very difficult to determine, in fact, which numbers are accurate, which numbers are right on, and the like, and whether they're ours or theirs or whatever.

So I guess it's fair to say that what we do is recognize that, yes, public housing is a thing that exists with us right now and that it must be addressed, and I believe that we do that. For instance, since 1982 we have subsidized almost 2,200 . . . almost 2,200 family units have been subsidized by Sask Housing Corporation. That's a significant number, Mr. Deputy Chairman. I can tell you that of that number, Regina is getting more than its fair share.

Mr. Lyons: — Well the fact of the matter is, Mr. Minister, whether its Regina or whether it's Saskatoon, the statistics — and it's not our statistics — the statistics generated by organizations like CMHC and by Statistics Canada point to a growing and increasing social housing crisis in this province.

And if you want to talk about the record since 1982, if you want to talk about the record, what have we seen consistently since 1982 is Sask Housing falling behind need. The demand is outstripping the supply in regards to the construction and the maintenance of public housing units, and public housing units targeted for those who section 13 of the act setting up the corporation is intended — those vulnerable groups in the society who can't afford to go into the market-place and to try to outbid each other for housing that a great many of us do enjoy. The facts of the matter are, and the statistics in the mayor's task force prove, that what we are seeing is a developing crisis.

What I want to know from you, and the rhetoric aside: what are you planning to do about increasing the supply of public housing? How many public housing units are you going to put on the market this year, are you going to make available? How many new public housing units do you plan to make available? And are you going to develop some kind of affirmative action program that will open the way for the poorest of the poor, which are single families headed by women, so as to provide their families with the kind of housing that's needed by them? How many units are you going to build this year? Could you give me a run-down on that? And what are your plans for 1988-89?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I should

point out a few facts as well to the member opposite who seems to have total disregard for the market-place. His philosophy, I guess; I hope I don't ever have a philosophy like that but . . .

Saskatchewan enjoys the lowest price houses in the country. That is a fact. And because of the prices being affordable to the majority of the people that live here, we find that we have the highest numbers of young people in the country being able to afford a home, a house of their own, right here in Saskatchewan. And we also find that low income families enjoy that same situation. We have more low income families by far than other provinces because of the fact that here in Saskatchewan we enjoy that low market prices in comparison to the rest of the country.

I'd hate to be a low income earner in Toronto. We all hear the stories about the cost of housing in Toronto. I suppose I'd even hate to have to supply public housing in Toronto at those prices. It could keep a government broke doing that.

But to be more specific, this year, through the federal-provincial housing agreement, we will be delivering 521 units. One hundred and fifty low income family units will be delivered throughout the province, and some 40 to 60 will be located in Regina.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, the provision of low income housing units in Saskatchewan — and I think that there is a relationship and one would like to draw that relationship here in this province — that because of the efforts of the previous government to develop a large public housing sector, one of the reasons why land developers and building speculators can't . . . and real estate speculators can't drive up the housing prices to prices that are totally out of whack with reality, as they are in Toronto or as they have been in Vancouver and as they were in Calgary, is precisely because there is a large stock of public housing which was built because there was government recognition that housing is a public right. And that in the only way in order to try to control a market-place gone crazy, as it has in Toronto, is to, in fact, engage in a major public housing project as the previous government did, much to its credit.

Now you say, Mr. Minister, that there is going to be between 51 and 60 units built in Regina for low income families. I wonder if you would care to tell us where those low income units are going to be built. Is this just a projection or have, in fact, tenders been called? And have, in fact, plans been drawn up and concrete work undertaken in order to build that number of units? I wonder if you would tell us where those units are going to be built.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, regarding the last question first. We're out to competition now on the innovative housing program. That competition closed May 26, so we're just nicely starting to assess the various proposals that have been put forward, including some very good ones by church groups. And you know, we're going to have to assess exactly how that's going to work out.

But again we see here, unfortunately, where the opposition members are not really aware of how a department functions. We've seen examples of it in other areas, and again we have the situation right now.

I don't want to demean the member opposite, but when he talks about the price of land and, you know, kind of says it's our fault and where is the low cost housing and the like, well I should point out that the city developed a place in Regina called Richmond Place, and the lots there are very, very expensive — hardly low income. So you see the city doing that. Now the city happens to be our partner in land, and they dictate that if we develop land and put it up for sale, that we must charge, must charge the market price for that land because the city gets the profits. So that as a result, I suppose even if we wanted to develop the land and put it out at half price of the market for a family income, we wouldn't be allowed to do so because the city wouldn't get the profit.

So our hands are tied through all of these agreements that have been put in place. And all of these agreements were put in place, in fact, by the NDP government. So we're hamstrung with these development projects and the like, if we wanted to go out and develop the land.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, that is what I call drawing an extremely long bow, trying to link the development of Richmond Place and the development of public housing in this province. And for any minister of the Crown to stand here, and a minister responsible for Sask Housing Corporation, to try and amalgamate the two, indeed brings one to the question of sympathy, and it's a question of demeaning. And I'm certainly not going to demean the minister by going out to that level of long-bow drawing.

The facts of the matter are — and we'll get back to the original point of the question — is that there is a need for public housing for low income families, particularly low income families headed by women. For example, in a 1986 survey done by the City of Regina, your partner in the development of housing in the city, it showed that there were 600 families on social assistance, and that of those 600 — pardon me, of the survey of 600 families on social assistance, between 42 and 50 per cent of these families were paying rents greater than the rents set by the Saskatchewan assistance program.

That shows two things: one, that the levels granted by social assistance payments are indeed totally out of reality with your mythical magic machine there, the market-place, or it shows that in fact that the market and the poor people are being asked to pay unrealistic rents. Some people would say that they're being gouged; however, we won't want to use those terms and demean the minister.

We had 41 people, clients with three persons in the family, paid an average of \$435 for rent and SAP (Saskatchewan assistance plan) allowed \$375 per month. There were 45 clients with two persons in the family who paid an average of \$413 in rent and SAP allowed \$355 per month. It's obvious there's a *prima facie* case here that, in fact, that relying on the market to provide housing for poor people doesn't work because poor people can't

afford the housing. And that is what we are talking about tonight — poor people. We not talking about Richmond Place.

If you want to talk about housing prices and land prices, we can look to the private developers to see the kind of public housing they've developed down in Wascana View in this city. And I'm quite sure that you're familiar with Wascana View. And I'd like to ask you how many people who are on public assistance in this province or in this city can afford to live in Wascana View.

(2115)

And by the way, are you planning to build some public housing in Wascana View, since it has been the policy, or at least it was the policy of Sask Housing Corporation not to ghettoize recipients of social assistance into poor people's ghettos, but in fact, in order to develop the community without ghettos to spread people throughout the community. Is Sask Housing going to demand that the developers like Cairns build low income housing in their developments, like the Wascana Views or like the Parkridges or like the Lakeviews of the city.

It's obvious, Mr. Minister, it's obvious that your reliance on the market-place has been a failure. These statistics prove it. There are people in the city who cannot afford housing. The number of people in the city who cannot afford housing is growing. And when I listen to you answer, and you said between 51 and 60 units were going to be made available, and then you turned around and said, but we just have these proposals put forward, it's obvious you have absolutely no idea of what you're going to do in terms of solving this problem.

I want to ask you again: what are you, through Sask Housing, going to do in terms of the construction of low income housing units so that poor people can live in decent housing in the city? How many are you going to construct in the year? Do you have a number or is it just up for review?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, if the member opposite is suggesting for a moment that the government build everybody on social assistance a house, I mean, he's starting to be far-fetched.

I don't believe that it's the responsibility of the government to build everybody that's on social assistance a house. And he says that I'm stretching a bow. Good grief, he was the one that brought up the land. I'm talking fact. I'm talking development of public housing. We have land to develop, lots of it, that is a burden to the taxpayers of this province right now because the NDP bought lots of it. And we're paying interest every year on that land and those landholdings, lots of it.

And yet when we go to our partners like the city of Regina to develop some of our land because we've got lots of it, what do they do? That's where Richmond Place come in. They say, no, you hold on to it because we get the profits. So we pay interest to hold on to, lots of it, while they develop Richmond Place. Are they concerned with public housing and low income families? You go out there and try to buy a lot at Richmond Place if you were

on low income. And that's a development by our city.

Now he stands up here and says that, you know, we're supposed to do something about it when our partner in land isn't at all interested in what we do with the land except hold on to it, pay money for it, pay interest on it, and develop it; and yet when we do finally develop it, develop it and sell it at market price because they don't want to lose the profits associated with that development or with their other developments.

I can tell you this, and I can tell the member that, Mr. Deputy Chairman, we are delivering a higher percentage of our budget now to low income families than has ever been done before in the history of this province.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Minister, if one looks at where over 1987 the housing projects that were developed — and we'll get to that — but when you look at the list and you want to say, and stand here and say, that there's a greater percentage of the budget being devoted to low income housing, that is contrary to the facts put out by your own department, but we'll get to that a little bit later.

It is not good enough, sir, for you to stand here and blame the city of Regina for your inaction in developing low income housing in this city. It is not your . . . doesn't solve the problem for you to stand here, or try to blame the city of Saskatoon, or the city of Moose Jaw, or the city of Yorkton, or where any place where you hold land.

Your responsibility and your mandate as the minister responsible for Sask Housing is to provide housing for poor people. And yes, Mr. Minister, it is the government's responsibility to ensure that all people in Saskatchewan live in adequate housing. That is your law; that is the law of this province. You are mandated under the Act which sets up the Sask Housing Corporation, article 13, to do that.

And if you're going to stand here and say that you're going to be derelict in your duties, then I guess you'll take the political consequences for that — like you and some of the ministers of the government who consistently ignore the law just because it doesn't happen to suit your blind, ideological fate to a market-place which doesn't provide housing for poor people. Because the facts of the matter are this: the poor people in this city, the poor people in Saskatoon, the poor people in rural Saskatchewan cannot afford housing. That's why Sask Housing was set up in the first place. Its mandate was to be able to provide decent housing and decent accommodation for people who didn't have the money and who can't afford the prices charged in the private market-place. That's the mandate of the corporation, and it's obvious, sir, that you've forgotten that part of the mandate.

I want to ask you again: how many units, how many units will be built by Sask Housing for poor people in the city of Regina in this year? How many units are you going to build? You have failed to answer that question. I want to know how many people, how many units you are planning on building?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, I've already answered that question, so you obviously didn't listen. I

said 40 to 60 are going to be built this year in Regina.

Saskatchewan has one of the highest percentages of home ownership in the dominion of Canada — one of the highest percentages of home ownership. And it's probably the biggest single investment that most of us will ever make — our home. And pride of ownership goes along with being able to own your home, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

So what we have done is we've come up with the home program to help the people protect that investment. Whether they're rich or whether they're poor, they can still take advantage of those programs. And they can improve their homes and get adequate shelter at very reasonable costs if they apply on the loan side — a \$10,000 loan for improvement at 6 per cent. I mean, you can't get better than that probably anywhere in the world.

They say they care about families. What did they do when they were in charge? They let the interest rates go up to 21 or 22 per cent; they could care less whether they made the payments on their houses or not; they could care less whether people were going to lose their homes or not. They didn't care; they didn't try to do a darn thing.

Some facts, Mr. Deputy Chairman — and maybe we don't go around talking about our accomplishments enough in the public housing sector, but since 1982 to the present, 7,220 units of housing have been built; 2,893 units were for senior citizens, 2,827 for low income families.

And yes, we removed the moratorium that the NDP government placed on nursing homes; we removed that moratorium and put up 1,500 nursing home beds — something that they dared put a moratorium on. And they have nerve now to stand here . . . and the Leader of the Opposition scoffs at that. You were in charge, sir, when you put that moratorium on. And we've got quotes about what you had to say about putting that moratorium on. You should hang your head in shame instead of standing up with pride and saying how you put that moratorium . . . You were proud of that accomplishment, weren't you? You should be ashamed, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

An Hon. Member: — . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . judicial inquiry of 1990-91, boy.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — There he goes. I must have struck a nerve with the Leader of the Opposition; he seems pretty adamant in changing his mind right now. Kind of hurts when it comes home and you get it drilled into you that you were the one that put the moratorium on. You, sir, quit building the nursing homes in this province, not this government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, the subsidy provided by the province for the social housing budget has increased from \$10.2 million to \$20.1 million — doubled. And I suppose I could on and on, but I've struck enough nerves, and out of respect for the time to finish these estimates tonight, I'll stop there.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Minister, with the kind of answers that you've been giving, the length of time you're taking to give those answers, I have very grave doubts that we'll be done tonight. In fact, you can be assured that we won't be done tonight.

Now here we have the minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, who brags about how the greatest percentage of his budget in the history of the province is going to be spent on low income housing, and when he's asked in the House how many units are going to be built in the city of Regina, he doesn't know. It could be 40, or it may be 60, or it may be none, because he's going to depend on the vagaries of the so-called innovative housing program and the market-place to build poor people's housing.

Now what kind of an answer is that, and what kind of a government is that?

An Hon. Member: — Government by chaos.

Mr. Lyons: — You know, it is total, total government by chaos, and the person sitting on the right to you should be reprimanded for allowing that kind of chaos to go on in the department and allowing that kind of mismanagement to go on in the department.

How can you stand here, come to estimates with the spending priorities for the Sask Housing corporation, and not know a simple answer like how many low income units are you going to build in the city of Regina? What is the answer you are going to give me now when I ask this question: how many low income units are you going to build in the city of Saskatoon? Is it 20, is it 40, is it 60, or is it just a number that you and the rest of your government folks like to pull out of the air to try to come up and make up answers? How many?

Why can't you come clean with the people, Mr. Minister? Why can't you come clean and say, we're reviewing it; we don't know. Because it's a simple question: all I want to know is, how many units of poor people's housing are you going to build? Could you answer me that? You say between 40 and 60 in the city of Regina. How many are you going to build in the city of Saskatoon in the coming year?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, they don't understand business; we've already clarified that. They don't understand how the Wascana Centre Authority works. They don't understand much about the urban revenue-sharing formulas and all the rest of it. And now they come along to this department. I wish that they would study . . . We've got a federal-provincial housing agreement. That agreement clearly dictates the number of units.

So if you think that I'm being vague, it's because we've got an agreement in place. And I suppose that if you want it exactly, I've told you for the third time, 40 to 60 in Regina, minimum will be 40 according to the agreement. And in Saskatoon there will be a minimum of 50. Now if we expand on that because of the innovative housing, and if I could say 50 to 60, then probably that's what it would be. I mean, you're asking the question; I'm

giving you an answer. And you want to know exactly whether it's 63 or 49 or 46 or some other silly figure. I mean, what's the difference? I say 40 to 60. It's going to be a minimum of 40, and in Saskatoon it'll be a minimum of 50.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, you characterized it perfectly. It's a silly figure. It's a silly figure because it's not nearly enough. It doesn't go anywhere near meeting the needs. For example, the Silver Sage Housing Corporation, of which has a relationship with your corporation, has 1,352 people on a waiting list — 1,352 people waiting for public housing. Now when they get the public housing — and earlier on I referred to the chaos that's in your department, and it's not me saying that it's in chaos. We look at a paper and it says, "Governments are slum landlords in Regina." And when they say governments, they're talking about your government and Sask Housing Corporation. We see a headline that says . . . We see that there are empty houses, houses going empty, subject to vandalism; houses which are being left in deplorable conditions; houses which could be, if a little bit of initiative were shown by your department and by your officials at the housing corporation, that could go and develop some kind of housing program.

Mr. Minister, don't you understand when you have 1,352 people or thereabouts on a waiting list for one of the non-profit housing corporations that are operating throughout this province, don't you understand that 50 low income units isn't going to be enough? Don't you understand that when you find between 42 and 50 per cent of the poor people receiving Saskatchewan assistance plan payments can't afford the rent of the house that they're living in, that the rent is not covered by their payments, don't you understand that there's a problem? Isn't it about time you exhibited some leadership in the area?

And now you keep blaming that, we're partners; our hands, are tied by Regina and our hands are tied by Saskatoon, or whoever. Well you're responsible, Mr. Minister, to strike out boldly, to go to those people. And if you're saying that Mayor Schneider and the city of Regina is tying your hands and that Ted Cholod won't allow you to build the houses, well then it seems to me that you should be able to use a little bit of your political muscle, what little you may have, to say, look, there's a problem in this city. There's a problem in this city. We'll get bi-party or tri-party agreement to solve the problem.

We don't need more Richmond Places. What the heck we need is more low income housing so we don't have people living in the kind of slum conditions that these headlines talked about. Isn't that your responsibility as the minister for Sask Housing, to go out there and say, let's solve this problem? You know. I mean, it's not a question of political issue. The moment you go forward and do that, or instruct Mr. Little to go forward and do that, we'll be there cheering you on, you can bet your bottom dollar. Because we know that there's a problem in this city. We know there's a problem in Saskatoon. We know there's a problem in this province with the deterioration of housing stock and a deterioration of housing stock for poor people. You know, we're developing slums in this city, slums that weren't there before, slums that Sask Housing

Corporation could do something about.

What I'm asking you is: what is your plan, what is your target, and what is the government going to do? Stop blaming people. What the heck are you going to do about solving this problem?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Here we go again, Mr. Chairman. They don't do their homework, and they come into these estimates absolutely, totally unprepared. And it's really a shame.

You know, the numbers that I've been talking, Mr. Chairman, don't include what the member just brought up about Silver Sage. Silver Sage is one of the programs, for instance, that we transferred to CMHC, so that as a result, additional units are being put forward into this city by the federal government — numbers that I'm not even talking about because they're federal numbers. And they would just simply add to the numbers that I have told you.

Now as far as it relates to funding for Silver Sage, this year \$658,000 is going to be spent with Silver Sage on maintenance. Silver Sage is responsible for the administration of those funds and also for their tenants. The story that you referred to — again, you didn't do the research broadly enough — the story was done by a young student who, not an experienced journalist, who I can't identify. They took pictures of a home that was all . . . the repairs were already in progress, so if they were going to fix the sewer line, of course there's going to be a hole in the floor in the basement. How are you going to fix the sewer? From the roof? They've got to chop a hole in the floor. So they took the picture then and they said, look at what we've got.

And now, just to end the Silver Sage thing once and for all, because I'm sure that perhaps even the hon. member, Rosemont, would back off, here's a letter from the general manager of Silver Sage Housing Corporation. Now pay attention; I'll read you a part of it:

Funding levels are adequate and conserve our common goals if cost efficiency is sought and wise use of available resources is a constant objective. The alleged shortfall of funding has been seriously and unfairly stated in the press.

This comes from Silver Sage. This article did not come from the Qu'Appelle district chiefs, the board of directors of Silver Sage Housing Corporation, nor from myself as general manager of Silver Sage Housing corporation. So there you have it.

Mr. Lyons: — I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if the minister, following the normal procedure, will table that letter that he's just read from, please.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I read it into the record. I believe that's sufficient.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Chairman, it's my understanding that when a minister refers to a document which is not a briefing note — and he specifically said it was a letter, that a letter that he received — I ask you that you have the member, the minister table that document, sir.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I read it into the record, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lyons: — Point of order, Mr. Chairman. I think I've raised the point of order. I've said it before. I believe that it's the custom and the duty of the minister to table the document. He specifically referred to it as a letter, not as a briefing document, or not as something that is not subject to cabinet confidentiality. And I ask him to please table the document from which he read.

Mr. Chairman: — I'm looking up the ruling now, and I'll make a ruling on it.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, the reason for hesitating was because the letter wasn't written to myself. But on reflection, if they insist that I table it, I have no problem with tabling it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Chairman: — Item one agreed? The minister is tabling the document.

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad the minister complied with the orders of his boss and followed the rules of the parliamentary system here.

Mr. Minister, you've made constant reference tonight to the great strides that your government has made in providing housing for senior citizens. I wonder, sir, that there is a proposal had been put before Sask Housing Corporation from Pioneer Village in the city of Regina, and your partner, as you refer to it.

I wonder if you would make announcement tonight to tell us that, in fact, it's the intention of Sask Housing Corporation to approve the proposal made by Pioneer Village, or will you tell us once again that there is some technicality that prohibits you from allowing the needed construction at Pioneer Village to go ahead.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I understand that Pioneer Village have entered the innovation housing competition, and as such I'll make an announcement at an appropriate time if they're selected through the process.

Mr. Lyons: — Well I wonder, Mr. Minister, could you tell us at what stage of the process is their application and what possible reason could you see for stalling that process?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I'll be glad to send the member the innovative process, which is a public little booklet on what you go through to enter the innovative competition.

I'm surprised that you didn't make yourself available to that, or make that available to you earlier in the year, being that you're the critic of Sask Housing. I would have thought that at least you would have gone through that. It was widely distributed. There were a series of public meetings held throughout the province at which these booklets were distributed.

I'll forward one to you. It clearly outlines in there the

process of the innovative housing.

Mr. Lyons: — There's no need to try to put on a little show. I happen to have a copy here and I've read it.

That's not the question. What I wanted to ask you is, is where is the application for Pioneer Village; what is the thinking of the corporation in regards to that application? We're sitting here with housing which is shut down on Pioneer Village because it's not fit to live in, and the Pioneer Village, the largest senior citizens' housing complex of its kind in North America, has made a proposal to go ahead and refurbish that housing. I just want to know, where's the process stand? When can Pioneer Village expect a response to their reply?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Chairman, this is in a competition and they applied for it as part of that competition. In fairness to everybody that entered that competition, how can I possibly make an announcement?

The member says that he has that innovative housing booklet and that he's read it. Well if you've read it, it clearly outlines in there how the competition process works. And part of my problem with Pioneer is that originally, when this was offered to them, they weren't in a position and they weren't ready to go ahead with any kind of project.

And then now, you used the word "refurbish". I wish they were going to refurbish their units, but I understand that here we have some units 25 or 30 years old that they're going to demolish. Well are they suggesting for a minute that every 25- and 30-year-old house in this province be demolished? Because if that's the case, we wouldn't have any houses left in this province. I wish they would refurbish it.

Mr. Lyons: — It's interesting, Mr. Minister, that you point out precisely what's wrong with your innovative housing project — competition — having one group compete with another group for needed funds.

You said nothing about the need, and I don't know when the last time you were at Pioneer Village, but I certainly invite you, and I'll take you myself to go through some of the units which are now no longer occupied because of the condition they're in. And yes, I'll allow you to enter the territory of Regina Rosemont, and you can come in and take a look at Pioneer Village and of the kind of situation that exists there.

Why do people have to compete for housing? The need has been established. Why would they have to compete? What is it about this competition, right? I mean, they run you around in track shorts or something to try to get public housing, and public housing which is needed and when there's been a demonstrated need. You know, what's this fetish with competition? It's just part of your blind ideological approach to meeting basic human needs, in this case senior citizens' needs. I mean, you can't judge anything on their merit. You can't judge anything in regards to what's needed. You have to develop some kind of competition and some kind of market-place oriented project so in order to meet your

blind partisan faith.

I'm sure, Mr. Minister, when the project is approved, because the need will have been amply demonstrated and the proposal will have been shown to be a good proposal, that the people of Pioneer Village will appreciate it. But they'd certainly appreciate an announcement so that they can go ahead and do the planning and go ahead and do the building that's necessary on at Pioneer Village.

However, Mr. Minister, I've got another group of questions I'd like to ask, but before I do that, my colleague from Saskatoon Centre has some questions that he'd like to ask, and I believe some of the other members have questions that they'd like to get on the agenda now.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — The . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Don't like to hear this do you? Need is always considered even in our innovative housing process. And along with the need, cost-effectiveness comes into play and it only makes common sense. And I don't believe that you can place enough emphasis on the common sense.

(2145)

And I'll refer to last year's success. We assisted in a total of 245 units through the innovative housing program. Now that's 245 units that would have been there ordinarily, and that would be it if they were just ordinary assisted units without the innovative process. But when they were combined with the innovative process, when we took those projects and assisted 245 units, what ended up was the private third-party groups — the church groups and the like — provided a total of 302 units as a result of the innovative housing process. Now that's a dramatic number of increased housing units for the public because of this process.

As a matter of fact, this is the first time it was tried in Canada. The results are so startling that CMHC is now considering implementing this across the country because of the fantastic results. And you stand up here and seem to knock it for some reason that you can't even put your finger on, and you say that the innovative process is being knocked and kicked around. Talk to some of the church groups. Talk . . . Well, I'll wait for the member from Saskatoon, and I'll ask him if he talked to McClure and see what their opinion is on the innovative housing process.

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I have two areas that I want to briefly ask you questions about.

The first, Mr. Minister, relates to the policies of CMHC towards co-op housing in Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, you will be aware that under new CMHC policies co-op housing projects in this province are only eligible for 30 per cent of the spaces in that co-op housing project to be funded as low income spaces, which means, in other words, Mr. Minister, that the other 70 per cent of the spaces have to be self-financing spaces where the occupants of the co-op housing project pay the full cost of rent themselves. My understanding now, Mr. Minister, is that this federal funding is coming through the province

and that the province is administering the funding and passing it along to co-op housing projects.

My questions to you, Mr. Minister, are: number one, how much federal funding are you getting in the current fiscal year for these 30 per cent CMHC-funded co-op housing spaces? And number two, Mr. Minister: whether you are prepared to make representation to the Government of Canada, specifically to the minister responsible for CMHC, that this 30 per cent of funded spaces by CMHC be increased, so that at least 40 per cent of the spaces in any co-op housing project would be designated for the working poor if you like — lower middle income persons who don't qualify for the current CMHC subsidy but need some kind of assistance in order to be able to afford housing. So, Mr. Minister, in effect under these revised plans, 60 per cent of the spaces in any co-op housing project would receive some level of funding through CMHC, administered by your government, Mr. Minister.

So I'm wondering if you could respond to that. This is, you will have been aware, is the request that the Co-op Housing Association of Saskatchewan has made to CMHC and to your government.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, here's another example of the members not doing their homework. That's a federal housing policy. Sask Housing has nothing to do with it. I can't respond to any of that.

Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Minister, do you not acknowledge that it's the province that handles the money? That's my understanding, and if it doesn't come through Sask Housing, then what government department in your government receives the money, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — CMHC delivers the program.

Mr. Prebble: — You're incorrect, Mr. Minister. CMHC administers the program but the money, as I understand it, after checking with the co-op housing association, comes through your government. And therefore, Mr. Minister, you have a say about the policies that CMHC sets. You're certainly in a position to lobby them, and as I understand it you administer the funds and pass them along to co-op housing projects. If that's incorrect, perhaps you can inform me. But that is my understanding after talking to the co-op housing project groups, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — No, Mr. Chairman, it's a federal program, and they just unilaterally dictate to us what we become involved in; they tell us the amount, they deliver the program, they're in charge. We have nothing to do with it; you're in the wrong pew.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, I want to ask you one final question in this regard then, and that is whether you, as minister responsible for Sask Housing and responsible for shaping housing policies in this province, are prepared to make representation to CMHC and to the federal minister of CMHC, that the 30 per cent allocation for low income

persons being eligible for a subsidy from CMHC be increased to 40 per cent? And that in addition, CMHC fund at least 20 per cent of the spaces in a co-op housing project for middle income earners, if you like, so that in effect, Mr. Minister, 60 per cent of the spaces, rather than 30 per cent, would be subsidized. Otherwise, Mr. Minister, under the new CMHC policies a lot of co-op housing projects will simply not be viable, Mr. Minister. And you, I'm sure, are fully aware of that.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well you know, what can I tell you. I suppose that every province is caught up in the same thing. It's a federal policy. If the federal government chooses to listen to the provincial ministers, so be it. But conversely, if they don't, I mean what are we supposed to do about it? We're trying to develop our federal-provincial housing agreements as best we can. We don't ever want to be caught in the position again of having to put a moratorium on nursing homes. And as a result, we're constantly renegotiating these federal-provincial agreements to see where we can get to. And I believe that we're spending our money wisely. We've come up with a new program, as we've discussed, the innovative housing program. If we can help the co-ops with their project, we certainly will. But I'm in no position to dictate to the federal government.

Mr. Prebble: — Well clearly, Mr. Minister, it seems that you're going hand in hand with the federal government as part of a strategy of eroding the success of co-operative housing in this province and in Canada. That, Mr. Minister, is what you're all about. It's obvious from your comments that you have no intention of making representation to the Government of Canada or to CMHC.

Mr. Minister, I want you to provide me in writing with assurance that the province has nothing to do with administering these CMHC funds. I'm very surprised to hear your comment that you have nothing to do with it. And I'd like your officials to check back and assure me in writing that you have no responsibility for this, and I'll be passing that letter on to co-op housing groups in this province.

I've one other question for you, Mr. Minister, and that is: I wonder if you can tell the Assembly if you can provide us with a comparison, Mr. Minister, of the number of low income housing projects and, specifically, the number of spaces that you constructed in 1988 in comparison with the year 1981, Mr. Minister? Can you tell us for Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw, and Prince Albert how many low income housing spaces were created for low income people in 1981 as compared to 1988 for each of those four cities? Could you provide us with that information, please?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I don't think so, Mr. Chairman, because construction hasn't started for 1988.

Mr. Prebble: — Well maybe you could provide us with a comparison of 1987 with 1981, Mr. Minister. Would you be prepared to do that?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, some of the figures that I have — I don't have all the figures that he asked for,

obviously, but I have a figure here that indicates the number of units in 1980: total social housing delivery in 1980 was 1,360 units; in 1985 was 1,083; and the other figure that I have, in 1986, was 925.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, were those the figures for the province as a whole?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I am advised that that's figures for the whole province, yes.

Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Minister, what we see from those figures is a substantive reduction in funding for low income housing in this province, Mr. Minister, and clearly a deliberate policy of consistently cutting, between 1981 and 1985 to 1987. We see cuts, Mr. Minister, if I heard you correctly, of more than 400 units. Can you confirm that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I'm told that in about 1986 or thereabouts the federal government starting delivering some units that aren't included in those figures — that weren't delivered in the prior ones.

Mr. Prebble: — But will you answer my question, Mr. Minister? In terms of the units that you delivered, can you give us those figures again? Over 1,300, as I understood it, in 1980, and in comparison with that, only approximately 900 in '87. Can you give us those figures again please?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Yes, 1980 was 1,360 units; 1985 was 1,083; and 1986 was 925.

Mr. Prebble: — So, Mr. Minister, what we have is a cut of 435 units to low income people per year by your government between 1980 and 1987. I wonder if you can explain to the Assembly, Mr. Minister, I wonder if you can justify this cut of 435 units per year for low income people in this province at a time, Mr. Minister, when there's a desperate need for affordable housing among the poor in this province — a priority, Mr. Minister, that obviously your government doesn't recognize.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Chairman, certainly there are other things that we got involved with. We introduced a build-a-home program that provided \$3,000 grants to purchasers of new homes, and 5,455 grants were committed, for a total expenditure of almost \$16 million, and that assisted the total starts of that year reached 7,200 units.

And the first-time, new-home-buyers' grant introduced in March of '86 provided a \$3,000 grant to first-time home buyers of new homes, and that initiated over 3,500 starts. So we're delivering units in a different fashion now.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:58 p.m.