

EVENING SITTING

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Martin: — Mr. Chairman, the other day I had an opportunity to introduce some guests from across Canada who were part of the Elderhostel organization. So I explained at that time that this is a group of senior citizens who are interested in continuing learning, and so we have with us again tonight another group, numbering 43. And they are from six provinces across the country, as well as, we have a couple here from Texas, I understand.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the House, these people are here at Luther College and they're studying some rather interesting subjects.

And just before I mention that though, however, I'd like to mention who's running the organization tonight. We have Kay Achtzener, Winnie Brennan, Alison Watson, and Rosemary Duckett; they are the co-ordinators of the activity.

And as well, we have a Dr. Robert McClure, who is the past moderator of the United Church of Canada. Dr. McClure, would you please stand for a second, sir. And Dr. McClure, of course, as we all know, spent a great many years in China, and one of the subjects that they'll be discussing is Canada in the Pacific Rim, using the great knowledge of Dr. McClure. As well as that also, they'll be studying medical ethics.

Ladies and gentlemen, everybody in the legislature here tonight is not . . . Thank you, Dr. McClure . . . are not members. We have behind us here and also sitting in the chairs members of the Department of Education who will be advising the minister, who is just about to sit down, on some of the questions that will be asked by the members opposite. As I mentioned to you earlier tonight — today — they are doing estimates on the Department of Education and that will continue now. Would all the people here please join me in welcoming our guests from across Canada as well as Texas.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Chairman, as a member of the opposition and the critic for seniors' issues I'd like to extend a warm welcome to the members from the Elderhostel trip and tour. I've just become familiar with the movement and the work that you're doing and it's really exciting that you've come here to Regina to see the legislature, and to study also under Dr. McClure. We're really pleased to have you here this evening and we all extend a very warm welcome to you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Education
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 5

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Rolfes: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to join with the other two in welcoming the seniors here this evening. But I would . . . A special welcome to Dr. Robert McClure, who I recently met at the opening of McClure Place again. We had the privilege some years ago to be on a panel together where we discussed senior problems across Canada. And it is our pleasure having you here, Dr. McClure, and we hope you have a very good stay in Regina, and a good educational experience with all the other seniors. Thank you very much for being here this evening.

Mr. Minister, before supper, before we adjourned before supper we had finished up a particular topic. I want to, as I indicated to you before supper, I want to turn very briefly — and I mean very briefly — to the situation at the U of R (University of Regina), and that is the students union centre which you are well aware . . . A great announcement was made six months before the provincial election in 1986; and six months, I think, almost to the day after the '86 election was over, an announcement again was made that you would not proceed.

Mr. Minister, I did ask you in a question period some weeks ago whether or not you had provided, in the budget, for the students union centre at the U of R. The students there are very concerned about that centre; they think that it is a place that is absolutely needed. And I was wondering, Mr. Minister, if you could give us a definitive answer tonight as to the status of the student union centre at the University of Regina.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — No there isn't money in this year's budget for that project, and I'm sorry about that, but the decision to go with that particular project has been deferred for another year, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, you really have given a new definition to the six-month hoist, there's no doubt about that. But, Mr. Minister, I wonder if you, in light of the fact that it is a high priority for the students at the University of Regina, would you be prepared to go to treasury board on this particular issue? And not only will it create jobs for people here in Regina in building that student union centre, but it would certainly help the . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. I would ask the members to allow the member from Saskatoon South to put his question.

Mr. Rolfes: — Thank you very much. Mr. Minister, I was wondering whether you would be prepared to make a special effort and go to treasury board to try and get the moneys for the students at the University of Regina. I know that your budget is tight, but I have . . . Since the House has been open, you people have come up with a lot of money that wasn't in the budget. I can give you a number of examples, but I think you know that for yourself . . . Whether or not you would be prepared to go to treasury board to request for the moneys for the student union centre.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — No I am not going to go to

treasury board. We've presented our case; the university has presented their cases to us, to myself; I carried that forward to cabinet at budget review. I was happy to see cabinet approve their budget request. That budget request includes 127 per cent increase at the University of Saskatchewan for capital construction projects — an unprecedented increase, probably. A new agriculture college is probably the centre-piece of that particular capital construction.

Here at the University of Regina: an addition to Luther College to accommodate as well the summer centre for international languages; the language centre at U of R, a major project with the federal-provincial agreement. So it's not as though we're not conscious that capital construction projects need to go on. It's just that the student union one has, albeit a priority in many students' minds, given all the economic realities we deal with, that's been deferred for another year. But certainly some of these other projects which we consider a very high priority are going forward.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, you did mention the minority language centre. Would you mind telling me what the cost sharing is on that one? How much federal and how much provincial?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, the capital costs are all coming from the federal government.

Mr. Rolfes: — That's what I thought, Mr. Minister. I just wanted to make sure that there wasn't some misunderstanding that the provincial government was putting in some money on the minority language building because that is 100 per cent funded by the federal government.

Mr. Minister, you do get things rather muddled up a bit; there are two campuses. I was not referring to the U of S (University of Saskatchewan), although they badly need some money for upgrading of building as you well know. But the University of Regina, and I'm sure that all members from Regina well know this, their buildings are deteriorating rather rapidly. And I think it's poor economics, it's really poor economics not to provide them with adequate funds so that they can upgrade the buildings at the U of R.

And, you know, I know you like talking about money spent on capital and, yes, a fair amount of money is being spent at the U of S, but that doesn't help the U of R here. And I'm sure that the administration at the U of R have made that very clear to you: that it's not very cost saving or cost efficient to let those buildings deteriorate at the rapid pace that they are right now. And I think in the long run you would save the people of Saskatchewan a lot of money and the U of R a lot of money if more funds would be made available to the U of R for upgrading their buildings.

And, Mr. Minister, I would like to ask you the question now. For the U of R, what moneys are in the budget for upgrading of buildings at the U of R?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Without including the language centre which we talked about, which is federal funding,

or the WESTBRIDGE building, the University of Regina will see \$6.329 million spent in capital construction projects. The details are these: library computer system at Campion, building addition at Luther, building addition and library, computer system, utility tunnels to the tune of about 2.5 million, library upgrading slightly over a million, and then there's various projects under 100 K, which are going to total around 480,000. So excluding the federal one and the WESTBRIDGE one, we're looking at 6.329 million.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, why would you even mention the WESTBRIDGE one? Is there provincial moneys being put into the WESTBRIDGE one? Questions that we ask about WESTBRIDGE . . . And no minister wants to answer any questions on it because they say it wasn't privatized. It's been privatized even though the government has some moneys in it, some equity. Would you mind telling me, are you planning on putting in some money in that WESTBRIDGE building?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — No, our department isn't putting any money into that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, do you know if any other department of government is putting money into it?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, no, I don't know.

Mr. Rolfes: — You don't know, or you don't want to tell me?

Okay, Mr. Minister, I want to . . . We were on libraries. I wanted to turn now to the U of S library, and I have a couple of articles here on the position of the U of S library, vis-a-vis other libraries in Canada, and, Mr. Minister, there is an assessment that was done of 106 libraries across Canada. The library at the U of S came at the bottom or very near the bottom in so far as books were concerned, resources were concerned, reference materials, and overall the library did not stack up very well with other libraries.

Now I was wondering whether you could tell me what discussions you have had and what requests were made by the U of S in making you aware of, really, the desperate situation that the library is in. Can you tell me, in their request, what request did they make, and what request did you honour as far as helping them to upgrade the library at the U of S?

(1915)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — As it relates to the library and other projects at the University of Saskatchewan that have been funded out of the university renewal and development fund, library acquisitions out of that fund have been something in the order of \$1 million.

Obviously there's been many other projects, and the university has prioritized their projects for us, not merely us doing it for them. And of course over that same time that fund has drawn down for the Administration Building, 6.6 million; there's the animal resource centre, 5 million; computer systems, 7 million; agriculture sciences, 17 million; waste management, pharmacy

additions, the list goes on and on and on.

But relative to library specifically on the fund of which the pay-outs were made in '87-88 and '88-89, out of that fund specifically the total has been . . . Out of three years actually, '86 through '89, has been a million dollars, a little over a million dollars.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, do you think that that is adequate to bring the U of S library up from, you know, about eighth out of 12 to, let's say, in the top rank? Would that be sufficient, the funds that you have made available?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I think it reflects the university's priority that it places on having a high-quality library. I wouldn't even want to suggest that this expenditure out of the URDF fund (university renewal and development fund) is all that has gone into that library, because it may well be that the university has, out of operating capital if you like, or out of other sources of revenue, put additional moneys into the library, in library acquisitions and computer systems and that kind of thing. I can't tell you where it's moved it in an international ranking order. I know it's been of some concern to them and I suspect they've reflected that concern in how they've prioritized the projects as they've brought them forward to us.

I guess I would say this relative to libraries. I don't know as you can ever spend too much. But you do have to prioritize the money you have at hand. That's part of managing and managing responsibly.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, the universities can't print money. And you talk about managing. I get a little concerned about that because you people a few years ago budgeted for a \$389 million deficit and it went to about \$1.2 billion. Now the U of S can't do that. They are not allowed to run deficits.

So it's a little unfair of you to say that they'd have to, you know, if it's not high in their priority, that's their problem. No, they just don't have the money. And it can be as high a priority as they wish to make it, but if they don't have additional sums of money they simply have to let the libraries deteriorate, and that's what's happened. That's exactly what's happening.

And you talk to the students. You talk to the students who attend there and they'll tell you, and the staff will tell you. I think when the university comes to you for funds and they make the case to you that the library is in desperate need of additional money, I think it's unfair of you to say, well but it's up to you to give it a higher priority. They just don't have sufficient funds, Mr. Minister, to do it, and I think you realize that.

Let me, Mr. Minister, turn you to the education library at the U of S, and I'm sure you're familiar with the article written by Myrna Sprecker, who was a former head of the education branch library at the U of S. And you know, some of her facts that she brings here do not speak well of the education library and the resources that it has available for our future teachers. They simply don't have the money. They don't have the materials to do it.

Let me just give you a couple of examples, Mr. Minister. When you compare it with the University of Alberta, the University of Alberta has 5,000 students, they have a monograph budget of 120,000. The University of Saskatchewan has 2,500 students — half the number. You would expect that they would have about a \$60,000 budget, but they don't. They have a 33,502, about one-quarter — about one-quarter of what the . . . Pardon me, about one-half of what the U of A (University of Alberta) has. And the University of Regina, with 1,100 students, has 42,000.

Now, Mr. Minister, we could . . . What about staff? Let's go to the staff. The staff at the university education library, if you compare it to the University of Alberta, again they have 5,000 students but they have 11 staff; U of R, 1,100 — they have four staff; U of S with 2,500 students — they have two staff.

So, Mr. Minister, if we want to provide quality education, one spot where it should be done at our universities and our technical institutes is the library, the resource centre. And if we don't provide sufficient moneys to our universities so that they can provide excellent resource centres and libraries, then I think the quality of education undoubtedly will suffer. I'm simply asking you, Mr. Minister, when the universities come to you next year for additional sums of money — which they will — and they make libraries a high priority, please don't tell them, well it's up to them to give it even a higher priority. If they are limited . . . If they have limited sums of money, they just don't have a choice. So, Mr. Minister, I'd like you to comment if you wish.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, I think books hold in my heart, like they do in many people's hearts, a special place. And certainly at a university setting they're considered one of the main working tools, if you like, in terms of discovering new knowledge. And I will be the first to admit that you can always use more money in education and you can always use more money in libraries.

But I'll tell you what. There's one thing I don't need and that's a lecture from the NDP on capital spending at the university. This year, at the University of Saskatchewan, we are spending 127 per cent more than we spent last year. And I will submit to this legislature — I don't have this for sure — but I will submit to this legislature and to all the members here that we are spending more in capital construction at the University of Saskatchewan in one year than you socialists did in 10 years in your administration. I guarantee that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — So we don't need any lectures from the socialists when we're spending capital to the tune of 12.4 million in agriculture research; \$15 million from the university renewal fund; seven and a half million in ordinary capital; 10 million from education; for a total of \$46.2 million in one year, and there will be more forthcoming in the years ahead, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, given the chirping from the chairs opposite, it seems that I've hit a nerve on this issue.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well okay, fine with me. Mr. Minister, you talk about capital construction. That's all you want to talk about. What about, you know, you build and build and build, but you won't provide them with the staff — oh no, you won't provide them with the staff.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — The same thing applies to the Minister of Health when it comes to hospitals. He's quite prepared to say, okay, I'll give you some money for capital, but don't ask me for any nurses. Don't ask me for any nurses — oh, no. You're quite prepared to say to some of the school boards, all right, we'll give you some money for capital, but no money for teachers, no money for librarians.

Mr. Minister, don't get on your high horse about what you are doing for operating grants. Your operating grants to universities have been atrocious. They have been atrocious.

Oh, you don't have any money, you won't go to treasury board for extra money for the union centre — oh no, you can't do that. But you got \$5 million to spend on Montpetit. Oh what does he do? Buys himself a nice jet. Takes a nice trip to San Francisco on a weekend for \$15,000. You're quite prepared to pay for that. Oh yes, you're quite prepared to give money to somebody that you can fly all over the world and spend four million bucks, but you haven't got money for the libraries.

Oh yes, you're quite prepared to set up a Future Corporation for \$9 million, and to have money in an election year to spend on political projects. Oh yes, you've got money for that, but you don't have money when it comes to our libraries at the universities. Oh no, you don't.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — So don't get on your high horse about how committed you are to quality education.

Mr. Minister, I asked you a question about the libraries. I didn't ask you about the Geology Building. I asked you about libraries and funding of libraries. I asked you what you were prepared to do to try and get the University of Saskatchewan's libraries from about the bottom of 106 libraries that were surveyed to somewhere in the upper ranks. That's all I'm asking you to do, and I don't need a lecture about how many capital construction you have put on the U of S. If you want to get into that, we'll get into it.

But I want to ask you again, Mr. Minister, what are you prepared to do when the universities come and request additional money so that they can upgrade their libraries? Are you going to tell them again, get your priorities straightened out. Well I think some of them should tell you to get your priorities straightened out. To spend \$4 million on GigaText, and let some stranger have sole signing powers and sign away \$4 million, and no accountability, and have \$9 million in setting up a corporation which is purely political — but you don't

have any money for libraries.

I'm asking you again, Mr. Minister, what can the universities expect from you next time around when they come and demand that they need additional moneys to upgrade their libraries? What can they expect from the Minister of Education?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier tonight, the library spending, just like other projects on the university that we fund, what we have done there has reflected the priorities that the university have brought forward to us. Obviously we've had joint discussion on them, but they reflect the priorities they have brought forward. And because this government has reflected across the piece that education is indeed a priority, I suspect that's what triggered the president, President Kristjanson, to report to Senate, and I quote from his report:

Therefore, I am very pleased to be able to report the recent provincial budget provided a 6.8 per cent increase in the operating grant, considerably above the amount we were led to expect would be available in preliminary meetings with government officials.

Now it seems to me that the president is saying, we identify our priorities; they meet them; and maybe even meet to a greater degree than they even expected. That's point number one. You yourself the other day in this House referred to some StatsCanada figures, and it might be worth reviewing them to show how we do respond to the university as a priority.

The StatsCanada *Bulletin*, 81-002, Volume 10, No. 7, financial statistics of Canadian universities, 1986-87. Are we shirking our duties to universities so that students are having to pick up an unfair share through student fees? Well, Mr. Speaker, what does StatsCanada have to say about that? What they say is that across Canada, student fees as a percentage of university income are 16 per cent for the year '86-87, and in Saskatchewan the same number, 12.6 per cent, Mr. Chairman — less than the Canadian average. Our students have not had to carry an unfair burden.

What about university expenditures as a percentage of total education expenditures? That part that we spend on universities, is it a larger or smaller share than what other provinces might spend? Well in Saskatchewan we spent 20 per cent for the year '77-78 through '86-87, and Canada on average was 18 per cent. So once again, we're ahead of the Canadian average.

(1930)

And then finally, and I know this one is a bit of an embarrassment to the NDP, the capital expenditures '86-87 as a percentage change from '85-86, Canada saw a 25 per cent increase across universities as a whole, and in Saskatchewan up 43 per cent, nearly double the Canadian average, Mr. Speaker. And that leads me to agree with what the critic has said tonight to this degree: when he said all we do is build, build, build — you're right, and it'll continue.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, that's absolute nonsense what you are saying, absolute . . .

An Hon. Member: — StatsCanada.

Mr. Rolfes: — Yes I'll read you StatsCanada. I don't know where you got your figures, but I'll read you StatsCanada. It was the exact same figures, those are the exact same figures I had yesterday which you called socialist mathematics. It was StatsCanada figures that I had yesterday.

And, Mr. Minister, here they are, here they are: percentage of provincial budget on advanced education by province ranked — here they are — 1987. Let me just read them to you, Mr. Minister: Newfoundland, 5.76, they rank third; Prince Edward Island, 5.61, they rank fourth; Nova Scotia, 5.40, they rank sixth; New Brunswick, 6.05, they rank one; Quebec, 5.57, they rank fifth; Ontario, 5.07, they rank eighth; Manitoba, 4.24, they rank ninth; Alberta, 5.77, they rank second; British Columbia, 5.12, they rank seventh. Where do you think Saskatchewan is? Saskatchewan, 4.34, and one of the members over there says on the top. Well if you consider ninth out of tenth top, yes they do. They come in ninth. This is Statistics Canada, Mr. Minister, 1987. The per cent of the advanced education budget compared to your total budget, you come in ninth. That's where you stand amongst all the other provinces. So don't tell me where you stand as far as expenditures are concerned for advanced education. These come from Statistics Canada, and they were, Mr. Minister, if you're not aware, made public by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, by the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Mr. Minister, I could do the same thing, for example, with elementary education. You know where you come in? Tenth. Exactly last. Of all the provinces, you come in last on your spending from grades 1 to grade 12. You come in ninth out of 10 on your expenditures for advanced education. So don't tell me that you have these great expenditures and that you are such an influential person when you go before cabinet and treasury board to get money for education. In that sense, Mr. Minister, you're a flop. You're a flop. You have no influence whatsoever. None.

Mr. Minister, I want to . . .

An Hon. Member: — Throw in the shorts.

Mr. Rolfes: — I don't think he's got any left. He's got his bell rung.

Mr. Minister, you talk about tuition fee increases, and let's have a look at tuition fee increases. Over the last number of years, Mr. Minister, you must admit, since 1982, the tuition fees at the University of Regina have increased by 88 per cent. Since 1982 they've increased by 88 per cent. You know, Mr. Minister . . . Mr. Minister, would you mind telling me how much the tuition fees have increased at the U of S since 1982. Mr. Minister . . . He's not even listening.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Just for clarification, did I

understand you to say that they've increased by 88 per cent in five years, which would be in excess of 10 or 15 per cent a year? Could you clarify that for me?

Mr. Rolfes: — Since 1982, I want to know . . . I've asked you, since 1982, what have tuition fees been increased by. What per cent have tuition fees increased?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I don't have the tuition fees going back to 1982. And I can say, as the hon. member well knows, that the board of governors set the tuition fee. That doesn't mean to say that I don't know what it is. But I can say that universities across the board, across western Canada certainly, have tried to make those increases minimal.

I don't have it with me, but certainly I know I think I read into this legislature last year, a letter from the students council thanking us for accepting their recommendations relative to tuition fee increases at our institutes, for example. What I can advise you is that the western Canadian comparisons for '89-90, per cent increase over previous years — U of S, 5 per cent; U of R, 5.7 — stacks up reasonably well compared to the U of M (University of Manitoba), which it went up 10 per cent; the U of A, four and a half per cent; U of Calgary, four and a half; UBC (University of British Columbia), 10 per cent; and Ontario, 7.6 per cent. And if we were to pick agriculture, for example, at the University of Saskatchewan, the fee there is 1,344; at the U of M it's 1,532; and at UBC it's 1,934. So I think we're reasonably enough well positioned there. Alberta is slightly . . . The U of A is slightly lower than ourselves.

Education, I pick another fairly popular college — tuition 1,344 at the U of S; 1,480 at the U of R; 1,284 at the U of M; 1,605 at UBC; and the two Alberta colleges coming in slightly lower than the other ones in western Canada. And one other one I might read for you then is arts — U of S, 1,344; U of R, 1,480; U of M, 1,284; and once again, B.C. coming in at 1,605.

So I think the boards of governors, along with the students, have been very responsible on their approach to tuition fees. And as the StatsCanada numbers pointed out, our percentage that the students pay as a source of university revenues and from their tuition fees, is lower than the Canadian average, and that would be other third-party evidence to suggest the same, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I am not surprised that you don't have those figures there, because you don't . . . I asked him for the tuition fee increases for the U of S and the U of R, and I don't believe for one minute, Mr. Minister, that you don't have those figures there. Not for one minute. With all the help that you have over there, they could tell you immediately what the tuition fees were in 1985 or 1984 or 1982, and simply know what they are today and work out the percentage. That takes two minutes to do it. I know why you don't want to do it.

I couldn't find mine for a minute, but I did find them while you were speaking, and sometimes I am thankful that you speak at some lengths, because I found the figures that I wanted.

Mr. Minister, the U of R, let me give you the figures. The U of R, 1982-1983, it was \$424. Today they are \$740 per semester. That is an increase of 61.6 per cent. In fact it's a little more than that. That was for 1983, I believe, to 1989.

Mr. Minister . . . Okay, I see the deputy minister shaking his head. He doesn't believe those figures. Mr. Minister, what I am going to do . . . We're going to turn to another topic. In the meantime, I want your officials to give me what the tuition fees were in 1982-83 at the U of S and the tuition fees at the U of R at that time and what they are today, and then give me the percentage increases. We will talk . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, give them to me. We will . . . I have a right to know what they are. And we will turn to another topic, Mr. Minister, while your officials calculate those percentages.

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Minister, Mr. Minister, I'd like to turn to ask you some questions about the provincial library, Mr. Minister. Is there some reason why the Provincial Librarian is not here tonight?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, our Provincial Librarian would like to be here but is at a conference in Alberta. And Marilyn Jenkins, who I introduced to the House on opening night of estimates, is here in her place.

Ms. Smart: — So she would be here if she was not away. Well that's something. Mr. Minister, I just have a few questions . . .

An Hon. Member: — That's the same as the rest of us — we'd be away if we weren't here.

Ms. Smart: — Well, the member from Meadow Lake is making a joke about this so let me explain what I mean, Mr. Minister. Last year when you were doing the estimates for the provincial library, the Provincial Librarian was not sitting beside you. She was at the back of the room. And my concern has been, since you've reorganized the provincial library, that it was losing status as an autonomous group, an autonomous system. And I continue to have those concerns as do many people who are interested in the public library system in Saskatchewan. And that's my reason for asking about the status of the Provincial Librarian in terms of being here to answer to questions to estimates.

Now, Mr. Minister, I want to ask you just briefly about the Saskatchewan library board, because you put out a news release in June of this year — of 1989 — announcing the Saskatchewan library board members. The last time you had a library board members was in 1987 and according to the annual report you completed . . . You did not appoint new members after 1987 because you were doing a review of the board's roles and responsibilities.

The review was completed in March of 1988. And it has taken from March of 1988 to June of 1989 for you to appoint new board members, Mr. Minister. Can you stand in the House and explain to me why that delay in appointing the board members?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I think the delay that the hon. member is referring to is that various jurisdictions make nominations to us that I take forward to cabinet. And

many of them had come forward and some of them, it took three and four and five and six months because they didn't have annual meetings or whatever, and some of them . . . There were some very lengthy delays, and I recognize that.

But we've since . . . On June 7 of this year, you're aware of the fact that the library board members were appointed, and we had all the nominations from the various jurisdictions, and it's in hand and behind us.

An Hon. Member: — I'm sorry, Mr. Minister, but I'm having . . . (inaudible) . . .

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, you're aware that as of June 7, '89 we put out a release relative to the new library board members and the various groups and their appointments to that board.

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Minister, I'm aware of that. I have a copy of that news release here. It's taken you from March of '88 to June of '89 to appoint that Saskatchewan library board, and you are saying to me then that the reason you took over a year — a year and three months — is because the various groups that are represented on this board didn't get the names in to you. So it's taken them that long. It has nothing to do with you and your concern to have a functioning library board to assist you.

Could you please tell me what the role of this library board is now going to be? Given that the . . . It doesn't seem to have any control over budget and it doesn't seem to have any input in terms of presenting an annual report to the legislature. So what is the role of the Saskatchewan library board?

(1945)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, the board, if I was to put it in sort of something other than legalese, probably is best characterized as providing a sounding board for the minister and for our government, for our library officials relative to the public library system in the province.

It provides advice to myself on co-ordinating and planning around our Saskatchewan library system.

I think that's why we have representatives on the boards from regional and municipal library boards, from the school trustees to bring their perspective, from the association of rural municipalities as it relates to the funding question, from the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association for the same reason, and as well some members at large.

It's a way, I suppose, for us to stay in close touch to all those players who directly or indirectly are involved in library services across the province. I've met with them as well as meeting with the Saskatchewan Library Trustees' Association over the course of my term. I find the meetings very useful, and that they do a great service on behalf of the people of the province.

Ms. Smart: — Well of course, but you've been operating for a year without any kind of a sounding board and that's

probably why you're getting yourself into so much trouble.

Mr. Minister, in the annual report there is no breakdown of the expenditures for the library per se. There is only statistics regarding the cataloguing costs. There's figures regarding inter-library loans and library circulation, but there's no separate reporting on the public library budget.

Now I've made this point in estimates before, and I'm not going to make it again except just very quickly to point out to you that you have destroyed the autonomy of the public library system by eliminating the annual report, by being very tardy in appointing any sort of a library board, and by burying, in effect, the provincial library system inside the Department of Education. And you have, in the years that you have been in charge of this provincial library, broken up what was one of the best public library systems, autonomous systems, in Canada and in North America, as a matter of fact.

Now, Mr. Minister, here's another example. You didn't appoint your board for 15 months, and now you've also in this annual report reported on having a task force on library services for people with disabilities. It completed its report during the year 1987 to 1988. The report was entitled *Partners in Planning: Libraries and People with Disabilities*. It provides recommendations on ways to improve library services to people with disabilities.

What have you done about those recommendations, Mr. Minister, since its annual report came out and you received that task force report?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The document to which you refer, I think for the most part, has been one that's been well received. It was to serve as a blueprint and as a resource document for local libraries. And I suppose it contains a lot of material, but if I was to sort of give you some chronological sense of what the first approach has been, which is consistent with the document, was encouraging local libraries and local boards to do a needs assessment. And I would suggest that's the stage that they're in right now. And some may be farther along than others, some may not have turned their head to it, and some may be well along in it. But that was the first and foremost recommendation, really, in a chronological sense.

Ms. Smart: — What financial resources have you given to the regional libraries to carry out this needs assessment and the rest of it?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — There's no special moneys been made available to them. If you like, it's part of their normal operations.

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Minister, the recommendations from this task force to provide library services to people with disabilities had a lot of recommendations in it which need funding in order to be implemented. The libraries can't possibly do it on the amount of money that you're giving them to operate normally, because you've already been cutting them back and back in terms of the amount of money that they have to operate the systems that now exist. And you're telling me that you're not providing any

more funds. You've had this report since 1988, and you're not giving the libraries any money to implement the recommendations in that report.

Mr. Minister, library services to people with disabilities is something that's been important to public library workers for some time, and you should be putting some resources to support that.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The hon. member's observation about the cost of implementing some of what needs to be done by any given board is accurate, in that there may well be some significant cost to library boards. But what I said to you was, the step that they are now engaged in, for the most part, is assessing what they need to do. That's not a high cost item relative to what might be in store for them.

I think you've got the cart before the horse, if you like. First we must identify what needs to be done, they must identify what needs to be done, and then they put their heads to acting upon the results of their needs assessment. We have made no special funding available to them to do that assessment other than sort of the normal resources that we make available to them through our officials, in terms of any usefulness that they may be to these people.

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Minister, what was the purpose of the task force on library services for people with disabilities if it wasn't to identify the needs? What did it do?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — That was the first thing, identify the needs . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's what they're doing now, is identifying the needs. What do I fund? Until they come and establish what the needs are, what do I do?

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Minister, your annual report 1987-88, says:

The Task Force on Library Services for People with Disabilities completed its report during the year. *Partners in Planning: Libraries and People with Disabilities* provides recommendations on ways to improve library services to people with disabilities.

Mr. Minister, that couldn't be any more clear.

That task force report had recommendations that were presented to the Department of Education. I don't know whether you've seen it or not, but it must have gone somewhere within the Department of Education, because it's mentioned in this annual report.

Now, Mr. Minister, what have you done to help the libraries fund what they need to do? You haven't done anything, have you? You're just continuing to go back to reinvent the wheel and to say they're right back to stage one — identifying needs. But this report was completed in '88 and it identified and made recommendations.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Their first step is to do an assessment, and I think you and I are probably going to have to disagree on whether that's a viable step in dealing with this, but I believe it is. It makes sense. If you're going

to spend some dollars, you have to know where you're going to spend them and in what order of priority.

Over and above that, I can't give you all the details on it, but if my memory serves me correctly, there are capital grants, for example, relative to building accessibility through four libraries and other buildings through the Department of Parks, Culture and Recreation.

And in so far as in-house at the provincial library, as part of our new collections, print Braille material, books for the developmentally disabled. I am not suggesting for a moment that we've got all we would like, but we obviously recognize it as an important area or we wouldn't have had the report commissioned.

Mr. Rolfes: — I know you have received a letter from the Palliser Regional Library on May 2. It was written to you on May 2; I assume you got it a few days later. And I think in that letter it is very aptly put — the state of affairs of the regional libraries and how desperate they are for money. They really cannot accomplish their goals and their objectives because, as they say . . . And I'll read some of the selected items to you.

Mr. Minister, I know you have the letter. In paragraph three, the people say:

We, the Board, feel that the provincial government has a responsibility to the public to maintain and improve this important community resource, the public library. If funding for public libraries is not increased substantially, there will continue to be a deterioration in our ability to meet the needs of our public.

I'll go on to the next paragraph:

With cutbacks in provincial funding, the Board has taken on the function of raising funds in order to maintain our present hours of opening. We are coming to rely more and more on local service groups and individuals for donations in order that we may update our material. As well, the town of Assiniboia and some of the municipalities that we serve are providing additional funding to the library above the initial levy they provided for our operation.

Mr. Minister, I want you to note the next sentence.

In the Palliser Region, municipalities provide 50 per cent of our funding. More and more, fund raising is becoming the means by which we maintain, rather than supplement our operating budget.

Mr. Minister, this lady finishes off in the last paragraph with the following:

A large segment of our population use the library. Indeed, for many, the library is part of their day to day life. We encourage you to support the library system of this province by providing increases in government grants to libraries that will not only allow us to maintain present services, but to

improve them as well. A library (and please note this, it makes exactly the point I made before) is more than a building with books, it is an educational tool.

And this is signed by Dilys Forsythe, chairperson, Assiniboia library board. And it was sent to the Hon. Grant Devine; Roy Romanow, Leader of the Opposition; and Jack Wolfe, MLA.

Mr. Minister, I don't want to elaborate any further because I think this lady states it very well, what they feel has happened to their regional libraries over the last number of years. The lack of funding is not allowing them to accomplish their goals and their objectives and making it a resource in the community for the people to use as an educational tool. And what they need is more funding. They need more operating grants. And that's what they've asked you to do, and that's what my colleague is asking you to do also.

There are other needs for the disabled, for the disadvantaged, and they cost money. They simply can't take it out of their ordinary expenditures because they are underfunded already. And if you're serious about it, Mr. Minister, you will provide additional funds. And I'd like to have your comment, not just on my comments.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — I want to know, Mr. Minister, what did you say to the Palliser Regional Library about the problems that they have, and how did you address it.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well what my specific reply to Dilys Forsythe at Assiniboia was that . . . Obviously I reiterated that I share her view about the importance of libraries, and that the increase at 2 per cent, albeit an increase, we would have liked to have seen a larger increase.

I think it's worth noting that this year the library budget, as you will see in your blue book, shows a 5.5 per cent increase . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, if I was a librarian I'd probably like to see at 10.5 per cent, or a 20.5. I mean that's the reality in this business. But I think under . . . given the context of the entire budget, I think a reasonable increase.

(2000)

When that 5.5 per cent shows up, it is explained in this way: 2 per cent increase on urban, regional, and northern grants, and then some special funding increases for our northern library and our northern federation, to the tune of about 280,000. One talks about educational services in Assiniboia, and elsewhere, and I recognize they, too, have to meet challenges, but I think that our provincial library, along with the rest of the library systems across this province, has been doing a tremendous public service. We're getting better and better co-ordination all the time. They're moving to automation.

And I would like specifically to point out to you about the tremendous strides forward that are being made relative to library services in northern Saskatchewan. You know,

when the NDP government were in power they had the northern library, and you know where the northern library was located? Was the northern library located north of Saskatoon, for example? Even north of Prince Albert, for example? Well you know where the northern library was located? Why, hon. member from Saskatoon Fairview, even you would find this amusing. Under your socialist colleagues in the '70s, the northern library was located in a building in downtown Regina, Mr. Chairman. Well what we have done is move the northern library into the North, and that's what that Bill was all about that I gave first reading to in this legislature today, and we're proud of it, and we'll continue to put more resources into that area.

And the co-operation up there is tremendous. When I was on that northern school tour, when I was on that northern school tour in La Loche and Buffalo Narrows and Ile-a-la-Crosse and other centres, you know what I saw? I saw a public entrance in all those, in virtually every high school or school I visited, a public entrance to the school library area. That's the kind of co-operation, co-ordination that's going on in northern Saskatchewan, and I take my hat off to all the jurisdictions involved in that kind of effort in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman, because that gives good library service to all the people without this turf fighting and territorialism that sometimes can go on.

Mr. Rolfes: — Well it's strange, isn't it, Mr. Minister, how everybody else is so wrong and you're so right. You know, the universities are wrong; they got their priorities mixed up. Mrs. Forsythe is wrong because she just can't stand having a library that can't meet its goals. But that's not your fault; that's their fault. It's everybody else's fault but yours. Everybody else's fault but yours.

And I simply want to say to you, Mr. Minister, I think as far as meeting the needs of the universities and the libraries are concerned, you've been an utter failure. You've been an utter failure. You haven't been nearly as successful, Mr. Minister, as the minister responsible for GigaText has been. He was able to get \$5 million and blow it on nothing.

Now you haven't been nearly as successful as the Deputy Premier has been. He needed \$175 million for Cargill. Boy, he could come up with it just like that. Oh yes, lots of money. Lots of money . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh yes, I'm sorry, I took . . . Well no, but I took the Premier's word for it. I should have known better. Two hundred and ninety million dollars, the Deputy Premier can just come with it like that. But you can't come up with a few bucks for our regional libraries. That shows what influence you have in cabinet and what influence you have in treasury — zippo, zippo.

Mr. Minister, when the minister, again the Deputy Premier, wanted a Future Corporation set up for political purposes, he went to treasury board. Up they came with nine million bucks. But you can't come up with a million dollars — the additional million dollars for their regional library. Again it shows your influence.

Mr. Minister, I just have a few minutes left for my estimates here. I was wondering whether all your officials

over there have been able to calculate for me the increase of tuition fees at the U of R and at the U of S.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, we've had a couple officials leave to see if they can't get hold of somebody at the universities or whatever resources we might have to see if we can't get that information for you as quickly as possible.

What I can give you, just getting back to this library question and the despicable track record . . .

Mr. Chairman: — The member from Moose Jaw North, please allow the minister to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — What I can provide the hon. member with relative to our track record in terms of funding libraries: in 1989, you might be interested to know that Saskatchewan still leads the western provinces in per capita grants to public libraries. Saskatchewan spends \$5.43 per person; Alberta, 4.40; Manitoba, \$3.03; and British Columbia, 2.50. And I think that speaks to the importance that we place on the library system in this province, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, we'll have to leave the library. The letter from Mrs. Forsythe speaks for itself. If you're saying that Mrs. Forsythe isn't telling the truth, I want you to say that to the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg whose riding she's in. You're saying that she's not telling the truth; it's fine if you tell me but I'm not coming to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I can defend myself here but Mrs. Forsythe can't. And I take exception to you saying that Mrs. Forsythe doesn't know what she's talking about.

Mr. Minister, I just have a few minutes left, and I will give you the figures for the tuition fee increases. Now in April of 1982, the tuition at Regina was \$392 per semester; in May of 1989, it was \$740 per semester. All right? Now that doesn't take very much of a calculation to figure out that from that time on, from April of 1982 to May of 1989 — and I'm sure your deputy will be able to calculate that — it works out to about 88.8 per cent increase.

An Hon. Member: — Say 89.

Mr. Rolfes: — 88.8 per cent — 392 to 740.

An Hon. Member: — Round it out to 89, Herman.

Mr. Rolfes: — Well, doesn't it work out to that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Minister, that is what it works out to. It's an 88.8 per cent increase. And during that time, Mr. Minister, the inflation rate was less than 40 per cent — less than 40 per cent, but tuition fees went up by almost 89 per cent. And you say that you're adequately funding in operating grants to universities? That's hog-wash — simply is not true, Mr. Minister.

And that is why, Mr. Minister, you rank ninth or 10th in support of advanced education in this country. That's where you rank — ninth in support of advanced education vis-a-vis your budget. As a percentage of your budget, you rank ninth or 10th in this country. Those are facts, Mr. Minister. You can't deny those.

Mr. Minister, in our estimates so far we have shown that you have some serious problems, problems that you must address. You've got some serious problems with your private schools. The regulations are very loose. There's very little assessment done, and we've found that hundreds of thousands of dollars . . . In fact, I think by your own figures, by one private school alone, over a million dollars of student loans have gone into that school, and the courses is very . . . The standards of the courses is very dubious.

The education that those students have received in many instances is worthless. From Bridge City College, in many instances, the education that they've received is worthless. And hundreds of thousands of dollars, and I think I'm right in saying millions of dollars of public money, has gone down the drain because you haven't put further restrictions on private schools. And I've asked you, Mr. Minister, to look into that. I hope that next year we won't have to go through that same problem again.

I believe, Mr. Minister, you must address the problem of operating funds for our universities and technical schools. If you don't, the quality of our education is going to suffer dramatically. It's going to suffer dramatically.

Many of our qualified students, as the president has said . . . As the president said the other day, if Einstein had been living in this province this year, he would have been denied entrance to our university; he would not have been able to go to our universities because of the restrictions that you have put on because of lack of funding, because of lack of funding. I didn't say that. The president said that. And the minister, I think, was there when he said it.

Now, Mr. Minister, there are some problems that I think your government must address in advanced education — very serious problems. And I hope that next year, if you still are the minister, we don't have to go over these same problems again.

An Hon. Member: — He may not even be elected next year or a year from now.

Mr. Rolfes: — Well he . . . If they don't call the election, he still may be the minister.

Mr. Minister, there have been many other problems that we have brought to your attention: regional libraries, the provincial library, access to education.

Mr. Minister, there are other things that I wanted to address: basic adult education, which we didn't get to at all, youth employment. I know that doesn't come directly under you, but there were a number of federal programs and provincial programs that were in effect in the past that have been cut.

And many of our students now find that they have to build up huge debts, huge personal debts, because they have to take out the maximum in student loans because there aren't any jobs available in this province. Many of our students will have debts of 25 and \$30,000 by the time they finish their education, and, Mr. Minister, without any

opportunity for jobs. That's a sad situation and it's not a very bright future for our students to look at. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, to make sure that by next year at this time that those problems are addressed.

And with those words, Mr. Minister, I do want to thank your officials, and I also want to thank you, for the most part, answering the questions, I think, straightforward. And I might have one or two questions as we get to some subvotes, but other than that, in advanced education I am finished, and I want to now turn it over to my colleague from Saskatoon.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Mr. Minister, can you advise me whether your department recently hired some officials or some people to fill some curriculum development jobs?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm advised that, yes, we have hired some in the curriculum area, about 10 to date — and by secondment, I understand. There are still negotiations with some, and with some of the school boards, I guess, on yet others.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, I just want to confirm the process that you use to hire these people. I understand that the department came up with a list of 10 names after they had done some interviews, that these names had to be sent across the pond to your office, that you had to determine whether or not these people would pass the political litmus test, that the names were held up for several days, and in fact, weeks, while your politicians phoned back to their constituencies to see whether or not these people were politically correct.

And in fact, Mr. Minister, I'm advised that you, or someone in your office, said that these names weren't appropriate and that the politicians had to go further down the list and said that they would only hire people that had been actively involved with the Conservative Party to write curriculum.

Now I'm reaching the point, Mr. Minister, and a good many people in this province are reaching the point, where they really wonder about your government and how low you will sink in order to get some of your friends hired. And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, how deep does political patronage have to sink in your department because people can't believe that you have to be an active Tory, or a Tory, to develop educational curriculum in this province.

(2015)

Mr. Minister, I want you to state for the record exactly what process was followed out by yourself in hiring people to develop curriculum. Do you have to be a Tory to develop curriculum? Or is it possible that a person might have some experience and educational background and be good at what they do in order to get a job with your government?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well if we were to take at face value what the hon. member says as fact, she suggests that we hire people who are only actively involved in the Conservative Party. Quite frankly, I couldn't give you the

name of one of the 10 that have been hired to date. Secondly, I don't know whether they have been actively involved in the Conservative Party or any other party for that matter. All I can tell you is at the end of the day the people we have to do the job will be competent and qualified for the position, whatever it may be.

Secondments from the school boards, I think, is not an unusual procedure. And if you want to get into patronage well, fine, we can get into that if you want. It's a little bit like the . . . When I see the hon. member talking about patronage I could flip through my chart here and talk about the patronage that went on under the NDP years, maybe even to that member — I don't know.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, you know what? You're becoming a joke in the educational world, Mr. Minister. You're becoming a joke. In fact in many cases, Mr. Minister, you are a joke — you are a joke.

You didn't have to have a blue Tory card to work in the Department of Education prior to you becoming a minister. The member from Swift Current hired people on the basis of competency. She didn't seem to care whether or not people were NDP, Liberal, or Tory.

But it seems to me, Mr. Minister, something has happened under your leadership, and as a result the perception is that your department is in an absolute disarray. And that is the perception of the people in the community, that your department is in absolute disarray; that you're lacking in punch; that the department is lacking in morale; that the department has sunk to a new low, Mr. Minister, under your leadership.

And I want you to explain to the people of Saskatchewan what exactly has happened under your leadership, Mr. Minister. What has happened to all of the people who used to work for your department that had some morale, felt good about it? But under your leadership, Mr. Minister, I understand that people don't feel good about working for you. They feel as though it doesn't matter whether they do a good job or not — it's not acknowledged; that there is no philosophy, there's no direction. There are so many people doing jobs that used to be done by one person, Mr. Minister. And I want you to explain to the people of Saskatchewan where exactly Saskatchewan Education is at.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, if once again what the member says at face value is true, why is it that I'm advised that when it comes to these positions in the department, particularly as it relates to the curriculum area, why is it that we've had just many, many, many applications, I'm advised verging on record-breaking numbers? If somehow this Department of Education is such an awful place to work, why has there been such tremendous interest? And could she then as well explain why we've doubled the number of people involved in the curriculum area if somehow we don't view that as an important area? And finally . . . Well I'll just leave it at that, Mr. Chairman. I think that speaks for itself.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, a great number of people were disturbed by your decision a couple of years ago to fire large numbers of competent, credible people in your

department. They got the golden handshake; they got the little red box, Mr. Minister. In fact I'm told that these people went on early retirement. They took their pensions and then they started receiving a \$300 a month top-up. And what have you done? And a lot of people understood that your government had lots of economic problems, that the province was facing an economic crisis, created by yourself of course, but they understood.

Now, Mr. Minister, a lot of people don't understand why you've replaced some of these people with two people, three people — they don't understand that. Because it appears as though you haven't saved a dime. You fired people, you gave them early retirement, you gave them \$300 a month until they were 65, in the name of restraint. And then a couple of years later you have two people doing the job that they used to do. How do you explain that kind of Tory economics?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, it might be useful for me to send across to the hon. member, which I will do, a supplement to the April 14, 1989, *Saskatchewan Bulletin*, entitled "Saskatchewan Education, report on curriculum". And in that, Mr. Chairman, are one, two, three, four, five pages, with pictures and small biographies and job descriptions of people working in Saskatchewan Education in terms of human resources and curriculum development, in the curriculum development area — six pages, Mr. Chairman.

And why that's in there is (a) because we are proud of these people who are shaping some very fundamental curricula that are going to be used in our Saskatchewan schools for the next decade, and two and three and four, as they approach the 21st century. It's in there because we're very proud of these people. It shows our commitment to the core curriculum exercise. And it was important to us that teachers, trustees across the province, know who all of these people are and what areas they're working on, because this curriculum development with the core initiative is just one that's growing by leaps and bounds. I think we've doubled the number of people in the branch.

And I would just ask if I could have a page take this over to the hon. member from Saskatoon, please.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, did you accept the 10 names that were sent over by your department to fill these 10 curriculum positions?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — What I said earlier, and I would repeat, the people who are filling those positions are highly qualified and competent people. I myself haven't looked at them. I couldn't give you six . . . I couldn't give you one name of those that have been hired, quite frankly. I have no doubt that every one of them is a highly competent individual in whatever area they're going to engage in.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, are you denying that 10 names were sent over to your office, or some political office that does the political litmus test?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The hon. member is drawing a lot of conclusions. It could well be that names came over,

even to my office. All I am telling you is that I have not looked at any names on any list relative to our curriculum development exercise or secondments or whatever it is.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, I know that you have some political assistants here. Can you check with them to see whether or not those 10 names were accepted.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well number one is I don't have any political assistants here with me.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, I just saw them through the glass door, so you might want to check with one of them.

Obviously the Minister of Education will not deny what I have described as a situation that occurred. And, Mr. Minister, all I can say is that there's no room for partisanship in curriculum development in this province — no room whatsoever.

Now, Mr. Minister, the other issue that I want to talk to you about is the occupational health and safety committees in schools. As I understand it, Mr. Minister, there are very few occupational health and safety committees in schools, and I'm wondering if you can tell me how many schools have active occupational health and safety committees.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I can't tell you how many schools have occupational health and safety committees, Mr. Chairman. I can tell you that we've had . . . At least at the officials' level I can say that there's been collaboration with the school trustees association on this matter. And as well, we're training officers in each region relative to do the occupational health issues in handling hazardous materials and those kinds of things, but I can't tell you how many schools or boards have set up committees per se.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, I understand that you have a ministerial committee made up of two trustees, two teachers, and two people from your department; that one of the things that the committee has done is published a booklet on occupational health and safety, and it went out to all schools, I believe, in 1984. But since that time very little has occurred in terms of safety in our schools. And as you're probably aware, our schools have industrial programs, and it seems to me, Mr. Minister, that you should be concerned about the safety of not only students, but the safety of teachers. So I hope next year when the new minister, the member from Meadow Lake, I believe, is here, he will ensure that the mess out there is cleaned up.

The other question, Mr. Minister, that I have for the minister is I'm wondering when we can have a broadly based family life education program available for Saskatchewan schools, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The hon. member wants to know what's been going on. The government, relative to hazardous materials and school buildings, has held regional meetings and at these meetings there was someone from every school division, and they were trained in the management of handling hazardous materials. As well, we are jointly funding the school

boards, SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), I'm not sure of the exact structure, but we're jointly funding instructors so that every school board will have a trained instructor and then the trainers can instruct others in their schools or school division in this whole area of hazardous materials. So I think it's fair to say that some headway is being made.

(2030)

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, that was the answer to my previous question. My last question was on whether or not we have a broadly based family life education curriculum being developed.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — What has gone on and is going on is that for grade 7, 8, and 9, there's been developed units in health relative to things like family life and drug and alcohol abuse — those kinds of things. Some of these have already been piloted and so they're well along in the developmental stage.

As well, there's the development of a new course, credit course for grade 10 — a health, physical education credit course that would address probably some of the dimensions that you referred to in your question as well.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, one of the things that I want to bring to your attention is that teenage pregnancy in this province remains unacceptably high and in fact, Mr. Minister, we lead the nation in the area of teen pregnancy. I just want to bring to your attention that in 1987 there were 345 births to mothers age 16 and under compared to 284 in 1986. That represents, Mr. Minister, a 4.6 per cent increase, because that's more than 61 births to mothers under the age of 17.

And it seems to me, Mr. Minister, that one of the responses of school boards across the province has been to put in place the services offered by Teen-Aid because we haven't had a broadly based family life education program that included information on sexual matters, Mr. Minister.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, whether you share the same concerns that I do, that we have an unacceptably high teenage pregnancy rate in this country, and in this province in particular, and that we have to develop a broadly based, uniform family life education program that is available to local school boards in order that we can move to start preventing this problem of teenage pregnancy.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Relative to the issue that the hon. member raises, we've talked about the curriculum that has been developed and those units that may be used by local boards. I am advised as well that there isn't the consensus in the research, as I understand it, when it comes to education and curricula relative to family life and sex education, in that with that comes the desired results, and so I think that clouds the matter.

The other issue, and I would reiterate again, is that when you get into these areas that touch on community values and religious values and personal values and morals and all those kinds of things, some sensitive areas, I very, very

strongly recommend that parents be very much involved in that whole process. And I guess at the end of the day if I was to rate, you know, how much you could do with curricula, etc., etc., versus how much parent and church can do as opposed to the state, if you like, I think quite clearly parent involvement here is of primary importance.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, I don't disagree at all that parent involvement is important, but once again we have a problem in this province similar to the problem that we have with the lack of information and knowledge when it comes to obtaining the AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) virus. And it seems to me that it's incumbent upon you as one of the leaders in this province to start addressing some of these serious issues that are facing young people.

And one of the issues facing young people is teenage pregnancy. And as you know, Mr. Minister, teen pregnancy can lead to all kinds of future problems for those young people. They can end up on social assistance, they drop out of school, and in the long run, Mr. Minister, it can cause a tremendous toll on that young person's life. And in the long run, it can also cause a tremendous toll on society because that young person doesn't complete school, may end up on social assistance for long periods of time, etc.

And so what I am simply trying to say to you, Mr. Minister, is that we have not had any leadership whatsoever in the whole area of family life education in this province, ever. And I'm not just talking about under your administration, I am talking about the days when my party was in office.

And it seems to me that as leaders in this province we have to come to grips with this tremendous social problem, that being teen pregnancy. It continues to baffle me why we continue to be the province that has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy. And it seems to me that we have to have a two-prong approach — one of them has to be in the area of health and the other has to be in the area of education. So I would call upon you, Mr. Minister, to get together with your colleague, the Minister of Education, to start providing some leadership in this important area.

Mr. Minister, I'd just like to wrap up on our estimates for K to 12. And I just want to reiterate some of the issues that I've raised with you over the last several days.

Mr. Minister, when I examine your record in the K to 12 education system, it seems to me that you have had a sorry record. This year, while you've promoted the concept that education has had great and wonderful things happen to it, the facts simply prove otherwise. If you look at your 1989-90 budget, the total amount spent on education only increased by 2.32 per cent, very little, Mr. Minister, in terms of the kinds of money that education presently needs.

If you look at the percentage of spending, Saskatchewan is last in Canada when it comes to the K to 12 system. Since 1985, when you factor in inflation, government spending on school operating grants has declined by 8.4 per cent. In this year's budget, your government patted itself on the back for increasing operating grants by 3.8

per cent, but, Mr. Minister, when you look at inflation, what we have seen is another cut to school boards.

The government's increase in the gas tax to 12 cents per litre on regular gasoline will cost school boards money across this province, and we estimate that it'll cost school boards an extra \$3.3 million. So, Mr. Minister, when you look at the increase in money to schools for operating grant, this \$3.3 million increase on the gas tax amounts to about 25 per cent of what you'd call a massive increase to K to 12 education spending.

Now, Mr. Minister, what is the effect of your eroding of education funding have on Saskatchewan. I would submit, Mr. Minister, that it's had several effects. You have a department that is demoralized. And you can stand in your place and tell us that it's not demoralized, but the people who are involved in education in this province know otherwise.

It seems to me, Mr. Minister, that if you can no longer provide the necessary leadership for your department, it's time to move on to other things, other areas. And it's time that the Government of Saskatchewan got a Minister of Education that was truly interested in educational policy in our province and was truly prepared to provide leadership in the area of education.

Now I note, Mr. Minister, that your deputy minister is leaving for Geneva, and I want to congratulate him on his appointment. But I also want to remind the government that there are a number of people in this province that believe it's important that we have an educator who becomes the new deputy minister of Education. And I want to pass on that message to you and your government, Mr. Minister, that people will be watching with great anticipation to see who, in fact, your government appoints to that particular job because it's a highly important and sensitive job in this province. And we would encourage your Premier and the front benches to appoint someone who has a background in educational administration in this province, or at least in this country.

Now, Mr. Minister, the other problem that I brought to your attention was the drop-out rate between the grades 8 to 12. And what the study has said is that the drop-out rate has increased by 42.3 per cent. And while you may quibble with the figures, Mr. Minister, the study shows a trend in this province that we find in other parts of the country and the United States. And it seems to me that we need to have a new study done in this province. You've agreed somewhat that that might be important, but that study should include, Mr. Minister, not only the numbers of young people that are dropping out, but we need to know why those young people are leaving school early.

It's particularly disturbing, Mr. Minister, that we've seen such a dramatic increase in the number of females that are dropping out. And I note that the member from Meadow Lake is continuing to talk from his chair, Mr. Chairperson. You have called my colleagues to order, and I would ask you to call your colleagues to order.

The Chairman: — Order. Order. Member from Meadow Lake. Could I ask all the members to pay attention and

allow the member from Saskatoon Nutana to pose her question. But I would also remind all members that we have had a number of catcalling from both sides of the House, so if we all work together then it'll work out well.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. Even with these appalling statistics in terms of school drop-out rates, this minister continues to pat himself on the back as being the great leader in education. And I would suggest otherwise.

Now, Mr. Minister, the number of schools serving the K to 12 system has gone from 927 schools in 1981 to 888 schools in 1986-87. And that's a reduction, Mr. Minister, of 39 schools, and that figure doesn't include the schools that have been announced for closure this year, particularly those schools in Regina. All of the 39 schools, Mr. Minister, closed between 1981 and 1987 were in rural areas, and the result has been longer bus rides for small children living in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, since 1984 the minimum teacher's salary has gone from seventh in Canada to 10th. Mr. Minister, we're falling behind the eight ball, and as a result, Mr. Minister, we have teachers that are leaving this province for other parts of the country and in fact other parts of North America. And it's interesting to note, Mr. Minister, that the Los Angeles school board was on campus this past spring looking for special education teachers because there simply aren't any jobs for special ed teachers in this province because of your government's freeze to educational funding.

(2045)

Now, Mr. Minister, I've outlined some of the problems. I recognize that you are not going to be the minister the next time we come before this legislature to deal with educational estimates, but I would hope that the person who follows you in this job will take into consideration some of the comments that my colleagues and myself have made in terms of educational policy and direction in this province.

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2 agreed to.

Item 3

Mr. Rolfes: — Just one question. Mr. Minister, I was wondering why the annual report on student aid fund has not been tabled yet?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, the report is still being finalized. Apparently there is some requirements of the auditors that have to be met, or we're attempting to meet, and I can't give you a specific date, but we're hopeful that it can be fairly soon that we can table it.

Item 3 agreed to.

Items 4 to 12 inclusive agreed to.

Item 13

Mr. Rolfes: — Could the minister explain to me why the

increase . . . there's a huge increase simply under "Other Expenses." Could you give some of the bigger expenses in those other expenses?

An Hon. Member: — Which number, Herman?

Mr. Rolfes: — 13, Official Minority Language Office.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — It's the funds for the College Mathieu construction project, the new school construction project.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, if I may, I'd like to, by permission of the . . . go back to 13. Yes, I just wanted to know why would it be under there. Why wouldn't it be under school construction? Or is it because most of that money is coming from the federal government?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — It's a . . . I know the question; it would seem unusual, and it's a reasonable question. And I'm advised it's because it was part of this federal-provincial sharing of the cost of building it and then it was outside, sort of, our regular programs, so it was shown in this area. And that's just that unusual characteristic of it because of the federal government's involvement.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, can you give us the breakdown? How much federal money, what per cent is the federal giving and what are you giving in this? What's the total amount for College Mathieu?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The breakdown on that project will be 50 per cent federal funding, 30 per cent local, 20 per cent provincial government.

An Hon. Member: — What's the total amount?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The project was estimated to be about 8 millions of dollars.

An Hon. Member: — How much?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Eight millions.

Item 13 agreed to.

Items 14 and 15 agreed to.

Item 16

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, can you outline to us the increase in payments to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The increase, which I think is \$420,000, is because of renovations at Mistasinihk Place in La Ronge, renovations relative to Sask Ed in North Battleford, and renovations in Regina, the total of which is \$420,000.

Item 16 agreed to.

Item 17 — Statutory

Items 18 and 19 agreed to.

Item 20

Mr. Rolfes: — Hold it, Mr. Chairman. On 20, Mr. Minister, can you tell me very quickly why the substantial increase of \$6 million? In order to save time, can the minister just tell me in general terms and send the rest over; I would appreciate that.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — What we're talking about here, the subvote, grants to Saskatchewan universities, SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) loan repayment, it's the payments that come due as a result of projects that have been, or are, under way at the universities. It relates to the capital construction there: libraries, hospital drive widening, maintenance buildings, rehabilitation projects, utility ... (inaudible) ... library upgrade. It's those kinds of payments. And it's a reflection, I think, of the activity that's been going on of a capital nature at the universities.

Mr. Rolfes: — Would you provide that to us in writing?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, if I can get a page, I'll just send you over the departmental briefing note over to you.

Item 20 agreed to.

Item 21 agreed to.

Item 22

Ms. Atkinson: — Yes, Mr. Minister, can you advise this House whether or not you've made any grants available to schools in order that they can feed all the hungry children in our province? As you well know, we have one of the highest rates of child poverty in the country; that the mayor of Regina is presently having a task force on child hunger; that school teachers and school principals and trustees and superintendents have identified a tremendous need in this province for a school-based lunch program for hungry children. And I'm wondering if there's any money, anywhere in this budget, to address that particular problem that's confronting our school system in Saskatchewan?

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to, while the minister is looking for information, ask leave to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Seated in the Speaker's gallery we have two individuals from Fort McLeod, Alberta, one of whom has been a lifelong acquaintance of mine, my aunt, Ivadelle Schmidt, and her friend, Jean McCall. They are in Regina taking part in the Elderhostel program and were part of the group indeed that was introduced here a little bit earlier this evening.

Anyway they're spending the week at the University of Regina, and it gives me a special privilege and a special

honour it is for me to introduce, particularly my aunt but also her friend, Jean. I ask all members to join me in welcoming these two.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Education
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 5**

Item 22 (continued)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Relative to the question of child hunger, I would say too that it's of concern to myself and others across society and in the educational community. The current funding for nutrition for our school children comes through, as you probably are aware, the community schools program — the nutrition program, there are daily snacks and nutrition counselling, that kind of thing. I think for the most part it's been successful.

Does there need to be more, or something different? All I could report there is that that whole community schools programming area is one that's undergoing somewhat of a review. I think it was established 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 years ago now, 8 or 9 years ago. And I think that our view is that we need to examine it to see what has worked and what hasn't worked, and maybe do more of what's working and quit doing what isn't working. So that's where we're at on that whole issue at this point in time.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, all I can say is I'm absolutely appalled by your answer. You have \$5.25 million for Guy Montpetit of Montreal for a computer translation flop and scandal. Your government has all kinds of money for your big-business friends like Cargill, which has a \$39 billion a year revenue base. You've got money for friend after friend after friend after friend, and this government has no money whatsoever for a child school lunch program. You haven't increased that area one iota, Mr. Minister, and as the Minister of Education, Mr. Hepworth, I think you should be ashamed of yourself.

Item 22 agreed to.

(2100)

Items 23 to 30 inclusive agreed to.

Item 31 — Statutory

Items 32 to 35 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 5 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1989
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Education
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 5**

Items 1 and 2 agreed to.

Vote 5 agreed to.

**Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Education
Education Development Fund — Vote 64**

Items 1 and 2 agreed to.

Vote 64 agreed to.

**Consolidated Fund Loans, Advances and Investments
Education
Vote 141**

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 141 agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: — I'd like to thank the minister and his officials.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson. As the Education critic for the K-12 system, I also want to thank the minister and his officials.

Mr. Minister, I can tell you that I was extremely disappointed in some of your answers to the questions, but I gathered that with the 25 officials that you had here you didn't necessarily ask them for their advice on all of the answers and you relied on your own judgement for those answers to my questions. But on the whole, I think we've had a fairly productive go at our Education estimates, so thank you very much.

Mr. Rolfes: — I did thank the minister and his officials before, but I neglected to thank his deputy who will not be . . . I think this will be his last estimates as the deputy minister of Education. I want to wish him well. All I can say is, if you want to come over on this side, I'll gladly go to Geneva for you. Good luck to you. Thank you very much.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank the critics opposite for their . . . on what has been a reasonably cordial examination of my budget expenditures for the year '88 and '89.

And I too would like to thank the officials, not only for their assistance that they've provided me over this past few days but indeed throughout the entire year where they work tirelessly on behalf of 200,000 young people in the schools across Saskatchewan.

I too wish my deputy well in his new undertaking in Switzerland, and I only perhaps wish that I was there to be his under-secretary, although I do enjoy this place very much, and so I'm having to postpone that for a while. Thank you to them, Mr. Chairman, as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

**Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Public Service Commission
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 33**

Mr. Chairman: — Would the minister introduce his officials, please.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to introduce to you and to members of the legislature, John McPhail, chairman of the Public Service Commission, seated to my immediate right; and behind him, Ray Smith, executive director, employment services; to Ray's left, Mary Kutarna, director of administration and information services. Seated at the back of the House nearest the door is Mike Russell, executive director, employee relations; then next, Will Loewen, executive director of classification services; and then Jim McKinlay, executive director of staff development, Mr. Chairman.

Item 1

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Minister and officials, to the Public Service Commission estimates. It's going to be difficult to be cordial in these estimates for the simple reason, Minister, that your government has attacked the public service year after year after year in a never-ending vendetta, a never-ending attempt to clear out the socialists from the Public Service Commission, from the civil service.

There is a growing discontent within that very civil service. For every person you turf out and replace with a Tory hack, you are creating far, far more problems, far more enemies, than you'll ever solve. You simply cannot replace enough people where you will ever have control and have the heart and the minds of the civil servants of Saskatchewan. They're too professional.

One of the very distressing things I find when I go door to door through my constituency or when I run into people, be it in Regina or almost anywhere in this province, in this great province of ours, I hear story after story about how the way to get elected or selected is to have a blue card. Competency has increasingly meant less and less and less.

You have down-sized and . . . I've pointed out you've down-sized, but I just want to use a little bit of numbers so that people will understand what I'm getting at. In 1985, Minister, the civil service numbered 13,277; in '86 that was 12,940, or a drop of 317 people; in '87 you dropped to 11,957, or a one-year drop of 983 people — 983 people, most of whom were the bread-winners in their respective families. Then between '87 and '88 you dropped it again to 11,056 people, or a drop of 901 people.

And as people and their families that are needlessly hurt because of your government's arrogance, your government's uncaring, your government's simple attempt at perpetually eliminating anybody who doesn't have a blue card from the civil service . . . and it's getting to be a joke, Minister. More and more, I'm hearing stories of people who pack a blue card and then simply laugh at your government, laugh at how they are pulling the wool over your eyes, laugh because the card is there for no purpose other than it helps them get the job, and they know that. And that's the only reason.

And those cards will be returned in huge numbers — you can mark my words — those cards will be returned to you in huge numbers after the next election. And it'll be real interesting for you to learn, finally, the truth.

The civil service should be a professional civil service, independent of partisan politics, independent of whether they . . . I'm not telling you — I see a smile — I'm not telling you, Minister, that civil servants don't have political feelings. Of course, to live in Saskatchewan they mark their X where they want. We all have that right. Civil servants should have that right, and civil servants should not be afraid of exercising those particular freedoms.

As I was preparing for these estimates, I was thinking of a civil servant who used to reside in our neighbourhood. And in the 1982 election, much to my dismay, my personal dismay, this civil servant had up a Tory lawn sign. So I wandered over and talked to him about it. And there was, of course, a couple of things I had in mind. One, I was hoping that he wasn't terribly strong as a Tory and would maybe take the sign down. That failed because of the cheap gas and your mortgage program that got you elected in 1982.

I then asked — because in my political naivety I thought he would be a little bit concerned about his job — I said: what are you going to do when the NDP gets re-elected and you have to go to work having had this Tory lawn sign? Don't you think that will affect your job, or don't you think your supervisor might say something about it? That civil servant looked at me and was absolutely flabbergasted and shocked that I would even think such a thing.

And that's a remarkable legacy to the New Democrats that at that stage had been in power for 11 years — 11 years they were the party in power when that civil servant was hired. And yet after 11 years in power he thought absolutely nothing wrong with putting up a Tory lawn sign. And of course he had every right to do that — had every right to do that — and will have that right again after the member for Riversdale becomes the premier of a New Democratic Party government.

Civil servants, if they choose, as anyone else in this province, will be welcome to show their political affiliation, not at work — not at work — but in their off time they're welcome to participate in whatever way they see fit.

Minister, these estimates are going to be dealing with your continued down-sizing. I've already mentioned some of the numbers. I'm going to be talking about the unfair selection practices that you are using in hiring blue card holders. I'm going to be talking a little bit about affirmative action and your lack of action with regards to that.

(2115)

Mr. Chairman: — Could we have a little order please?

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to be asking some questions . . . Thank you again. I'm going to be asking, Minister, some questions about your early retirement ideas and what has been happening there. As well, we will be touching on the subject of work that is not being done because of understaffing — work that simply cannot be done.

Minister, I want to know, because of your perpetual down-sizing, when is it going to end? Is it going to take the next provincial election, or when is your down-sizing of the existing civil service going to end, and when is your simply filling positions with Tory hacks going to end?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The hon. member covered a number of areas in his opening remarks. And I think what would characterize those opening remarks is the fact that the hon. member continues to believe in the notion, the NDP, the socialist notion, that bigger government is better government. He can't accept the fact that, albeit the down-sizing that we did a couple, three years ago, is tough to do for managers, there's very much the human dimension to it.

For the most part the process went very, very smoothly, and that's a credit to all who worked on that project. Of course, having smaller government concerns socialists. They like to see bigger government. They like to see them involved and have their tentacles into every aspect of the public's life. That's not our administration's view. And I may say that the public service, albeit that there's less of them, they continue to do a tremendous job, and indeed, I would argue, they continue to do more, albeit that there may well be fewer of them in some areas.

The hon. member also made the observation that the civil service or somehow their morale . . . they're demoralized, etc., etc. I guess I would take issue with that somewhat, Mr. Chairman, and the reason I would take issue with that is because if somehow this is such a hard-hearted government that can't get along with its employees, or there's some kind of notion that the hon. member would put forward to that that would go something like that, it seems to me that that flies in the face of the record.

And what is the record of this administration? The record is that for the first time in a decade, for the first time in 10 years, we've struck an agreement for a three-year period with the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employee's Union), unprecedented in 10 years. Never before has an agreement been struck of that magnitude, in that 10-year period, where the settlement was attained without third-party intervention or threat of strike.

That's the kind of relationship we have, Mr. Speaker, and it's a tribute to the commission employees who . . . involved in negotiations and in management on both sides, that that kind of unprecedented agreement could be forged. And as I said earlier, I think that speaks to the kinds of good relationship that exists.

I think also we care very much about the human resource we have, and that's exemplified, I think, particularly dramatically by the educational opportunities we make available to the public service. And of course, as being the Minister of Education as well, I am particularly sensitive to this area. I am sensitive because one of the realities of the information age or the knowledge economy, one of the realities of the world ahead is lifelong learning. It doesn't matter whether you're a dentist, a nurse, a refrigerator technologist, it doesn't matter — public service in whatever professional area, that constant retraining and updating is going to be a

reality.

And just to underscore our commitment to our employees being able to participate in learning opportunities, we only have to look at the numbers over the last seven years. In '81-82 under the NDP administration, 1,700 employees participated in 108 learning opportunities, Mr. Speaker, in various kinds of events — 1,700 employees. When then the — and I don't have the exact numbers here, but I would think that the public service permanent cadre then would number somewhere around 12, 13, 14,000, something like that. By 1987-88 we had had 5,600 employees participate in 310 educational learning opportunity events, Mr. Chairman.

And this last year, '88-89, that number has jumped again from the 1,700 in '81-82 to now over 6,000 employees participating in 360 events, Mr. Chairman. That speaks to our government's commitment to our servants — public servants — to that lifelong learning that I think is so important in terms of making opportunities available to our professionals, for the people who work for this province, and as well, to having a province that has access to professionals of whatever area who are trained and upgraded and have the latest information in the various areas that they work.

And it's in-scope and out-of-scope that this occurs, Mr. Chairman, because we've implemented new programs such as a professional and technical development program. The supervisors certificate program, particularly been a valuable one in the in-scope area. The employee wellness program, which I think speaks to that whole question of healthy life-styles and substance abuse and those kinds of things.

We've put in place a deferred salary/leave program, which is applicable to all permanent employees, and provides them with an opportunity to set a certain per cent of their wage aside over a five-year period so that they can broaden their own personal interest while on authorized leave. That's part of this flexible approach in the work place that employees are so much desirous of having, Mr. Speaker, and we've put that deferred salary/leave program in place.

We continue to offer innovative programs, such as job rotation, career leave, secondments, Interchange Canada programs, educational leave, variable work hours, and related programs to provide flexibility, interest, and new experience for our employees.

I think it's fair to say that probably the Public Service Commission shows leadership across the nation in some of these areas, Mr. Chairman, and I am proud to be associated with that kind of progressive Public Service Commission.

Mr. Trew: — Well, Minister, obviously you don't have to go to Disney World to experience the land of make-believe, you just have to listen to your responses. It's interesting to watch you filibustering your own estimates. I did not ask you any question about training, or collective agreement, or job rotation, or the secondment policy — or any of those things.

My intention is to cover a specified number of things, for which I have prepared questions. I simply remind you, my job as critic is to ask the questions, yours is to answer in general and specific terms to the questions I ask. I don't expect that you stick exclusively there, but it is nice if occasionally you'd touch on an issue that I touched on — at least once in a while. I mean, if it's just a forum where I can stand up and make a nice speech or a not-so-nice speech, and then you can stand up and filibuster, then I say we're wasting our time, and we're wasting the taxpayers' time.

Minister, this has nothing to do with the size of the government. These estimates — you talk about the NDP thinking that big government is better when I'm talking about the number of civil servants — has nothing to do with that.

But as you broach the subject, how do you say that \$300 million tied up in a fertilizer plant with Cargill, 300 million of the taxpayers' dollars, is somehow smaller or less government? How do you say that nearly \$5 million on GigaText is smaller government? How do you say that a quarter of a billion dollars in loan guarantees to Weyerhaeuser of Tacoma, Washington is smaller government? How do you say that a \$4 billion provincial debt is smaller government? You had to have spent the money somewhere.

You talk about . . . You mentioned the three-year agreement, and I just want to make one quick comment on that, that is that civil servants wanted an agreement that would take them to what they see as the next provincial election. They wanted some semblance of security in a very terribly insecure world, an insecure Tory world, and they're looking for just some way of hanging on until the next election. That's part of why you got the three-year contract.

The other reason of course is the knowledge of trade unionists throughout Saskatchewan that Tories are not their friends. Conservatives do not particularly want to hear what unions have to say, and they certainly don't want to practise collective bargaining as trade unionists have come to expect it over the years. That is a give and take collective agreement.

Minister, you talk about the down-sizing of the government, but I want to know how you explain the fact that there's been over a 240 per cent increase in part-time employment alone — part-time employment. You are becoming . . . The Public Service Commission, the Government of Saskatchewan is becoming the superstore of governments in that you go after part-time positions rather than full-time employment. And there's a number of reasons for doing it, but not the least of which is that you have much less difficulty sliding somebody with a blue card into a part-time job. You've much less difficulty with that than you do placing someone with a blue card in a permanent job where perhaps the job qualifications are beyond their reach, so you slide them into some part-time job and try and sneak them in the back door.

How do you justify between '85 and '88 the number of part-time employees going from 416 to 1,413, an increase of nearly 1,000 people?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member suggests that — I think, to use his words, we're the Superstore or something like that. I guess we take a different view. And we take a different view because our employees in the Public Service Commission are the . . . because of the realities of the '80s and the '90s and kind of lives that we lead, and more leisure time and that kind of thing, other interests, that's the kind of thing that it seems to me that employees are looking for — at least some are — where they have variable work hours where they can themselves decide, in conjunction with their supervisors or managers, that they, instead of working 100 per cent, would like to work 75 or 50.

I think that's particularly attractive sometimes to women. It allows them to be in the work-force, sometimes raise families, or pursue outside interests, the job sharing, all those kind of notions. And at the same time, those part-time people, give them the benefits that come with permanent placement.

(2130)

That's why we look at these things — job rotation, career leaves, variable work hours, secondments, all of those things. We look at them as innovative programs, as useful and desired by the service, as opposed to some kind of punitive approach to running a service.

Mr. Trew: — Well, Minister, in Conservative Saskatchewan people will take just about any job. You look at the out-migration numbers. More than 11,000 more people have fled Saskatchewan so far this year than have come in.

You know the unemployment rate in Saskatchewan is atrociously high — atrociously high. People are desperate. Many people are desperate for any job and will take temporary jobs, which have increased in the civil service. They'll take part-time jobs, which I just talked about, or they'll take casual jobs, which in the three-year period that I was referring to, temporary, part-time, and casual employees increased by 1,634, while your permanent employees decreased by 3,855.

Obviously, people, when you let go 3,855 people, you're going to create some unemployment. Obviously those people are going to be looking for anything to keep some groceries on the table. Casual, part-time, and temporary positions are all acceptable when the choice is to go to the Social Services department — which we all know is largely a farce in Saskatchewan these days — but when the choice is go to Social Services or accept casual, part-time, or temporary employment, of course the temporary or part-time or casual employment will win out. It is simply not the case that people are overwhelmingly looking for part-time employment.

Minister, I'm wondering if Stevenson Kellogg Ernst and Whinney are still on the payroll?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Stevenson Kellogg Ernst and Whinney is not on the payroll, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Trew: — What was the cost — I hear you saying

they're not on the payroll right now — what was the cost for their services since March 31, '88?

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Minister. For that period of time, the year under review, would you provide a list by department of the number of people who have taken an early retirement, the number of people who have been fired, the number of people who have been laid-off, and all other terminations?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — We don't have what you're asking for, but my officials . . . I'll take notice of it and my officials will endeavour to provide the numbers for you in the various categories.

You weren't asking for names, were you? No, and I wouldn't provide that because of the confidential personnel records and all that kind of stuff. But kinds of numbers . . . and I can advise you that the numbers are extremely low, I think, in all the categories you've suggested. I'm advised that they're very low. I would think we could have that for you maybe even tomorrow, I don't know, but shortly.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Minister. I heard you say, maybe tomorrow. That just simply gives me a guide-line so I know that I'm not looking at after next week. I should be having it certainly by next week at the latest.

On the same list, would you indicate whether those positions were refilled or whether they were abolished? Could you do that?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, we can provide whether those positions were refilled. Generally, I guess, on early retirements, it may or may not have been; on dismissals, probably yes; and on lay-offs, probably no, although we can provide that.

Mr. Trew: — So from that list I will be able to determine the total number of terminations since March of '88. Correct?

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you for the nod. Minister, if I could have your attention. Obviously not. I have your attention? No, I had it.

Mr. Chairman: — Could we allow the member for Regina North to proceed with his questioning please.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, if I could have your attention. I want to get to my question, but I feel that it is much better if you're listening.

Will you assure this Legislative Assembly that your attack on the civil service, your down-sizing and your firings are at an end? Will you give the civil servants of Saskatchewan and us that assurance?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I wouldn't like to suggest ever, for a moment, that we had some kind of attack on the civil service. Yes, we engaged in a down-sizing

operation of approximately 2,000 — 75 per cent, plus or minus, that was accomplished by such voluntary programs as early retirement. A difficult situation but I think done under very . . . in a very humane way.

And the final comment that I would make is that all of that, as necessary as it may have been, and as humanely as it may have been done, all of that is well behind us. And we have no plans for a similar kind of exercise at this time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Trew: — Minister, I wish I could be more reassured by that. I can tell you that on this side of the Legislative Assembly we very much agree that people should have the opportunity for an early retirement if they choose.

But, Minister, if I had — it wouldn't have to be a grand sum of money — but if I had a fairly small sum of money for every civil servant who has taken an early retirement and confided to me, when I run into them, either by knocking on their door or . . . (inaudible) . . . the money for every one of them who said, I wish I felt I'd had some option; I wish that I could somehow have known if I did not accept this early retirement package that was offered, that I would be able to continue my employment for the long term with the Government of Saskatchewan . . . If I just had that reasonably small sum of money, I could be taking a pretty decent vacation.

That's what leads to the concern with your previous answer. You assure us there's no more down-sizing, but yet people who have taken early retirement tell me — not all of them, but many of them — tell me they wish they had had more of a choice.

So what steps, Minister, are being taken to ensure that all of the early retirements are purely voluntary? What corrective measures do you plan to take in departments that have used coercive tactics — that's either directly or indirectly — with their employees that may be eligible for early retirement but prefer to keep on working? How are you going to ensure that an early retirement program is strictly voluntary and there's no coercion of employees to take it?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I guess the questions that you are raising arise from two, two and a-half, three years ago and I would just restate what I've said in previous years' estimates when it was at issue, if you like, and that the early retirement package was a voluntary program and one that was taken up even in larger numbers than our consultants would have even expected.

Mr. Trew: — Minister, for the year ending March '89, can you tell us the total amount that your government has paid out in severance packages due to firings, lay-offs, and other unnecessary terminations?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The severance payments are paid out by the individual departments, so I don't have those.

Mr. Trew: — So to get those numbers we would have to ask each minister, department by department. Okay, I will ask in relation to the Public Service Commission itself, can you give me whatever the figure is for this

particular department?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm advised that we've had one settlement. And where normally I might give you a global number, if there'd been a number, by divulging the number for one, it kind of breaks the unwritten, if you like, agreement to not disclose those kinds of things. So I'm reluctant to provide that number for you because of the fact that there is only one, so obviously it identifies the person with it. That's because there has been virtually . . . well, one — not very many, I guess one could argue.

Mr. Trew: — Minister, can you tell me how it is we on this side of the legislature will know. Where does that severance disappear in the budget? What areas will the severance show up, because ultimately every dollar your department spends has to show up. I am simply wondering in how many different spots of your budget will it be distributed?

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm advised that that would come under the salary subvote, at least for the commission.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Minister. Not terribly reassured by that because, as you can appreciate, we have absolutely no control over . . . And not only do we have no control, but the people of the province, the taxpayers who are footing the bill, will have no idea whether you are being miserly or extravagant on a case-by-case basis.

Of course, we know not the circumstances that this settlement was reached under, so it's not terribly reassuring. However, I will move on because I don't know how I can zero in on that settlement.

There are, as you know, Minister, many, many thousands of people throughout Saskatchewan looking for work today, and they'll be looking for work tomorrow. And yet if I hear this story once a week, I hear it a half a dozen times a week. People who are hired for government jobs are hired on the basis of carrying a blue card. They're hired on the basis of who they know, not on competence, not on the basis of any grand selection. I mean, I am very, very reluctant to get into names, and indeed I won't. I suspect a few people may be relieved to hear that. But what steps are you taking to ensure that all — and I mean all — every qualified applicant has an opportunity for employment, even if they don't happen to be friends of a minister or of an assistant?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the process is unchanged from what it was under the NDP days. Competitions are advertised; there's, I guess, short lists that are drawn up; there's certification; there's panels with union observers on them. The department picks the best one in their minds to do the job. I don't think there's anything that's unchanged there, and I think this process has served us well in the past and continues to serve us well now and probably will in the future.

Mr. Trew: — Minister, gas tax employees are summer students — correct? How are they selected for employment?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Okay, the non-permanent resourcing unit looks after the hiring of all our summer students, the temporaries and the part-times — the summer students he referred to — the applications received. And I think we've had over this last year, like several thousand. Resumes are forwarded to departments, there's interviews, select interviews undertaken, and the students are selected.

Mr. Trew: — And what is the criteria for selection?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Just to give you some idea of the number of applications we've received, there's been to date this year something like 5,589. And what's looked for is obviously, what are the job specifications, and the academic background of the student, the previous experience. Those kinds of things would figure into it. I guess if I was to give you an example, one that I was very familiar with in Energy and Mines for the gold survey teams or camps, whatever you call it — those, because of the nature of the job, tend to be geology students headed up by a professor or something like that.

And that's the kind of meshing you like to do and the departments want. I mean, Energy and Mines doesn't want an agriculture student, they want a geology student; that seems to make fair sense to me.

Mr. Trew: — Did I understand you to say there was 5,589 applications for the gas tax alone . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, that's all summer student? Fair enough.

I have a copy of summer student placements, not for the year under review, but a year previous, and I have no reason to suspect that it is any different this year than it was then. And it's really interesting to notice that in the two Regina seats that are held by Tories there was 91 summer students placed out of one, 75 students out of another; in an NDP seat there was 10 in one, 15 in my own constituency, 28 in north-east. The high of the eight seats held by the NDP was 44, compared to the low of 75 in . . . the 44 came in Regina Lakeview, the 75 came in Regina Wascana; Saskatoon Riversdale, three in that year — three.

You want to drive people to vote NDP? Boy, that's the way to do it — just tell them they've got to have a blue card.

And I don't know how you can tell it any other way when you look at summer employment. You look at the total list and you can go through it. I've got the breakdown constituency by constituency. I don't know how you can conclude that this is anything other than proof positive that what we're saying about your hiring practices are absolutely bang on. How do you justify it?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I went through the process — I'm not familiar with what the hon. member is referring to — I went through it, and quite frankly my understanding is, university students, as I recall university student days, is where do they come from? I mean, their address might be . . . their home town might be Mossbank, but they might be living in Saskatoon because that's where the university is that they're going to, and

that's where they might like to get their jobs.

So I think that you might be drawing a bit of a long bow relative to the highly mobile university, post-secondary crowd, if you like. That would just be an observation I would make.

Mr. Trew: — Fair enough, that explains the difference between urban and rural, but how do you explain the difference in the city? You take Saskatoon Mayfair, 19 hired. You take Riversdale, Saskatoon Riversdale, three hired. The major difference in those seats is one is Tory, held by a Conservative; the other one is held by the Leader of the Opposition, the next premier of the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well all I can do is reiterate how we go through it. We've received several thousand applications. We've had 5,589. And you can draw all kinds of conclusions. We've been able to place 1,076 students. There's 4,500 we haven't placed.

So I don't know where they all come from either, but we take their applications, send resumes to the department. They do the interviewing, select the appropriate student. And as I've said before, we do that because it doesn't make sense to have an agriculture student trying to do the job of a geologist for Energy and Mines, or vice versa. Some, I suspect, you can have a fairly wide academic background and probably still fit in.

We try to be a useful kind of employer for young people, to help them with their post-secondary education, and I think we're a substantive employer at 1,000-odd.

Mr. Trew: — Well it's interesting. You know, you keep trying to justify it on the basis of urban and rural. Well let's look at a couple of rural seats. You want to talk about students and their qualifications. Rural students should be, essentially, reasonably even. One wouldn't expect a wide variance in the employment there, I wouldn't think.

But let's look at Indian Head-Wolseley, 17 students, which is Conservative. Let's look at Humboldt, one — one student in Humboldt — Humboldt constituency which has one of the highest populations of any rural constituency. Humboldt constituency, which is largely or much of it is within an hour of Saskatoon, in the . . . there are parks in and around that area. There is plenty of opportunity for summer employment.

I want to hear you again tell me about the criteria for student selection. And you explain to me how Humboldt, represented by the NDP, gets one student placement; Indian Head-Wolseley, represented by a minister of the Conservative government, gets 17.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Once again, the hon. member has statistics obviously and, I think, you mentioned at the outset that they weren't for the year under review, so I don't know where they're from or where you got them from. But we don't keep statistics that way as far as I know, or as far as my official knows. So I can neither dispute, deny, nor confirm your observations. And I think

you yourself said they had nothing to do with the year under review.

All I can do is reiterate again what I said earlier — this year we've had 5,589 applications. We placed 1,000 of those students, roughly, a little more. We've obviously taken lots of applications. We've obviously sent lots of resumes to departments. There's probably been lots of interviews, and students have been selected. And that's all I can say, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Trew: — Well I can just take a little bit of a load off your mind, Minister, by telling you that these figures come from the Public Service Commission.

I have a cover letter to all . . . or pardon me not to all, because I don't recall getting a copy of this, nor do any of my colleagues, but:

To MLAs re summer student employment:

Please be advised of the procedures which the non-permanent resourcing unit will be following with respect to . . .

And the letter goes on and on. It also says:

A draft letter, which you may wish to use in regard to notifying the summer students in your constituency, will be enclosed.

Very interesting that none of us recall it.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I wonder if the hon. member could provide me with a copy of the document he's been quoting from please?

Mr. Trew: — I am uncertain how to respond. I think it's your department. I think it's easy enough for you to find it out. The document was prepared, and you've got to have some handle on what's going on in your department, at least I would have thought so before tonight.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, I think the practice in this House — I know I've done it in Education estimates — where if I've quoted from a document and it's been asked to be provided to the member, we provide it. It think that is the fashion that this House has conducted itself in, and I would ask the hon. member to provide me a copy.

Mr. Trew: — Minister, I want to move to a different area that you are doing an abysmal job in. Of course I'm referring to affirmative action, Minister. We are finding out increasingly that there are . . . We used to think of there being three target groups for affirmative action. Your answers here tonight have proven that as far as you're concerned there's not three but there's four distinct minorities in this province deserving of attention. Unfortunately, only one of those distinct minorities is getting the attention. That fourth minority I'm talking to, of course, is the Conservatives in this province. They are very abundantly looked after through the hiring practices of the Public Service Commission, the hiring practices of your government. But women and aboriginal people and disabled people do not share anything resembling the

same wealth.

Minister, the number of women in non-traditional, non-management positions dropped to 7.3 per cent from 16.2 per cent of the PSC (Public Service Commission) in a 17-month period. And I'm quoting from a November 12 Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*. In a 17-month period ending August 31, '87, during the same time period the number of natives employed by the province dropped to 4.5 per cent from 5.2, and the number of physically disabled fell to less than 1 per cent from just over 1 per cent 17 months earlier.

And yet you had the audacity to go to the Human Rights Commission and say you were going to turn things around. You wanted to hire 30 women in non-traditional management positions, 19 women into non-traditional non-management positions, 37 natives and 22 disabled people in '87-88.

Then the following year of '88-89, you stated you wanted to hire 29 non-traditional management women, 30 non-traditional non-management women, 50 natives, and 29 disabled people. Minister, those numbers are incredibly small. They smack of nothing more than tokenism, and what is even worse, I don't think you've even met those dismal numbers. If I'm wrong, I'm sure you will correct me, and my intention is to give you that opportunity right now. Would you tell me what's happening with affirmative action?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — That's an invitation I can't refuse. The hon. member has asked me to prove him wrong, and will I prove him wrong. Let's talk about target group representation in government. Let's talk about it under the NDP years, and let's talk about it under the Progressive Conservative years. And I will preface all this by saying, much as we have . . . Although we have accomplished much, much yet remains to be done.

Let's talk about the first category he talked about it, women in management. In March of '81, in the NDP days, we had 7.7 per cent women in management. Today, as of March '89, 24 per cent or a 212 per cent increase, over three times — went from 7.7 to 24. That sounds like a reasonable affirmative action kind of a program. He also mentioned women in non-traditional jobs.

I ask the members of the legislature, back in the NDP days of March '81, did they even have such a category? The answer is no. Today we have 18 per cent women in those non-traditional roles. Women in government has gone from 47 per cent overall to 53.2. We've seen increase from .7 per cent to 2.3 per cent of persons with physical disabilities, and I think there has to be greater concentration there. Persons of native ancestry increased by 21 per cent, but still an area that needs working on. So I think the statistics speak for themselves, Mr. Chairman. Women in management, women in non-traditional roles — increases of 212 per cent in some instances over the NDP days. And in the NDP days they didn't even have such categories. So I think, hon. member, you are proven wrong in spades.

I'd like to go on to say as well, relative to the whole

question of employment equity, that this government has developed an employment equity plan in consultation with the Canadian Union of Public Employees 600. This plan has been submitted to the Saskatchewan Human Right Commission for approval.

We developed an interim plan with the SGEU. This plan has received the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission approval, and meetings have been scheduled to finalize the comprehensive plan.

And as well, we've developed the following new initiatives to assist members of the target groups. These include: telephone device for the deaf to assist hearing impaired — this device is available for members of the general public in Saskatchewan; the Saskatchewan careers publication in Braille, disc, and cassette tape, the first application in North America.

And as well, I could go on and on and talk about at SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), the new native studies division, the joint appointment of Mr. LaFontaine at both GDI (Gabriel Dumont Institute) and at SIAST. I could go on and talk about, as we did earlier tonight, about the special incentives for natives, for disabled students relative to our student assistance.

I'm not saying that we have accomplished all that needs to be accomplished, but I'm saying that we have made significant stride forward from the dark days of the NDP when all they ever did in this area is pay lip service — cheap lip service, that's all they ever paid, Mr. Chairman. And I stand by our government's record in this area. And we have done much, and we will do much more, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Minister, would you give me a list of the jobs that are filled by these . . . in these categories that I have asked you about? Because I think you said a whole mouthful a couple of times in your response, when you said the NDP didn't even have those categories when we were in office, or when the New Democrats of the day were in office.

That doesn't mean that people that fit neatly into your categorized package weren't there then. It means no such thing. It means, simply, they didn't count how many one-armed people worked in the civil service, or how many people had only one eye, or so on. There was no record, if you like, of people in those categories, because hiring practices were much more humane.

People were, by and large, hired on the basis of ability, something that I very strongly urge your government, and indeed our government will, when we form it. We will be hiring people on the basis of abilities, not on the basis of disabilities. Hire people for what they can do, don't hire them because of who they know or because of some problem that they have, or especially if the problem is the card that they're carrying.

The Saskatchewan association of human rights has called your affirmative action, affirmative action in reverse, and

I would be very surprised if they have changed their minds since that article was written.

Will you provide me the list of new hires, people who are in these categories that I've asked you about? I'm not asking you to tell me that Mary Smith — my apologies if there is a Mary Smith working for the civil service — if Mary Smith happens to be disabled, and you've now categorized her as disabled even though she was working for 10 years in the civil service, you haven't addressed any problems. So I want the new people that have been placed in those positions.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I don't know if I can meet your request. I'll take notice of it and provide you what we can there. For example, I can send across tonight "Non-traditional Occupations for Women," it doesn't talk about numbers or who they are.

The difficulty we have, I'm advised, is, for example, some of the survey work on the disabled is . . . voluntarily they state to us in a confidential survey. That's the situation with themselves. So that's something I don't want to because I'm kind of proud of the numbers, but there's just some technical human resource policy that surrounds that.

But I'll send this across to you. I don't know that it says much help. We'll take notice of your comments in **Hansard**, and my officials will send what we can relative to your requests, given their leeway as professional managers in this area.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Minister. We're nearing the end. I just want to make sure that I understood what you just said. I think you said that you're sending me this information, and I thank you for that.

But you did a survey of existing employees to find out, on a confidential basis, whether they have any disabilities or any handicaps. And then you're going to use those numbers to say, oh, we've hired a whole bunch of disabled people; never mind that they may have been career civil servants for 1, 5, 10 or more years. Am I correct that those people are going to be included in your numbers?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Under human rights legislation, it prescribes that it shall be a voluntary declaration, and the reason for that is really, when you think about it, is that employers can't compel people to say they're handicapped or aboriginal or whatever the case may be. And I think that makes some sense when you think about it. And why we're doing that is we're complying with that legislation.

Mr. Trew: — I take it I'm on the right track, Minister. And because of the hour and our desire to wrap up these, I want to urge that you start hiring according to ability. Hire according to ability. If you do that, next year's public service estimates will go much smoother, and indeed people will be much happier.

I'd like to urge you . . . in fact I am urging you to let the Public Service Commission and the civil service become professional again. Free them to do their job and to do it in

the manner that they want to do it. Give them general directions and let them go to work. They'll surprise you because they'll really, really do the job. There's all kinds of talent out there.

Just as I wrap up, I want to thank my Aunt Ivadelle for behaving tonight. She did not, when my grandmother was standing in here and giving an address to the throne speech, and indeed I'm told the family story is, my grandmother wrote her a note and sent it up and that straightened her out. But thanks, Ivadelle, for behaving, and thank you, Jean, for keeping her in line.

On a more serious note, though, I want to thank the minister and the officials for the answers provided. I don't always like the answers, but I appreciate the manner in which you provided the information. I look forward to getting the additional information that you had promised to send across in the next short while, and thanks very much for staying a little bit beyond 10 o'clock tonight.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 7 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 33 agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: — I'd like to thank the minister and his officials.

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Chairman, I was asked in estimates to table the document that I was reading from, and if there is no objection, I will table or send the document across, okay. So it will be coming right as quickly as I can lay my hands on it again — I just cleared it up.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I too want to thank the critic for the examination tonight of the Public Service Commission estimates and thank my officials for their assistance this evening and indeed throughout the entire year.

Mr. Chairman: — I too thank the Minister and his officials.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:17 p.m.