

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Education
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 5

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I want to return for a moment to the questions which I raised yesterday, or the last day, on the matter of francophone schools and governance of francophone schools in the province of Saskatchewan.

I wonder whether the minister would confirm whether or not my understanding of the process leading up to the decision of a week ago or so to postpone for the time being the francophone governance laws is correct or that my understanding is correct.

As I understand it, the background to all of this basically is summarized by a June 1989 report signed by Edgar Gallant headlined, “Fransaskois component for the Saskatchewan school system,” which report in effect had . . . at least the making of the report had representation from people in the provincial government, Saskatchewan Education, intergovernmental affairs, the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), that’s the school trustees, francophone delegation, the teachers’ federation, the League of Educational Administrators, and perhaps others; that a number of experts were consulted; and that in this particular document, of which I have a copy before me, on June 1989, were the principles and in some instances the details of a proposed program for the implementation of French school governance in the province of Saskatchewan; that this report was at that time hailed by your government and by the various participants to it as being a bit of a breakthrough after this very difficult and complicated issue. And it was from this report that the next step was the drafting of the legislation which we have not seen but which we discussed the other day in the Committee of the Whole.

Is the foregoing summary that I gave an essentially correct summary of the background leading up to this document and the draft legislation?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Yes, I think that the member, Mr. Chairman, gave a fairly accurate summary of what has transpired to date. And I would also point out that it was out of the Gallant report that the co-ordinating committee then began the work to draft the proposed legislation, and that in fact was the legislation that was at the drafting stage when the Mahé decision came down in Alberta.

Mr. Romanow: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, that was my next question and you’ve led me to it. But out of the Gallant report, of which I have a copy here, there was established, as you described it, a co-ordinating committee which — again, correct me if I’m wrong in the statements which I make here — was comprised, among other people, with representatives of the Government of Saskatchewan and

of course the francophone community.

Is it correct to say that the co-ordinating committee, in addition to drafting the legislation . . . are responsible for drafting the legislation, also sought to identify schools or target schools, as one may describe them, which schools might fall within the ambit of the proposed legislation and the overall thrust of the Gallant report.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, I am informed that is correct. They had contacted the schools where they thought the possibility did exist for francophone governance.

Mr. Romanow: — And is it also correct that, when we talk about francophone school governance in general terms, what we mean by that is the empowerment of those general powers and authorities of school divisions to the francophone schools so identified by this co-ordinating committee. Said empowerment coming about by virtue of the draft legislation which we’ve not seen but apparently you and the committee have been working on. That’s roughly what the legislation and the legislative policy aim was directed towards.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, the member is correct in what he is suggesting, but at the same time the parents had to come forward and give an indication that they in fact were also interested in having a governance over their own schools. So it worked both ways. There was consultation with the parents in those areas but they did also have to come forward with their requests.

Mr. Romanow: — Yes, I thank the minister for that clarification, and I’m not making a comment on this for the moment, process one way or another, but I’m trying to get a handle on the process.

Could I just to clarify this. Is it correct that the drafting of the legislation, which would legislatively empower the so-called target schools — if I may put it that way, for French governance — do you say that that is the responsibility or was the responsibility of the co-ordinating committee or the responsibility of the Department of Education in consultation with the appropriate other ministries such as Justice?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — The co-ordinating committee made suggestions with regard to what they would like to see in the legislation, but it was still up to the Department of Justice to draft the legislation.

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Why is the member from Kinistino on his feet?

Mr. Saxinger: — Mr. Chairman, I’d like to ask leave to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Saxinger: — Mr. Chairman, I’d like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, some guests in the Speaker’s gallery. It’s Stella Waldbillig

and her daughter Barbara Scriver. Stella is down . . . she's a health worker in Cudworth and she's down for Consensus 100. She's one of the 100 who got chosen. And I want to ask everybody to please welcome them to Regina.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Education Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 5

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Romanow: — Again, Mr. Chairman, as the minister has explained to me, the co-ordinating committee was providing input and presumably general principles, their comments to the drafting of the proposed legislation which was the responsibility of the Government of Saskatchewan. I believe that, roughly stated, is the summary there.

Can the minister tell me whether or not the co-ordinating committee and/or the Department of Education officials, who are seen beside you, were aware of the issues in Alberta on the question of section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Alberta legislation and the court litigation in that province pertaining thereto, while in the course of drafting and preparing and discussing the recommendations on the proposed Saskatchewan law.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, in answer to the Leader of the Opposition's question, I would point out that the Supreme Court decision did not come down until March 15 of this year; however, it was being argued back in June of 1989, so there was no way that the officials or the Government of Saskatchewan had any way in which they could presume what that court decision would be. So it was heard last June but no decision until March.

Mr. Romanow: — I appreciate that, Mr. Minister. The decision was, as I am now informed and advised as a result of the document that you tabled, that the Supreme Court decision came as you've described. But that's not really the question that I ask.

I think the answer is self-evident to my question. I'll put it again. Prior to the decision by the Supreme Court of Canada on Mahé, is it correct to state, can I assume that the co-ordinating committee and/or — I would think it would be and — the Department of Education were familiar with the key issues, of which there are four or five as I read the Mahé decision? It's more complicated than that, but four or five major decisions and issues. Were they familiar, the Saskatchewan co-ordinating committee and your department officials, of the issues surrounding the question of French governance as it was working its way through the Alberta court chain and ultimately the Supreme Court decision? Clearly the answer to that must be, you must have been aware of it.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, the officials of Justice and the department would have been aware of what was being discussed certainly in Alberta back last

spring, but at the same time would not have any idea what the outcome of the case was going to be. The legislation as it was drafted here was based on the Wimmer decision that came down in 1988, and there was no real guide from any higher court decision that could be used in the drafting of this particular legislation and thus the need to take another look at it.

But in answer to his question, certainly they knew what was being discussed in Alberta back last spring, but who was to know what the outcome was going to be.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Chairman, will the minister tell the House whether or not he and the government dispute currently, in the light of Mahé, that there is an obligation upon the Government of Saskatchewan pursuant to section 23 and the various decisions of the courts thereto, is there any disputation at all about the constitutional obligation with respect to francophone governance in the province of Saskatchewan as a result of this decision, in principle terms?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — There's no doubt in the part of the government. We're bound by the constitution and we're committed to bringing this legislation forward, but we want to ensure that the legislation that is going to be brought forward is going to be correct.

Mr. Romanow: — In the light of the Mahé decision, will the minister advise the House whether or not the co-ordinating committee, the one that was advising in general terms that you described for me, will it be consulted and advised of the government's analyses of the government's perception of the problems, and if so, when and how?

(1915)

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — As I mentioned the other day, Mr. Chairman, we are going to be meeting with the other groups that are involved with the francophone governance, namely the parents and the task force, and we will want to be consulting and discussing this further with them. I would suggest that if there is further need for more consultation with the co-ordinating committee and input that this certainly would be the case. These people have a very important interest obviously in what the final legislation's going to be, the ramifications of the Mahé case. And so we're going to have to work together on it to ensure that we do get it right.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Chairman, it's not my intention to prolong this issue tonight because there are other issues that members may wish to raise, but I do want to ask the minister a specific question.

If it was thought, previously to the Mahé decision — as I gather it was and in fact practised — that the co-ordinating committee was part and parcel, a natural extension of the consensus that was achieved by Gallant, provided the overall directions and input to the drafting of the legislation prior to Mahé, why is it that the minister seemingly is reluctant to indicate that the co-ordinating committee will not be or will be used in the period following Mahé, in the understanding of the so-called complex legal and constitutional questions of which you

speak?

Why isn't the co-ordinating committee brought into this early, and quickly, and fully, and completely? And if they are, would you please tell us when the next meeting is going to be?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, the task force is the main body that we would be working with. Now we're going to be meeting with them very shortly. This, of course, was what came out of the Gallant report, and that's the body that we should be working with. Obviously if there is a decision or a concern about the co-ordinating committee having to be involved, certainly we would want to pursue that. But until we meet with the task force, which I believe is going to take place the 16th of this month, then we will take our direction following that meeting.

Mr. Romanow: — Well again, Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry to prolong this, but perhaps I don't understand the structure. It's important for me to understand the structure.

You're talking about task force now. We were previously talking about a co-ordinating committee, which I assume by your answer are two different bodies. The task force is chaired — if I have this correct information in front of me — by one Donald Michaud, director of the Fransaskois adult education services, College Mathieu, Gravelbourg.

But I want to come back again for clarification. Was I in error in hearing you say that in the pre-Mahé period, the assistance or the guidance — call it what you will — in the drafting of the legislation was given to you by something called a co-ordinating committee. Is that a different body, or is it the same body? If it's different, how does it relate to the task force? Since it was helping you on the legislation then, my question is: since the legislation's apparently run into snag as a result of legal decision, why isn't that body helping you now? Why is it going to the task force? Perhaps you can enlighten me here.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, just to bring the member opposite up to date, the co-ordinating committee then was set up to look at the whole area of the governance and that committee was headed up by Gallant, Edgar Gallant. He then wrote the report, following that.

Now one of the recommendations out of that report was to set up the task force. Some of the members of the co-ordinating committee are also on the task force, and since the task force has been set up, that's the main group that we have been involved with and would continue to be involved with.

Now the fact of the matter is that Roger Lepage, I believe, was the one who was involved in helping with the legislation. I believe he is still helping out with the task force. So until we meet with them, we will not be doing anything further on this until we have some more discussion with them, and bring them up to date on the reasons for the delay and where we go from there.

Mr. Romanow: — Okay, that clarifies it. I think you used the term co-ordinating committee in consultation with

the drafters — I'm not holding you to it — but what you're saying is that the co-ordinating committee is in effect Gallant. What we're really talking about is the task force working members, task force — they're the ones and whether it's co-ordinating or task force, that's fine, it clarifies it.

Now I want to return for a minute or two, before I leave this subject for the evening, to the Mahé decision, and I wonder if the minister would be prepared to state again for me, but perhaps with a little more specifics tonight, what it is about the Mahé decision, in the light of section 23 in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that detrimentally affects the draft legislation being prepared by the task force and/or co-ordinating committee.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, a couple of the issues that I would just make mention of with regard to the Mahé case, and one of those was with regard to the fact that they consider it a sliding scale when they determined the student numbers and where it might warrant either complete governance, partial governance, or representative participation within existing school boards. Now that was something that had not really been considered, I hear, in the province of Saskatchewan. But that did throw a different light on the case. So whether you have a fairly large number of students where it could warrant complete governance down to the situation where you might have only a handful of students, and whether or not it would warrant having a separate situation there or complete governance situation or simply ensuring that those francophone parents had representation on the existing school board. So that's one of the areas. Our proposed legislation did not take these considerations into account, simply because precedent had not been established when our legislation was being drafted.

Now the second one, and I mentioned this as well to you the other night, that a problem that was to do with section 29 of our particular Act, in that the implications of this section would have in fact meant that some of the parents that would qualify under section 23 of the charter would have been denied certain rights under our Act. And I don't think that the francophones want that to be the case. So those are two of the specifics that I would suggest to you are a couple of the main reasons for delaying our legislation.

Mr. Romanow: — For the minute I want to leave this question, but I'd like you to think about it because I'm going to ask you before I take my seat this evening. With respect to the second reason, proposed section 29 of the proposed legislation, the question I'll be asking you, and your officials perhaps could give some thought to this, is whether or not it is correct to say that this was essentially not dependent upon the Mahé decision and could be relatively easily rectified by drafting changes and amendments.

You can give some thought to that, but this is the question that I want to ask with respect to the sliding scale. And may I preface this by saying that in the Mahé situation as I understand it, the appeal there dealt with the question of section 23 in Edmonton and the management of a minority language school in Edmonton. The facts are that

in the Edmonton area, according to the judgement, there were approximately 116,800 students enrolled in the public and separate systems and 2,900 citizens whose first language learned and understood was French. Of these, 4,130 children aged from birth to 19 years, and they were the subject of the particular Act for governments in the province of Alberta. And in that context, as the minister says, the Supreme Court talked about section 23, the constitutional right to provide these language of instruction provisions in the context of the sliding scale.

The question I have for the minister in this regard is, having read the Mahé decision, as he undoubtedly has and his officials have, does the minister view the sliding scale standard set by the Supreme Court of Canada, with respect to section 23, as setting out minimum or maximum standards?

(1930)

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — The understanding, Mr. Chairman, is that it's minimum, it's not maximum.

Mr. Romanow: — I appreciate the minister's answer. I'm looking at page 27, 28, and 29 of the judgement of which you have and your officials will have. And at page 27 the court there talks about the measurement of management and control, and describes in some detail the sliding scale ranging from independent school boards to representation and so forth. Funding on page 28 and then goes down to page 29. And I shall read for the minister the following passages of the decision in the middle of page 29, and I'm reading from the court judgement: "Second . . ." The first point being the sliding scale, the court says:

Second, provincial and local authorities may, of course, give minority groups a greater degree of management and control than that described above. Section 23 only mandates a minimum level of management and control in a given situation; it does not set a ceiling.

And of course the minister says that it's a minimum. But I want the minister's attention focused, if I might, to the first sentence of that decision which says that:

. . . provincial and local authorities may, of course, give minority groups a greater degree of management and control . . .

I continue from the quotation, the court says:

Third, there are a variety of different forms of institutional structures which will satisfy the above guidelines.

Note the words "a variety of different forms of institutional structures." So the minister says that the standards are minimum standards. Is the minister telling the House that the proposed legislation, which is drafted but which we have not seen, violates the minimum standards?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, it doesn't violate the minimum standards but at the same time we

recognize that if the numbers were too small, that the better route to go would be to provide for francophone parents to have representation on a school board as opposed to having the full governance and management control over their school. So it doesn't violate the minimum rates.

Mr. Romanow: — Well if it does not violate the minimum standards as set out by Mahé, but yet the minister says that there is a better way to go or a better route, based on his words, roughly speaking, does this not amount to a denial of the basis of the Gallant report and the work that stemmed therefrom?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, the understanding that we have is that we would be proceeding in a fashion that would be in line with the Gallant report. But at the same time, I think that there has to be some consideration given to those situations, as I indicated earlier, where there was a very, very small number of students, as to whether or not they would have representation on the school board as opposed to the complete and total management and control.

Mr. Romanow: — Well, for example, what school boards of the several targeted schools, given the numbers that exist within those targeted schools — and you've identified those, as you told me — which one of those would not fall within the minimum standards of the Mahé decision?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, there hasn't been a decision on the numbers here in Saskatchewan. But I would point out to the member opposite that now, based on the decision out of Alberta, it is necessary that we go back, have further discussions with Justice and with the task force to take a look at our legislation and ensure that it does not have some of the problems that have been pointed out to us that do, in fact, exist.

So we need more time on this. The Leader of the Opposition is a lawyer. He certainly understands a lot of this a lot better than certainly I do. But we have to go back now and work with Justice and ensure that the legislation that we are going to bring forward is, in fact, right and it is going to protect the rights of the francophones, the ones that desire this governance of their own schools. But we need more time on that.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Chairman, what I'm trying to inform myself about is the government's position. If Mahé has set out a sliding scale, which scale is a minimum standard, which standard by your own admission the proposed Bills did not violate — couldn't have; how could you have violated the minimum standards? You told me you didn't violate the minimum standards. The question I have, therefore, is what specific reasons justify the postponement of the project in the light of Mahé. What specific problems are there?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I have indicated to the Leader of the Opposition that we're going to be meeting with the task force within the next two weeks. We are also going to be getting more instructions from Justice as to some of the detail that needs to be looked at and changed in our legislation. And until that

time arrives it's very difficult to give him much more than I have.

We have concerns about the Mahé decision and how it works on a sliding scale. We keep in mind that here in the province of Saskatchewan that there may be some of those situations where in fact it would be more appropriate for the group of parents to simply have representation on a board as opposed to the francophone governance. But those are things that we're going to have to take a look at with the task force and with Justice as we get into more detail in the Bill.

But we want to ensure that when we are finished, that we are going to have an Act that is going to meet the wishes of the francophone people. And I think he should understand that to do that we require more time. The Bill could not be put together and put through this House by the end of this month in order to allow enough time to have all of the mechanisms in place to deliver this service by September 1.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Chairman, I think I understand much of what the minister is saying. But what I'm trying to gauge with some specifics is the rational arguments upon which the government has made its decisions. That's what I'm asking you, to provide some answers here for me. And I'd like to ask another question. Who made the recommendation to cabinet that there should be a postponement of French governance and the legislation as a result of the Mahé decision? Was it Justice or Education?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, once the decision came down in Alberta this information was made available to the Department of Justice. It had been their officials that had been involved in the case in Alberta or monitoring the situation there. So when that report came through, and once Justice had had an opportunity to examine it, they were in consultation with the Department of Education officials and then that decision was taken forward to cabinet that there was no way that we had enough time, under the circumstances, to bring in this legislation in this session; that we would be just simply unable to have all of the mechanics in place for this to go ahead for this fall. So that is the sequence of how this unravelled and how the decision was made.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Chairman, I just have a couple more questions in this area before I yield to other members. Did the minister last day promise to me and the House that he would provide a copy of the legal and other concerns prepared by either Justice or your department, which might be the basis of discussion by the task force in the light of Mahé, the considerations herein? Am I correct in assuming that that's what you indicated you would do?

I understand, if my memory is right, that you will not table the proposed Bill in order for us to look at section 29, and measure your assessment of 29 with respect to Mahé to make sure that we agree with it. But what about the documentation which sets out the constitutional and legal concerns which, I must say, with the greatest of respect to you today, you have not articulated fully, I don't think, for the clarification of the House. Can we get a copy of the written concerns when you make them

available to the task force?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — We'll be finalizing those within the next short while, Mr. Chairman, and we'll want to meet with the task force and we will be able to provide you with a copy at that time.

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you. I appreciate that very much. I also want to ask if the minister will indicate to the House what timetable his department has with respect to the resolution of these obstacles as set out in Mahé, as you see them. What timetable do you have for the resolution of these obstacles and your meeting for the task force?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, as I've indicated to the secretariat we have met with to date and the other groups that we will be meeting with, that it is our plan to get the legislation together and finalized to the satisfaction of everyone just as soon as we can, with the idea that it could be introduced at the next session of the legislature.

Mr. Rolfes: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I want to dwell on a couple of major issues this evening and leave a number of items for next day and next week. But I have a couple of big issues that I want to dwell on tonight because they've had a major impact on education, post-secondary education in the last three years.

Mr. Minister, I want to take you back to 1987. I know you weren't the minister at that time, but you were a member of the Executive Council and consequently you have to take as much responsibility, I suppose, or almost as much responsibility for the decision that was made at that time as the previous Minister of Education.

I guess I can say without any reservation, Mr. Minister, that the previous Minister of Education had very little understanding of education and the process of education as such, and it was a relief to the educators out there and many other people associated with education when you received your appointment, not so long ago. And there was hope in this province. There was hope in this province that we finally have an individual who understands education. But before, Mr. Minister, the buttons pop on your shirt, I will tell you that we have been disappointed, and the educators out there have been disappointed. And I think part, it's not your fault — you inherited a bad situation. We have to see what you will do in your term of office to see whether or not you will rectify some of the damage that was done by the former minister.

I am referring, Mr. Minister, to the decision that was made in 1987 by your government to overhaul the technical schools in this province. I want to take you through some of the disastrous consequences that have occurred because of that decision. We certainly made it very plain to you in the opposition here that that was a wrong decision to go.

(1945)

Our technical schools at that time — Wascana, STI (Saskatchewan technical institute), and Kelsey — those three campuses could certainly compete against any

other technical schools, certainly in western Canada. There was no doubt about that at all.

And, Mr. Minister, let me tell you, when I was an active member in education and a high school counsellor, we felt very proud, very proud in recommending students to anyone of those campuses — anyone of those campuses. The standards were high, the programs were accepted by the industry out there, our graduates were sought after, and the morale of our instructors was extremely high. What compelled you people to make that dramatic change, with the disastrous consequences that have come from it, is still not understood by very many people out there, certainly not understood by the opposition, and some of us have been in education for a long time; certainly not understood by many of the people who are in the field and at the four campuses now. Mr. Minister, I guess the decision that you people made has been, as I said, an unmitigated disaster.

And what you have done, Mr. Minister, by making that decision, you have virtually driven away the chances of many of our young people to receive their post-secondary education in the technologies from Saskatchewan. You abolished many good programs, programs that were over-subscribed, and your officials who were on the board at that time can certainly confirm that. They know that that is true.

And, Mr. Minister, by abolishing many of those programs, you turned them over to the private vocational schools, without any standards in those private vocational schools that you enforced — and I will turn to that later. And many of our young people have been ripped off by the greed of those private vocational schools.

And I make no apologies for saying that these students were ripped off and the province was ripped off, as you indicated in a letter to me last January by indicating to me that last year alone we put out, through student loans, anywhere between 22 to \$25 million depending on which figure we use, as we understood last night.

That, Mr. Minister, in itself, as I will later on corroborate for you, has been a disaster for many young people. Their future is shattered. Their future has been shattered; they're deeply in debt, and it's come about because of a decision that you people made.

Mr. Minister, I want to . . . So that you don't think that it's just my own assessment of what people think has happened in the technical school area, I want to read to you some lines of a letter that was written to Mr. Houghton, and you will know Mr. Houghton is the Chairman of the Board of SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), by a staff member.

Now I will just read some lines to you, and this individual, whom I just recently met — I did not know this individual — but he wrote the letter to Mr. Houghton, and he says the following:

We stood by, stunned in 1987 when we saw Kelsey Institute, which was a quality educational institution, ravaged by a political decision that promised better opportunities and better funding

for a leaner, amalgamated super-institute that would be world class. "Trust us," said the former minister. "This is done to provide better quality education".

I'm not going to read the whole letter because it's about four or five typewritten pages. He goes on to say in another paragraph:

The result has been anything but a better quality institution. Good instructors were fired or pushed into early retirement, and success appears to be gauged in terms of numbers of clients processed through, rather than whether or not we were helping our students to become educated people who were prepared to make personal and career decisions which would enable them to provide worthwhile livings for themselves.

And then on another page, the writer goes on to say this:

Quality comes out of commitment. I, for one, continue to have commitment to my students because I am a professional educator; yet if there ever was a commitment to the institute by instructors at Kelsey, it has been destroyed by your statements, and the ongoing behaviour of the people who fund and manage this institution.

He goes on to say to Mr. Houghton:

I invite you to walk the hallways of Kelsey. There is terrible morale, which obviously affects the students. Why is it so low? For each instructor there is a different reason, but collectively it is because we are tired of hearing what can best be described as lip service to quality.

No budget for months into the school year, originally no contract commitment to instructors beyond the first of December, no public request by the board to the government for sufficient funding to keep our equipment up to date, and now the final insult of having our board chairman say that we have demonstrated frivolous disregard to our students by withdrawing our services.

I want to, Mr. Minister, end as he ends. He says to Mr. Houghton:

Your cavalier words regarding instructors have only added to the negative environment created by years of underfunding and questionable management, decisions taken with little, if any consultation with student alumni and faculty.

This, Mr. Minister, comes from an individual who has taught at Kelsey for a number of years, and he takes his job very seriously. But I guess they were, as he says, stunned on the process of the lack of consultation and the treatment that people received when you changed the technical schools to what you called a SIAST or world class institution.

Mr. Minister, it will take years for the technical schools in this province to get back to the standards that it had before

you ravaged it in 1987. It will takes years. And I know, Mr. Minister, that you have a hand in this because you choose the board. You chose the chairman. You chose, through your board, the president. And you chose, through your board, the vice-presidents and all the people that are in the administrative structure.

And I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, tonight a series of questions on SIAST as to what your assessment is today in so far as the decision that was made in 1987. And if you had to do it today as Minister of Education, would you proceed in the same process as the former minister of Education did in 1987?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I would start by answering the last question first. Yes I would definitely proceed. There might be some things that I would do a little bit differently, but there's no doubt about it that the fact that we live in changing times, that it was necessary to reorganize SIAST and the old community colleges that we had. I think that the member opposite makes a good point. There were good programs being offered prior to the reorganization, and I would suggest that there are many more good programs that are still being offered today.

I would also point out that when he talks about quality, that I would suggest that we still have quality instruction going on in SIAST. The quality instruction, in my view, Mr. Chairman, comes about by having qualified instructors. I think this is always the way it is in education. I think we overdo this whole idea of underfunding.

I know that we need funds and we could always use more money, but at the same time the quality of programs is determined more, I think, by the quality of the instructor and the type of the instruction that is going on within the class-room. So for the member to suggest that the quality has gone down simply because there's a reorganization, I don't buy that.

We've got many of the same instructors that were there prior to the reorganization. And I will readily admit that there have been many problems since reorganization. Part of the problems go down to contract decisions and the fact that there has been problems with staff and management and people wanting to get contracts settled, and something that lasted for a good many months, in fact, over a period of probably three years. And that can be unsettling, but at the same time, Mr. Chairman, most people are not undaunted by that. They go ahead and they provide the quality of instruction that they've always provided. But I know that the times have been unsettling for many of the instructors.

And in some cases, courses were shut down because there were courses, Mr. Chairman, that were no longer relevant to the needs of today. There was also the need to reorganize and, in some cases, rationalize the programs. There may not have been enough students in some of those courses to warrant having them on all the campuses. So the natural thing to do would be to rationalize and specialize in some of the different campuses; in other words, setting up more of an idea of centres of excellence. And I think that there's a great move in all areas of Canada and probably in North

America to look at that type of thing today.

So there were some programs cancelled, but very few, but there was more amalgamation at some of these courses. And when you consider that the number of spaces has increased substantially since this change or with the change, we've got many more students enrolled in SIAST today than ever before. And when you look at the figures back in 1981-82, for example, the number of students enrolled was just under 20,000. Well for this past year . . . well 1988-89 it was as high as 46,613. So many more young people that are interested in taking these courses can have that access that they didn't have prior to the reorganization or the development of the Woodlands Campus in Prince Albert.

So yes, I would do the same thing, but I would probably do a few things a little bit differently. So there have been problems; I recognize that. We're talking about a pretty big institution here when we talk about SIAST and it has taken a while to get some of the kinks out. But I would hope that now that the negotiations have all been completed and things can get back to normal and we can move ahead, it is a world class facility. It is a world class facility.

Well let's take a look at some of the things that are happening. Let's take a good look at some of the things that are happening, Mr. Chairman. We have got much more activity going on today, as a result of the reorganization, than was ever possible before. And when we talk about world class, I would quote from an article that was in the *Star-Phoenix* just a few days ago that indicates quite clearly that SIAST today is involved in no fewer than 19 different countries and that there is an awful lot more that can be done in the world through the provision of services from the SIAST campuses. If that isn't world class, Mr. Chairman, I don't know what is.

The member opposite has indicated that the private vocational schools have, in some cases, not been totally fair to students, and we recognize that fact. That's why we're changing regulations and that's why we're changing rules in the student loan fund. But I would suggest to him that in Saskatchewan, where we have — this was for 1989, the national statistics — 59 schools were registered with 5,766 students enrolled, that compared to the other provinces across the country, there are very few provinces that would have fewer of these than here in Saskatchewan. And I would point out directly to the maritime provinces where generally they would have many fewer schools registered.

(2000)

But when you look at the province of Alberta where they have 97, where Manitoba has 45 — just a little bit behind us — British Columbia with 465, and Ontario with 235. Now, much larger populations? Well enrolments are pretty big in some cases here, but at the same time Ontario has 40,000 students enrolled in those particular courses.

Now we know that other provinces are looking at some of the changes that we're making in our regulations, and we feel that we've got some really good conditions that are

going to be put into place that are going to make these programs a little bit fairer as far as the students that are taking them, but also the fact that the programs are going to be quality and are going to meet a need that's out there. But they are at the same time going to lead some place and that the students will be able to get a job upon completing their courses.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I am sorry to hear that you follow in the follies of your predecessor in that you, as an educator, can't be enlightened to see that what you have done was a mistake. And to say — to say — that we've ironed out the kinks, what a joke. As I will indicate to you very shortly, you have spent and wasted more money in administration in the corporate body — not just thousands, millions — in the corporate body itself, as we will come to grips with very shortly.

Mr. Minister, I wish, you know, if you say that you would do the same thing as the former minister has done and ripped up the agreements that were made, negotiated agreements, you legislated them out of existence. That was, number one, your basic problem. Finally the Labour Relations Board forced you people to accept those agreements.

Time and time again you have been shown that you are wrong in what you are doing, and yet you persisted in bulldozing ahead without any regard — any regard — Mr. Minister. How you can stand before this legislature and say that you would proceed in the same way, with maybe some minor changes, for people that have worked and slaved in the education field for 20, 25, twenty-nine and a half years, and you summarily dismiss them. And you say you would proceed in the same way. I am disappointed with you.

I could understand the former minister doing it. He didn't understand education; I've told him that time and time again. But you are an educator. I would expect that you would have more respect for those people who have dedicated their lives, who have spent 20, 25, and twenty-nine and a half years. I don't go to 30 because they would have qualified fully at 30. But to dismiss people, summarily dismiss them and replace them with people who are not as qualified but who have allegiance to your political philosophy is unacceptable, Mr. Minister, simply unacceptable. And that is what has occurred.

That is why the instructors are so low in their morale, because they have people heading up the campuses, in some of the campuses, who simply know nothing about technical schools, who have had no experience in administration, and they are expected to take their advice and their leadership from these people. Those were political appointments, and whereby you dismiss people who are fully qualified who had dedicated themselves. And that, Mr. Minister, is where you made one of your most serious mistakes. Not the only ones, but certainly some of them.

Mr. Minister, if you say that activity is the yardstick that you want to use, you say, well look, there's lots of activity going on; it shows that we are successful. Then you say to me that because we have quadrupled the private vocational schools that that shows success and

excellence of quality of work? Absolutely a *non sequitur*, absolute nonsense. That's what it is. Absolute nonsense. You go and talk to those students who have been ripped off by those private vocational schools when they could have received office education at Kelsey Institute, and now have to go to one of those unregulated private schools.

I will document a little later a number of cases. And I asked you, Mr. Minister, in a letter that I sent to you, whether you would meet with these 17 students who were attending CompuCollege. No answer from you, none, no answer. I will document that a little later.

Let me say, Mr. Minister — You say that when the former minister said that it was world class, I didn't think he meant that, oh well, we'll take some programs out to third worlds, now we're world class. That wasn't the interpretation that was put on it at all. When he talked about world class, he was talking about quality, excellence.

I want to ask the minister: will you admit that one of the courses that you are teaching in another country is a dental program that you did away with a few years ago? Is that true? Is SIAST teaching a school-based dental program in another country?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, it surprises me a bit, I guess, the member opposite that he would be so opposed to change — opposed to change. Because he is suggesting that the reorganization of SIAST and the change as far as the community colleges were concerned was not very, very progressive. Because, Mr. Chairman, we fully realize that times are changing. And we had courses going on in the SIAST campuses that were no longer going any place. I mean, why would you want to continue turning out widget makers? Why would you want to continue that? I mean, it was time for change.

And for you to suggest that the principals that we have at the SIAST campuses were political appointments, I think that that's really being unfair when you consider the background of every one of the people that is now on a campus here in Saskatchewan. Take a look at that. Because when you consider they've got in some cases maybe between 20 and 30 years of experience working with community colleges, working with vocational programs, or in some cases being involved with vocational programs in other parts of Canada — and I refer there specifically to Moose Jaw — these are decisions that are made by the board of directors of SIAST.

An Hon. Member: — Your appointments.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well that doesn't mean that I have any involvement with the appointment of . . . the appointment is made by those people. The appointment is made by them. In fact I could point out to a couple of the principals that I did not know until the appointment had been made, who was going to get it. So if you call that a political appointment, I don't know where you're coming from.

I would also indicate to the member opposite that the

capacity at SIAST has increased by some 21 per cent since the reorganization. Now that points out that there is a lot happening in Saskatchewan. There's a great need for vocational programs, and there are a lot of other things that are happening off the campuses where SIAST is involved. Not all of the students are being taught on the campuses. We've got a lot of other programs throughout rural Saskatchewan being provided through the regional colleges where SIAST is very, very involved. So yes, Mr. Chairman, reorganization was due and as I indicated to the member earlier, there are some things, probably, that I would have done differently. But at the same time it was necessary to meet the needs of the students for the 1990s and on into the 21st century.

I would also point out that because of some of the changes, the reorganization that took place, that it did create new opportunities for some students that possibly hadn't had their needs met in the past. And I refer there to more accessibility that was made available for native students in some of the programs that have been developed since that time of the reorganization. So I think that we could have a good debate on this. If you consider the pros and cons of the change, one would see that there were many, many reasons for that change taking place, but because of the fact that there was a lot of labour strife, I suppose, between management and instructors, with not having a contract settled, that certainly did not help the situation.

But now, of course, we're past that. We're past that, and I would hope that now we can go ahead and move along to develop programs there that will make these campuses what all of us want them to be. And in fact, Mr. Chairman, I would welcome support and suggestions from the member opposite because he does have a good deal of experience in working with students at the secondary level and we need that kind of input as well. So I would welcome that.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I know you're very adept at not answering my question, but I would like you to answer my question: does SIAST offer a school-based dental program in another country?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Sorry, Mr. Chairman, they do that; they offer I think it's Namibia, one of the African countries I believe, where they are doing this. And I think that to make a comparison to that particular area, possibly to Saskatchewan, what their needs are — yes, they are in fact doing that.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I'm certainly pleased to see that. At least somebody at SIAST recognized that you made a mistake in doing away with the school-based dental program and that other countries can benefit from an experiment that was so successful in this country and in this province, but that you didn't recognize the value of it.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you a question on one particular principal, and that's the principal of Kelsey institute, Modest Kowal. What's Modest Kowal's background as far as technical school experience is concerned and also Modest Kowal's administrative experience as far as running a big campus like Kelsey is

concerned?

Mr. Minister, while you're at it, could you also tell me, when the position became vacant, was it tendered? Was it an open competition? And could you give me the names of those people who applied but did not receive the job?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Kowal has a B.Ed. degree and a master's in administration. With regard to his background, he was acting principal at the community college; he also spent eight years with the community regional college. He was also in charge of the Saskatchewan skills development program for a number of years. And it was an open competition. This was a board-sponsored competition, and the board made the selection.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, do you mean to tell me that for a position like Kelsey we could not attract somebody with post-secondary experience, somebody with much more administrative experience? Mr. Minister, to be fair with you, I want to let you know, Mr. Kowal is a very personal friend of mine. I've taught with Mr. Kowal a number of years at Holy Cross High School. I don't want to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, I didn't beat around. I'm not putting him down. All I'm saying to you is, Mr. Minister, it was political interference, and what I get from Kelsey campus is exactly that, that they now have an administration who don't know, who don't understand, post-secondary education. That is the problem that we have. That is why the morale is as low as it is, because they see this as political interference. I also happen to know what the politics of Mr. Kowal is, and I think you do too. I think you know as well as I do.

(2015)

So, Mr. Minister, let's not talk so innocent like that there's no political interference. You know as well as I do. We know what the policies of Mr. Houghton is. He ran for you people. I have no objection to Mr. Houghton. He's well qualified and has administrative experience. I don't agree with Mr. Houghton not answering my letters, but I'll get to that a little later. But, Mr. Minister, don't tell me that you couldn't find . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, please. Order. Order, please! Order. Order, please. We're trying to hear the member from Saskatoon South ask his question. There's several other conversations going on, making it impossible for everybody. So if we could allow the member from Saskatoon South to continue. Thank you.

Mr. Rolfes: — I don't expect the member from Morse to understand too much about post-secondary education, so stick with agriculture, and you know very little about that. You're not having very much success. If I were you, Mr. Associate Minister, I'd go to my office and study a little bit more about the problems that we're having in agriculture. Maybe you'll be able to have some success with Ottawa. Don't get into a field you know very little about or next to nothing.

Mr. Minister, I want to again ask you: of those people in the open competition, how many people applied for the position of principal of Kelsey institute, and could I

receive the names and the qualifications of those people who applied?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think it's unfortunate the comments being made by the member opposite because you're talking about the fact that he has no experience with post-secondary. Or what would you call the Saskatchewan skills development program? What would you call the community regional college program? That's post-secondary. I mean, the fact of the matter is that Mr. Kowal is an administrator, and he's got his master's degree in administration.

Now for you to ask me how many people applied, we can probably check with the board and get that information, but this was a competition that was done by the board. We're talking . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . We've got the loud-mouth from Moose Jaw harping over here. If you wait . . . Do you want to allow him to get into this now or carry on?

I would point out to you that the SIAST board is an independent board. We have nothing to do with those competitions. Well, for you and some of your colleagues and some of the people around, everything that's done is political. I mean, let's get off that. I told you that since I've been Minister of Education we've had two principals appointed with SIAST. I didn't know who was going to be the principal until after the appointment had been made. I mean, are you going to accuse me about political interference with that? You're just totally dead wrong.

So the same thing with Mr. Kowal. If you want us to try and find out from the board how many people applied for that job, we will attempt to do that. But I assume that from the competition, and that Mr. Kowal was selected, that it was all done fair and square and he was obviously the best candidate. So I mean, I don't know where you're getting your information, but I mean in some cases everything is political.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I wonder, would you tell me is Elizabeth Crosthwaite here this evening as one of your officials?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — No she isn't, Mr. Chairman. She isn't one of my officials.

Mr. Rolfes: — Oh, that's right. We have a lot of movement in post-secondary education. I should have known she's no longer with you. Yes, there's lot of movement there.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could find out before the adjournment of the estimates, which will not adjourn for at least another three or four days, and you will have sufficient time to get the names of those people who applied for the position at Kelsey Institute and also their qualifications and experience so that we can compare them with Mr. Kowal just to see what the open competition for such a job would have brought forward.

I'm surprised that for such a position we could not have received some applicants from across Canada, of people who have had actual administrative experience or a number of years of teaching experience plus

vice-principal experience at the post-secondary level. Could I be assured, Mr. Minister, that those will be made available to me before the estimates are finished in post-secondary education?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we can attempt to get the list of the applicants, but would point out to the member opposite that whether or not the board wants to give those out, that's their decision. The same thing can be applied at the University of Saskatchewan with their competition for a new president, and the same thing here. We don't know who applied for that job from wherever. Those are independent bodies. If they don't want to give us that information, certainly they're not bound to it, but we can ask them about it.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, that's just so much nonsense. Come on, don't pull that on me. I know you better than that. Mr. Minister, you appoint all the board members. They're all OC (order in council) appointments. The cabinet appoints every one of those. They then appoint — and I'm sure through consultation with you or your department — the chairman of the board.

Look, I just find it very difficult that you're trying to play those games with me this evening. I thought we were going to be straightforward with each other. We can have our differences . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, I just don't think you are; I don't think you are.

I want a commitment this evening on a number of things when it comes to SIAST. I just don't think it's good enough, Mr. Minister, for you to spend millions of dollars, of additional taxpayers' dollars, in SIAST, when, as I say, it's been a disaster — not just by my standards, but by a lot of people's standards. The reorganization of SIAST has been a disaster and it's cost us millions of extra dollars, and I need to know some of those answers.

This is going to be a long, long session in estimates here, and I mean, I've got lots of time and I suppose you have too. I've really nothing planned for the summer except a little bit of golf and I'm willing to sacrifice that — I'm willing to sacrifice that. I'll never break 100 anyway, so . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I don't have the time that some members opposite have.

But, Mr. Minister, could we have some assurances that you will make an effort to get us the names of the people who applied for the job of principal of Kelsey and their qualifications? Could I have that assurance?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I can give the member that assurance that I will try. But if the board or the chairman do not want to give that information to me, that's their prerogative.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I will be coming back to this tomorrow; we will be on again tomorrow unless they call different estimates. And I will be asking you tomorrow morning as to whether or not you have checked with the chairman of the board, and whether or not the chairman of the board will co-operate in making that information available to us. I think it is important.

Mr. Minister, if you had appeared at the February meeting

where I represented the opposition, Linda Haverstock represented the Liberal Party, and we had Arnie Paus-Jenssen from the university, and we all spoke on post-secondary education. But your chair was empty. You decided not to show up.

And there was a lot of anger, there was a lot of hostility towards what was happening at the various campuses on SIAST. And much of it was they were saying, was not that they were opposed to change, but they were opposed to change when they felt that the quality of education was suffering from those changes when they saw that it was political interference. That people were fired and replaced by people who were politically affiliated with your party. And they were very angry with that, and I don't blame them, I really don't blame them. When we have people, as I said before, who had put in 25 or 29 and a half years and then were simply told to leave, and without any regard at all for their future and what it would do to their pension and their retirement, I think is simply unacceptable.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you now turn to another area of SIAST. When you set up SIAST, you decided to set up two headquarters, one in Regina and one in Saskatoon. My understanding, Mr. Minister, is that you presently have rented space at Innovation Place, and my understanding also is that you have considerable space rented at Sask Place here on Albert Street in Regina.

Could you tell me, Mr. Minister, what are the terms of the rent or the lease rents in Innovation Place and at Sask Place here in Regina to begin with?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, before I comment on that I think it's interesting that the member opposite makes mention several times about political interference and then he keeps coming back suggesting that the Minister of Education should be going to the board of SIAST or to the chairman and suggesting that he turn over all of the names of those who applied for the principalship of Kelsey Campus in Saskatoon. What is that, if it isn't political interference? The other point that I want to make, Mr. Chairman, to just straighten out the member opposite when he talks of a meeting that was held at SIAST, and the minister didn't . . .

An Hon. Member: — No, it wasn't at SIAST.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well wherever it was. And the fact that the minister was not there. It's pretty difficult. You've been a minister of the Crown; you know how busy you are. You know how your schedule gets jammed up, in some cases two months ahead of time. Well, the fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, that I heard about the meeting about two days before it was going to be held and already had commitments. Well, that's the truth, but the member opposite does not always want to believe the truth.

With regard to the corporate offices, the locations that we have at the present time in Regina, as you have indicated, at Saskatchewan Place we have 970 square metres, and the length of that lease is till the end of March 1991. In Saskatoon, at the SEDCO Centre at Innovation Place, 233 square metres, that lease is until 1992, June, no, June 1992

for the SEDCO Centre.

Mr. Rolfes: — I want to ask several more questions. Would you mind telling me, since you're moving out, you're moving the headquarters from Regina to Saskatoon, and you have a lease there till March 1, 1991. That means almost two years now where you will have to pay the lease on that and obviously will not be using it, would you mind telling me what the cost of that lease is per year?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well I've indicated that the length of the lease is until March 1991. Now there are a couple of options that one could look at here. There is a six-month buy-out option, so that would be the maximum. So we're looking at less than a year. And the move from Regina to Saskatoon now is not going to be complete, I wouldn't think, until probably this fall. So there won't be that many months left on that particular lease.

At the same time, generally it's the policy that they try and find someone else to move into that particular space so that they aren't held to the payments until the end of the lease. So at any rate, the move won't take place probably, I would think, September 1, October 1, so there won't be a very long period of time left in that particular lease.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, as I said before, you're very adept at not answering my question. I asked for the cost of that lease; you didn't answer that for me.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well I think in all fairness, Mr. Chairman, that we cannot give the cost of the lease. I think we have to keep in mind that we're living in pretty competitive times. So I'm not going to be providing the cost of that particular lease.

(2030)

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, am I correct in surmising that the cost of that lease annually is somewhere around 300,000 per year?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the member opposite will have to continue to surmise, because I will not be giving those figures.

Mr. Rolfes: — Let me tell the people of Saskatchewan then that the cost of the lease, as far as I know is 300,000 a year, and that if they vacate, as they said they would, in June of this year . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The minister now tells me it will not be until probably fall, and I will have to take his word for it. Then there is still six months left, and of that six months it would mean again that it would cost the taxpayers \$150,000 per year.

Mr. Minister, that's not the only cost that has been involved. Can you tell me, Mr. Minister, what has been the cost involved of renovations to Sask Place in order to accommodate the corporate body? What did you spend on renovations to accommodate the corporate body?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite suggests that there could be a considerable loss once the office moves out of Saskatchewan Place to

Saskatoon, but the general practice is that SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) would attempt to rent that or lease that space out to someone else so that there would be very minimal loss. I would suggest that with regard to costs of renovations that that's a question that you should direct to property management.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, that's very nice of you to say direct it to management. I'll read to you a letter very shortly about what management says about questions that I asked and how they react to those questions. I'll just read that to you a little bit later.

Mr. Minister, I do want to say to you that this is with the high vacancy rate in Regina right now, it'd be very difficult for the government to find other people to take that place, and that the high rental that you're paying on that, particularly that's, you know, 300,000 per year is a lot of money to put out for such an office.

And so, Mr. Minister, I won't get those answers from management because management says to me they don't know, they haven't set a policy as to whether or not they should answer those questions. I'll read you the letter that Mr. Houghton wrote to me just recently.

Mr. Minister, I also am given to understand that extensive renovations were done at Innovation Place. Can you confirm that that is true? And secondly, can you confirm that there is no more space left in Innovation Place and that SIAST is looking for additional space now in downtown Saskatoon. Can you confirm that?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Let me correct the member, Mr. Chairman. I didn't suggest management would be a place where he could ask that question. No, I said property management, Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

The second thing, with regard to the space that they are presently occupying here in Regina, as I understand it there are other tenants that could very well be available quite quickly to move into that space, so in fact there may not be any loss of money.

With regard to Innovation Place in Saskatoon, there is, as I understand it, more space that will be available there before very long. As you well know, the Future Corporation is being wound down and there is a considerable amount of space there which is right next door to SIAST. Now that's something that they may well be considering, but I don't think any definite decision has been made on that right now.

An Hon. Member: — Are they looking downtown?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well there's a lot of space available certainly in Saskatoon that they could be looking at, but the plan is to have everything in one spot. And they may not be able to do that at Innovation Place, but there is an option there that the Future Corporation will be out of that before very long. But they do want to be in one spot.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I can certainly understand

that they want to be in one place. They just moved out of two; certainly they're not going to move into two different ones in Saskatoon if they can help it, and I can understand that.

But again you did not answer my question. My question was: can you tell me if extensive renovations were made and what the costs were of those renovations at Innovation Place. I am told that extensive renovations have been made and I'd like to know what the costs of those were. One of the problems, Mr. Minister, that came up during those extensive negotiations was that too much money was being spent by the corporate body. And one of the things that they were saying is that the debt that we have now at SIAST of \$1.9 million, which now the SIAST is at the board, is asking the students to make up in large part, was incurred because of the expenses incurred by the corporate body, unnecessary expenses. That's why I'm asking these questions — because those people have said, look at, that's unfair; why should we as students now have to pay for the very expensive tastes of certain members of the corporate body? That is unfair. I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, can you tell me: were extensive renovations done; what were the costs of those renovations; and thirdly, can you tell me, did they buy fairly expensive and unique furniture that I believe is still crated and has not been used at all?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, there were extensive renovations done in view of the fact that there were no walls, or any other facilities that had been developed in that particular space prior to SIAST moving into it. So yes, there were extensive renovations done.

As to the cost, I can't give him those figures. This was a management decision and I'm not one who believes in political interference. So if you can get information from them, that's fine. But there were extensive renovations done and for you to be asking me if there's furniture there that hasn't been used, I think I've only been in that particular office once for a very short meeting, Mr. Chairman, and I couldn't tell you. I certainly did not see any furniture that was still in crates, but maybe you should visit up there and see what's going on.

Mr. Rolfes: — They won't let me in. That's not true; that was said facetiously. I don't want anybody to take that seriously.

Mr. Minister, I was going to ask this question before. Do you, from the department, have a representative on the board? And if you do, who is that individual?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — The department does not have a representative on the board nor are they required to. But officials are available to meet with the board at any time when they require consultation, information, whatever the case might be.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, did you have a representative on the board?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Yes we did, Mr. Chairman. The representative was Elizabeth Crosthwaite. And Elizabeth Crosthwaite has moved from the department and is now involved with another department.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, can you tell me when Elizabeth Crosthwaite went off the board and when she left your department?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — The last date that Elizabeth Crosthwaite worked with the department, Mr. Chairman, was December 6.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, when you had your representative on the board, did you regularly meet with that representative in consultations with her as to what was going on at SIAST, or did she report to you on decisions that were made by the board of directors?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, she didn't meet with me directly. She reported to the deputy minister and any information that would have flowed from the board at that time went to the deputy minister.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, do you meet with your deputy minister concerning SIAST and discuss the policies and directions and decisions that are made by or that come out of the board of directors of SIAST?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I meet with my deputy on many occasions and we discuss many issues, many topics. There are times I'm sure that we talked about SIAST. There are times when we meet with the chairman of the board of SIAST, and certainly there are times when we discuss SIAST. But do we meet on specific occasions to do just that? The answer would be no.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, you indicated you meet with the chairman of the board, Mr. Houghton. Would you mind telling me how often you meet with Mr. Houghton and do these meetings generally take place after a board meeting has occurred?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, I have met with Mr. Houghton on probably, I would say, about three occasions. I have attended parts of two board meetings since last October. There is, I suppose, the odd time if he has a question of me that he will give me a call, but as far as any meetings, I would suggest about three since last October.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, you say that it's an independent board. What is your function at such a board meeting? Are you there as a guest? Are you there as a person who influences the board in decision makings? Are you there as someone who gives direction to the board? Are you there to participate in setting policy with the board? What is your function at that board?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well any time that I have met with the board, it's been because they might have had specific concerns that they wanted to discuss with me. I generally consider myself more as a guest when I'm there, but at the same time I am involved with some policy and we may discuss that when I'm there. Generally the time that I've spent at the board meetings would probably be in the neighbourhood of a half hour to an hour. The first time that I met with them was more of an orientation for me to meet the board members, but also to hear some of the

concerns that they had and ways in which . . . I wanted to know how the department could work with them, and so it was a very informal meeting that I had with them, but not there to necessarily give them directions, certainly.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I guess what I am trying to establish here is exactly what influence you have on the board of directors in decisions that they make. Certainly, you know, you are no stranger to Mr. Houghton and Mr. Houghton is no stranger to you, and I'm reading nothing into that. I want to say that from the outset.

But, Mr. Minister, could you tell me, are you in regular contact with Mr. Houghton on the telephone?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — No, I wouldn't call it regular contact. (2045)

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I'm not going to pursue it and say well is once a week or twice a week or once a month — I think I'll leave it at that.

Mr. Minister, I want to go on to another area in SIAST and that is the appointment of Eva Lee and of course, her resignation. Mr. Minister, can you tell me when Eva Lee was appointed as president of SIAST? Again, was this an open competition? And now here, of course, I'd like to also know how many people applied for that position and who were these individuals and what were their qualifications?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, Ms. Lee was appointed as president January 1, 1988. Yes it was an open competition. As to the number of applications there were at that time or where they were from, I have no idea how many there were or where they were from. This again was a decision of the board. They looked after the receipt of the applications. As I understand it, they had a committee that was involved with the selection process and made their appointment from that. And I would assume that the common practice would be that she was the best applicant at the time and that's how the decision was made.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, one of the problems again, I think we have to admit, I think was the inability of Eva Lee to communicate with the board and with the staff of SIAST. And also I think one of the problems that she probably experienced was her lack of experience in this area. It's not an area that is common to all people. I know Ms. Eva Lee was head of home economics at the U of S. I don't know Eva Lee personally; I've met her once or twice. But certainly her stint as president of SIAST was not a very good one, I think, and not a very successful one.

I know that there were many administrative organizations put forward by Eva Lee and my understanding, Mr. Minister, is that one of the problems they had was that the administrative organizations were changed at least five times in the time that she was the president. One time we would go this direction, next time it was best to go in another direction. And we've had vice-presidents change, I guess, about three times in the human resources area in the last year itself, and we certainly had some

difficulties in making that a go.

I want to now turn to the letter that I wrote to Mr. Houghton, and I want to read it to you — and some of the difficulties that I have in you saying, well go and ask the board of directors or ask management.

I wrote Mr. Houghton a letter and I asked a number of questions. Mr. Houghton wrote back to me on January 2. I wrote to him on December 15, and a number of questions I asked were these: “Dear Mr. Houghton . . .” This is my letter to him. I don’t know if I sent you a letter or not, Mr. Minister. But I says:

As the critic for post-secondary education I am interested in the budgetary expenditures of SIAST.

And I felt as the critic I had a right to know some of these answers. I said:

It would be much appreciated if you could, at your earliest convenience, answer a number of questions for me.

1. Of the total budget allocated for SIAST for the 1989-90 fiscal year, do you anticipate a deficit?

I thought it was straight forward.

If so, what is the amount of the deficit?

2. How much of the total budget has been allocated to each of the four campuses?

3. What per cent of the total budget is expended for professional staff, excluding the Corporate body?

4. What is the budget allocated to the Corporate body?

5. How many people are employed by the Corporate body?

6. How much money is expended by the Corporate body on lease arrangements? Where are the offices located, who are the leases with, and who are the owners of these buildings?

7. What is the salary paid to the president of SIAST, Eva Lee?

8. In addition to salary what were the additional expenditures incurred by the president so far in 1989-90?

9. What payments are made to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and to each member?

10. What criteria are used for the appointment of the members of the board?

11. What criteria are used for the selection and appointments of the principal of each of the

campuses?

I thank you in advance for a prompt and accurate reply to the above questions. Sincerely . . .

And I signed it as critic for post-secondary education. Mr. Houghton wrote back on January 2:

Dear Mr. Rolfes: Thank you for your letter of December 15, 1989 expressing your interest in SIAST and requesting information.

Your request will be put before our Board of Directors at the January 17, 1990 Board meeting. We have had a number of inquiries such as yours over the past month and it is important for the Board to establish a procedure for handling requests.

In the meantime, I am enclosing two pieces of information which will answer a number of your questions. The first is SIAST’s annual report which contains a statement of financial position. The second is the Order-in-Council outlining the appointment of Board members, remuneration rates, and so on.

Our Board has a scheduled day long meeting each month except August.

I will get in touch with you shortly after our January Board meeting.

Well I wrote back to Mr. Houghton, and I said the following:

Dear Mr. Houghton: (I wrote back to him on February 22) On December 15, 1989, I wrote to you as Chairman of SIAST’s board of directors requesting answers to a number of questions. On January 2, 1990, you replied saying that my questions would be placed before the board at a meeting on January 17, 1990. You indicated that you would be in touch with me shortly after that meeting. It is now February 21, 1990, and I have not received any further communication from you concerning my letter of December 15. I would very much appreciate it if you would reply to my letter and write me with the information requested as soon as possible.

And I signed the letter. Well I did not hear from Mr. Meiklejohn and today is May 3. He has not corresponded with me whatsoever. So, Mr. Minister, I then wrote to Ms. Eva Lee on March 23:

Dear Ms. Lee: Further to the letter sent to Mr. Houghton of March 5, 1990, which is in response to my letter of December 15, 1989, I would appreciate an immediate reply to the questions I asked in my letter. I hope that you will respond positively and quickly so that I can adequately perform my duties in the legislature as critic for post-secondary education.

And then I signed it, “Thank you for what I hope will be a

positive response". And I sign it.

I did this, Mr. Minister, because last year I got stonewalled. The minister told me: go to the board of directors, go to the chairman, go to the president. This is exactly what I did. And I did not, Mr. Minister, get any reply, satisfactory reply, from either the chairman of the board or the president. Now I understand now of course why the president didn't answer, because in the mean time, Ms. Lee has resigned her position.

But, Mr. Minister, I hope you can put yourself in my position as the critic for post-secondary education with a responsibility to try and find out for the people of Saskatchewan whether moneys have been expended according to the law of the land and according to rules and regulations laid down by this legislature. I can't do that if I cannot get the answers from you as the minister responsible. I cannot get those answers in public accounts, and I cannot seem to be able to get them from the chairman of the board or the president.

Now I think, Mr. Minister, that that is not an acceptable policy. Somewhere along the line, I think, in a democratic government the opposition has a right to those answers of the questions that we have asked. And it's not just thousands of dollars; here are millions of dollars of public money being expended. And I think the public has a right to know those through the official opposition.

Now I'm asking you again, Mr. Minister, in view of the fact that I cannot get these answers from the chairman of the board, I don't seem to be able to get them either from Ms. Lee, who I know has resigned but there is a replacement, an acting president, a Bryan Dunleavy, who I would expect would pick up her duties, and if he had any intentions of answering my question or my letter, would have done so.

So I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, would you as the minister responsible for post-secondary education, then take it upon yourself to answer these questions in the legislature so that we can guarantee the people out there that yes, their money is well spent and it is spent according to the rules and regulations and the laws laid down by this legislature. Would you do that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I presume that the member opposite is interested in all sectors of post-secondary education. So I would assume that he has also contacted the president of the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina, as well as the chairman of the board of governors in each case, asking them for this same type of information. And he didn't indicate that, but I would assume that he would be contacting them in the same way because we are talking about independent institutions here.

With regard to his concern about whether the money is being spent properly and whether business is being conducted in the proper manner, Mr. Chairman, SIAST is subject to an annual audit in the same way that any other institution is. The annual report, if it hasn't already been tabled in the House, will be tabled here, and certainly he has an opportunity to take a look at what's happening at that time. But if the chairman of the board or the president

doesn't see fit to provide that information, that's maybe unfortunate, but again the same thing would apply at the universities.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I must admit I am terribly disappointed. I must admit I had high hopes and was very pleased when you were appointed as Minister of Education, as I did not expect that you would follow that stonewalling, that secretive kind of policy that the former minister of Education ran. I'm disappointed in you, terribly disappointed, and the people have to be.

Yes, Mr. Minister, I met with the four top officials of the University of Regina; I asked them a number of questions. And I will be meeting with the president of the University of Saskatchewan. I've already met with the president of the University of Saskatchewan. He was very, very frank with me on every question I asked him.

I met with the top officials of the U of S, at least the four or five top officials. They were very frank in answering all of my questions that I asked. I did not ask for a meeting with Mr. Houghton because I didn't think that he would give me a meeting, but I did write to him in all sincerity as critic for post-secondary education. And I do think that he has an obligation or you have an obligation to the people of Saskatchewan to answer these questions.

You can laugh it off, Mr. Minister, that's fine. You can laugh it off, but I'll tell you, the people out there aren't laughing. And I'll tell you that people, the staff at Kelsey aren't laughing. Neither are the staff at Northlands college. They're not laughing.

An Hon. Member: — Why?

Mr. Rolfes: — Because you aren't answering the questions for them. Because everything you've done in secret, and so much of it is done for political reasons. That's why — that's why.

I asked you a number of questions. All right? I'll ask you a question then, Mr. Minister, see if you will answer it. You said I should ask you a question; I will.

Number one, Mr. Minister, would you please answer for me: of the total budget allocated for SIAST for the 1989-90 fiscal year, do you anticipate a deficit? If so, what is that deficit and what caused that deficit?

(2100)

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, a couple of points. The report for 1988-89 did show a deficit of \$1.9 million. That was because of the accrual accounting method that is used, an estimate that was made in view of the fact that it was thought that the salaries could be settled in that particular year, but in fact they weren't. So there would not have been that deficit in '89-89. Now of course if he's talking about '89-90, we haven't reached their year end yet, so we are not going to have an accounting of what the deficit is going to be at that point.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I do want to ask you: am I not correct in saying according to the legislation that was passed in this Assembly in 1987 that SIAST is not allowed

to run a deficit? And if it isn't, how are you dealing with SIAST's not abiding by the law of the land?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, they can run a deficit with the minister's approval. So I mean, there is that possibility. I would point out as well, that the budget for SIAST this year has been increased by some 10.7 per cent, if you consider the increase in the operating grant plus the enhancement fund. So they got a significant amount of new money there. And until such time as their year end is reached and their books are audited, no one is going to know exactly what type of deficit they might be looking at.

Mr. Rolfes: — Would you mind telling the legislature what your reasons were for allowing them to run a deficit?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — We have to keep in mind, Mr. Chairman, that the negotiations have now been completed and an agreement reached, and there is a substantial amount of money that's required to put into that agreement. As a result, you could really only estimate how much money they are actually going to need and whether or not the grant is going to be adequate enough to cover that — you never really know for sure.

At the same time, we have to give some comfort to the board that, in fact, if a deficit does occur, that it can happen with ministerial approval. But we're not going to know exactly how much the deficit is until their year end is concerned. But I would assume that because of the salary settlement that there will, in fact, be a small deficit. I don't know how much it will be at this point.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, you're telling me that the reason you okayed a deficit was because of the salary increases — is that correct? Okay. Mr. Minister, would you mind telling me what suggestions have you made or did your department make any suggestions to SIAST as to how they were going to make up this deficit?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, the board of SIAST is going to have to determine how they will deal with any deficit that should arise. They are looking at all kinds of different options at the present time. They're looking at a changing mix, if you will, of programs. There may be some programs that would be deleted if they become redundant.

They're also looking at an expansion, I suppose, if we consider some of the contracts that they do get with other agencies. And we know the expansion of programs in foreign countries, and a lot of excellent work being done there. And we do know, as well, Mr. Chairman, that there has been a modest increase in tuition fees. But the students at SIAST, I believe now, that their tuition fee is still in the neighbourhood of 5 or 6 per cent of the total cost of their year. The board has to look at all of these options. As far as the department is concerned, my officials are involved with them in helping to provide data and this sort of thing, and information that they need as they take a look at how they can deal with this.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, you had indicated a modest increase in tuition fees. Well maybe I suppose to some people 10 per cent is a modest increase. That's almost

double inflation. It certainly doesn't seem to be a very modest increase for the students at SIAST, neither the students at the U of R or the students at the U of S. We'll get into that on another day in our estimates on the university student fee increases.

Mr. Minister, I want to continue with the questions I asked Mr. Houghton. The next question I had asked: how much of the total budget has been allocated to each of the four campuses in the year 1989-90?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, the allocation of moneys to the different campuses, of course, is a decision of the board. We can attempt to get that information for the member.

Also a comment with regard to tuition fees. One can suggest that a 10 per cent increase does sound like quite a bit of money, but in actual fact a 10 per cent increase was probably in the neighbourhood of \$60, which is not a whole heck of a lot of money. The maximum fee at SIAST now, Mr. Chairman, is \$720 for a 38-week program. And just to relate that to the other provinces in western Canada: B.C., it's \$816; Alberta is \$639 — they had a 15 per cent increase, so theirs is 150 per cent of ours; Manitoba is \$605.

So we are higher than Alberta and Manitoba, Mr. Chairman, but even at that, \$720 for a 38-week program is not an exorbitant amount of money. And I would hope that a 10 per cent increase is not going to create any hardship for the students, considering the fact that they are still paying in the neighbourhood of 5 per cent, 5 per cent of the total cost of the program's operating costs.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I do agree with you that it's a much better deal than they would get from one of the private schools, private vocational schools that we're going to be talking about later on.

Mr. Minister, I could go through all of these. I do want to ask you: what per cent of the total budget is expended for professional staff, excluding the corporate body? You may not have that with you but you can supply that to me before the estimates are finished. But I do want to ask you the next question. What is the budget allocated to the corporate body itself for '88-89?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, in the same way that the Department of Education provides an operating grant to the universities, we do not ask them for a statement, other than what we get in the annual report, as to how that money is allocated. Now the member opposite is asking for something that is provided in the annual report in the same way the reports are provided in universities. So if he can take a look at that.

We provide the operating grant to SIAST and the allocations then are made by the board and by the administration. We know that they are responsible people and they know the needs that they have on each particular campus, how much it costs to operate the different programs. So we certainly don't have that information here, other than I would point out what's in the annual report. You take a look at the annual report, pages 24 and 25, you've got a statement of the SIAST up to

the end of June 30, 1989, and you can see there some of the areas of expenditure that they've had. That's the information that you should have, in the same way that it's provided from the universities.

Mr. Rolfes: — That simply isn't good enough. What I want to know, and what the people of Saskatchewan want to know: just how much money was spent by the corporate body? And that is not in here — can't find that in the annual report. I've looked through it.

I also want to ask you: how much was spent on travelling expenses by the corporate body? What were the travelling expenses of the president of the corporate body? How much was expended for suites in the Regina Inn by members of the corporate body? Do we still have a suite rented in the Regina Inn, or when did we cease paying for a suite in the Regina Inn?

I think these are all questions, Mr. Minister, that the public have a right to know; this is public money. And you are not really at arm's length. You appoint the board, and I just don't believe that the public is satisfied for you to simply say, well we have no control, we have no say over the board of directors. Why, you appoint them. You, I'm sure, are consulted as to who the chairman of the board is. I'm sure it wasn't by accident that Mr. Houghton was appointed the chairman of the board. I mean, people of Saskatchewan aren't that naive. They know you had an influence and a decision in who the chairman of the board was going to be. And I think, Mr. Minister, you have a responsibility to answer those questions in the legislature. And if you don't, I'll just simply keep on asking and we'll be here, as I said, a long time.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you again, and I'll go through these again tomorrow if I need to, can you tell me how many people are employed by the corporate body?

(2115)

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, let me refer the member again to page 24 in the annual report. The total costs for administration ending June 30, 1989, was a little over two and a half million dollars, and travel was a little bit over \$1.8 million. Now board expenditures is also there, \$168,768. Mr. Chairman, I can't tell you the breakdown of these particular expenditures any more than if I had the annual report here from the University of Saskatchewan or the University of Regina as to what the expenditures would be for the president or for the vice-presidents or for their administrative offices. That information is not available to us. And with regard to board appointments — he talks about board appointments of SIAST — yes, Mr. Chairman, we do appoint the board, but we also appoint half the board members to both universities. But they don't provide us with a breakdown as to all of this information.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, am I to take from what you said . . . I asked for corporate expenditures, and you said, well okay, administrative was two and a half million dollars. It was two and a half million dollars to administer the corporate body? And for travel that the corporate body spent \$1.8 million in expenditures for travel? How big is the corporate body? You didn't answer the

question: how big is the corporate body? How many members are there in the corporate body? I want to divide that into \$1.8 million and see what they expended in that year for travel.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — The administration, Mr. Chairman, was a little over two and a half million dollars, and that would include the administration on each and every campus; it also includes the corporate offices, the corporate body. The travel would be the same thing. It would be travel for, I presume, administration, faculty members from the campuses, as well as what would have been done by the corporate office.

With regard to the number of people there are in the corporate office, I couldn't tell the member opposite how many people in the corporate office any more than I can say how many are in the corporate office or administration of the University of Regina campus or the University of Saskatchewan. So when we talk administration here, this is for total administration: four campuses plus the corporate office and all that's involved there.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, what you're saying is that you will not divulge what the corporate body expended as far as administration is concerned, as far as travelling expenses are concerned. You simply won't tell the people of Saskatchewan what it is . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I don't believe you, Mr. Minister. I just don't believe you that you don't have that information.

The Minister of Education says it's a problem of the people of Saskatchewan that they don't know what the corporate body expends on travel and administrative costs. I'd tell the Minister of Education that you have an obligation to this legislature to tell the people exactly what is expended by those people that you have appointed. You appointed them, and I think you have an obligation to tell this legislature what is expended on that corporate body.

That is one of the problems that the people had. They saw these people living high off the hog, high off the hog, making these huge expenditures, suites rented at the Regina Inn. And Mr. Minister, they couldn't get a settlement. They couldn't get a fair settlement and had to go on strike for weeks and months at an end. That was one of the problems, Mr. Minister, that you had, and still have. And I think you owe it to the people of Saskatchewan to answer some of these questions.

Mr. Minister, would you mind telling me what kind of contract Eva Lee was given by the board of directors or by SIAST? And I want to be more specific. Was it a contract of personal employment? Was it a contract for personal service contracts? Or was it an order in council under the terms of the Public Service Commission? Which one of those three was it?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well you know, Mr. Chairman, it's unfortunate that the member opposite wastes time asking the questions that he does because we don't have the knowledge as to the contracts. That was between the president and between the board of governors. I think it's unfortunate that the member opposite isn't talking about

some of the excellent programs that are going on at SIAST and the excellent work that's being done with regard to distance education and the opportunities that they're providing for more and more adults and grade 12 graduates from different places in the province — a lot of really good stuff that's going on.

And, Mr. Chairman, it's unfortunate that we don't really deal with the good things that are happening in SIAST instead of wasting a lot of time on questions here that are where the information is between the board of governors and in this particular case the president. So, Mr. Chairman, if the member wants information in that regard, I would suggest he'll have to ask the chairman of the board for it.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, the chairman of the board, as you well know, I read the letter to you, refuses to answer my questions and I believe he probably was instructed, either by you or the government, not to answer those questions. And that's why you are stonewalling here. And that's why the chairman of the board, who I do not believe is at arm's-length, he's your appointment, the board is your appointment and, Mr. Minister, the reason you won't give me these answers is because there has been a huge waste of public moneys in the corporate body. That's why you won't give it to us.

And, Mr. Minister, you might not want to tell me what the salary was for Ms. Lee. You know what it is. Yes you do. I believe it was somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$110,000 — I think I might be out a thousand or two, one way or the other — and her severance pay was six months. But I wanted to know under which of these three she was employed, whether it was under a contract for personal employment or personal service contract, because I wanted to know exactly whether her severance pay was in line with the policy set down by your government.

So Ms. Lee was well paid and she, I am told, did receive severance pay of six months. And so, Mr. Minister, I'm sure that if I have that information, you have that information. So it's nothing secret what those . . . As we know the salary of the president of the university is probably 145 or 150,000. That is no secret. That's just a little more than what you make as a minister of the Crown. Oh, well actually it's quite a bit more.

But, Mr. Minister, look. You know, don't tell me that you don't know this information. I know you know it. So let's have some of the answers. Come clean with the public. You have an obligation to let the public know how that money is expended.

You, Mr. Minister, made the decision. Your government made the decision to reorganize. Your government made the decision to hire your political people on those boards as the chairman and as the president. You made that decision. You made the decision to give them millions of dollars. Now you have an obligation, through the opposition, to tell the people how that money is expended. You simply can't sit there and hide behind the people that you have appointed. Those are your appointments; those are your people. And, Mr. Minister, don't tell me — I don't believe you, the public doesn't

believe you, when you tell me that you don't know the answers to the questions that I'm asking.

You don't want to tell them. That's the reason, because you are embarrassed. You are embarrassed at how the public money has been squandered while programs are suffering, while staff couldn't get an increase. They had to go on strike. And now you're saying to the student body, you will have to pay more because of the mismanagement of some of the people that you appointed to these positions. That's why you don't want to tell us. Mr. Minister, it is simply unfair and it's unacceptable. It's simply unacceptable.

Mr. Minister, I am going to take a break right now and let my colleague from Saskatoon Centre ask a particular question, but I'll be back. Thank you very much.

Ms. Smart: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I want to ask you a particular question about the student loan program. I'm sure you've been hearing from my colleagues their concerns about student loans, and you'll be hearing more about it in the hours to come on the budget estimates for Education.

But I have a particular problem that's been raised by a constituent of mine that I want to question you about. I've written you a letter about this issue and I have not had a reply from you in writing, but I have had a phone call from Don Reimer who is one of your assistants.

Let me try to explain as carefully as I can this particular issue that I want to question you about, because it's one that has affected a young woman constituent who is trying to go to Robertson Career College for a year's training.

Now this particular person has been in and out of the work-force, getting employment from time to time, but not been able to get a good paying job that would allow her the independence that she needs now that she's an adult. So she's applied to go to Robertson Career College, and she applied for a student loan. And in the assessment that came back regarding this particular person, one of the items that she was . . . Now she's applied for Robertson Career College. Let me be clear, the program that she wants to go to runs from this May to next May — May 1990 to May 1991 — a full year straight through. And she's expected to contribute some money from something called a student work-period income.

Now apparently the way the students are assessed is that your department decides that they're going to earn a certain amount of money in the course of their time in school, and she's been assessed that she's going to be able to get, in her student work-period, \$1,135. Now because she's assessed as getting this amount of money from her work-period income, she is not then eligible for the full Canada student loan, and once she's not eligible for the full Canada student loan, she's then is not allowed to get the Saskatchewan student loan.

Now, Mr. Minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Chairman, if the Minister of Finance would stop yapping from his seat, I . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. I'd ask members on both sides of the House to allow the member for Saskatoon Centre to put her question without a debate going across the floor.

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Chairman, I was having particular difficulty with one person on the opposite side of the House.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you about this student work-period income that this young woman is supposed to have. Now when we questioned your assistant about this, because of this income that she's supposed to have, she's not qualified for the full Canada student loan. And because she's not qualified for the full Canada student loan, she can't get the Saskatchewan student loan. So she's not getting the amount of income that she needs in order to go into this program at Robertson Career College.

(2130)

Now my understanding from talking to your assistant is that the definition of a student work-period is the months that she was supposedly working prior to getting accepted into this program. Now she's been working on and off, part-time work, not been able to get anything very substantial to maintain herself. So she obviously has had great trouble saving up anything in order to go to school. She's also not going to be able to get a part-time job during the summer as university students have, because her program goes for one year straight through.

So I'm concerned about what you're defining as a student work-period income for this particular situation, Mr. Minister. She has been asked to provide your department with evidence that she's been looking for work. And, Mr. Minister, if you know what's happening to the young people of this province, you will know that they are going around in the city of Saskatoon and in other parts of the province asking people for work. They've been asking at Pizza Hut and submarines, they've been asking at Safeways, they've been asking at 7 Eleven stores. And if they get rejected for work, they don't think at that particular time to collect any evidence from the employer that they've been there looking for work. They simply take the rejection and they go off and they go looking for work some place else.

She's been going through this process for a while. Nothing indicated to her that she should save up evidence in order to present it to your department once she decided that a good work position was not available to her and that she was going to have to go to school.

And now she wants to get into this program and your department is saying she has to have income, or evidence of looking for work in the student work-period. Will you please explain that to the House, just exactly how you see people being able to meet that demand, these young people. They're having such a terrible time finding work and are trying so hard to get through school and who are being cut back in the amount of money they can get on student loans, because you assess them as having collected money that they don't have.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, one thing

that I would suggest to the member opposite, that she can probably provide a lot of assistance to her constituents if she made sure that she herself is fully aware of the programs that we have and the different conditions that must be met. And that can be a help certainly to the Department of Education, but I think an even bigger help to your constituents.

So I appreciate your asking the question because there sometimes is a lot of concern out there, and some of the students have not either taken time to read all of the information, or it hasn't been available to them, or there are things that they don't understand and they don't always know where to turn for help.

But with regard to what we refer to as a work term, this would be the four months prior to the start of a course. So if you're suggesting that the course would be starting this month, it would be the four months prior to May of 1990. And I think that the conditions there are very minimal, and it's considered it would be on the basis of the person being paid minimum wage.

But you pointed out that in some cases these young people maybe do have a difficult time finding a job. Quite a few of them do, but some do have difficulty. There are exceptions that can be made so that a student, if they can in fact prove that they have been doing a job search and have not been successful, that it may in fact be possible for them to get a larger loan. So whether or not your constituent has gone through these different steps, I'm not sure, but that would be the process if she hasn't. If she hasn't got the \$1,135 because she was not able to find enough work, then I would suggest that all that she would have to do is to document in some way that she has in fact been looking for work and was not able to raise that amount of money, and then it may be possible for her to apply and get a larger loan.

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Minister, your responses show exactly what the problem is for the young people of this province. First of all, you have suggested that I have not been giving them the help, and I've been getting all the information from your office. So if she isn't getting help, she isn't getting it from your office because that's where I've been in touch for information.

Secondly, you have put the onus on the person themselves; you have said that she hasn't read the forms properly, that she doesn't know what she's dealing with. She's read very clearly what you've sent to her. She understands very clearly that your expectation is that she will have saved documentation from her work searches, which have been sporadic over the last few months because there isn't work out there for young people. And she has not saved it because the decision was made recently that she would have to go back to school, and the program starts this May. It's been quite a quick decision, Mr. Minister. Can you understand that? — in people's lives, just what that means to make that kind of decision. That you can't find work elsewhere.

Now you have also said, Mr. Minister, that people can save over four months, \$1,135 when they're working on minimum wage. And that again shows how little you understand the situations in this province. If you have a

40 hour work week and you're getting \$4.50 an hour, you only make about \$640 a month. If you have to pay your expenses, how in the heck can you save over a thousand dollars from that kind of income? I bet you've never had to do that. I'd like to see you walk around in someone's shoes for awhile that has had to do that.

I think you could start to demonstrate some understanding of what's happening with the young people here. And I think that your statements that . . . when you stand up and say that within four months she should have saved these documentations that she's been looking for work is really being very hard on the young people. She's asking for a student loan. She's going to get in debt up to her ears because of the interest rates. But she's not being given a Saskatchewan student loan based on this decision — that she has a work-period, that she's going to earn that money.

My point is this: it's not usual for young people to save up the evidence, but even more, it's so arrogant in a way to say that people on minimum wage should be able to save any amount of money towards their education. Minimum wage is not even a living wage and lots of young people, like this young woman, can't even get 40 hours of work a week. They're lucky if they can get 20 hours or 15 hours. And they can't save money on that, Mr. Minister; they can't.

Now you have got to be more accountable to the students. Don't blame me; I've done what I can do, given your department. Don't blame her; she's trying to get through school. She's got time to get through career college. Give us a good explanation as to why you think young people should be able to save these kinds of money and why you're cutting them out of the Saskatchewan student loan program.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — You know, the member opposite, she's more than trying at times, Mr. Chairman. I certainly was not putting her down. I mean, she gets this narrow view and she doesn't take time to listen to the answers or she would have heard what in fact that I was saying.

I think that you can provide a very good service for your constituents. I was just suggesting that you need to make yourself aware of some of these programs too, and be helpful in more cases and we're willing to work with you on that. I fully understand the difficult time that many students have today.

And for you to stand up and make any kind of statements with regard to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . We seem to have a little interference from another channel, Mr. Chairman. For you to stand up and make any kind of statements with regard to my background and how I got my education. I got my education the hard way, and I would certainly be willing to discuss that with you at some time, and how I got my education. And it certainly wasn't by having people that handed me a lot on a silver platter either; it was all a matter of hard work. Now you weren't listening to what I was saying . . .

An Hon. Member: — Well what are you saying?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — I was suggesting to you that this particular student — and you haven't given us all the information. You haven't told us whether or not this student is living at home. You haven't told us that at all. The fact of the matter is that it's a very minimal requirement, I think, for students to keep track of job searches or whatever that they're doing. It seems almost today that everybody has to have the government do everything for them. Well where has responsibility gone?

Now for goodness sakes, is it asking too much when a student wants to get a student loan — and we go by the Canada student loan criteria — is it too much then to ask that they should not be able to provide in some way a record as to how much they have been looking for work over that period of time? I don't think so.

And let's keep in mind that the student loan programs are there as supplementary programs. It's not the intent that they should be providing all of the assistance for students to go on to a college or to university.

Now again, you can stand in your place and you can throw these figures around, but you haven't told us whether this young person is living at home; you haven't indicated whether or not the parents are providing any assistance. I mean, there's a lot of information here that you're not making available.

Now I've indicated to you that if she can indicate that she has been looking for work and has not been able to find enough to make a minimum amount or save a minimum amount of money, that there is a process by which she can apply for a larger loan. Now you didn't hear me say that.

If you would just listen to what I was indicating to you, if you've got a student that is living away from home, they wouldn't really have to save all that amount of money per month to meet the minimum requirements to qualify for these student loans. So until I see all of the detail here, I couldn't give you any more of an indication on whether this student should be getting more money or not, but it's something that we're willing to look at. If you need more information or the student needs more information, we will be very, very happy to provide that for you. But I'm wanting to work with you on this; I'm not working against you.

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Minister, I realize that I haven't given you the details of this particular case, because I want a decision on the principle of this concept of student's work-period.

What you are telling me, Mr. Minister, is that students have to find out . . . she has to have decided five months ago that she can't make it, and she has to come down to a constituency office or by some happenstance get the information, because we don't know that the students are trying to do this. We are not in touch with people prior to the decisions that they make.

This young woman came to see me because she had decided that she wanted to get into Robertson Career College, and she was accepted, and she wanted to get in. And she needed the student loan; she was prepared to

take on that debt. Yes, it's not the whole amount of money that she needs to live on. It's not enough, the interest rates are high, she's taking on a major debt. That's what she chose to do. And you're denying that to her on the basis of some income that she should have been able to earn, and on the basis of having saved up some evidence.

Now, Mr. Minister, the problems are this: that if you're saying that students should know, six months ahead of time or a year ahead of time, that they are then going to go on to school, and that they then have to find out from your department what's involved in getting a student loan, and go through the hoops to meet your requirements, and another year later in their lives get into the college of their choice, then be clear with that. Put that out as your policy. Put that out as your policy. Tell us that people have to know ahead of time, that they have to second-guess what your program is, so that they can prepare themselves for it.

I don't see that information getting out to the students, or to the potential students. I don't see you taking the initiative to let people know that they have to save up the evidence that they've been looking for work, and that they have to come up with a certain amount of money even though they're working on minimum wage.

I don't see you making it known to people that even if they get into a student program that goes for a full year and doesn't allow them any break in the middle where they could maybe earn some income, that they're going to have to get work and have a work-period. So I ask you, Mr. Minister: will you be fair with the young students of this province — if this is your policy, how are they going to know about it?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well I wish, Mr. Chairman, that when the member was up, she would have given an indication as to whether this person was living at home or not, because there is different information that I can give in each particular case. But she asks: how are these young people to know? Well let me point out to her this: that we send out some 75,000 guides with regard to all of the information that applies to student loans for those who want to go on to further education. And these go out to all of the high schools; they're on all the SIAST campuses; they're on the university campuses, and I dare say that the private vocational schools, as well, would have them. And you suggest she's going to Robertson's. I would think that they would have that information. So I don't think that there's a problem here with the young people getting the information. It is available.

(2145)

Now I don't know whether she graduated from grade 12 last year or left high school last year, but that information would have been available at her high school, if in fact that was the case. And I would point out that, if this person happens to be living away from home, that the amount of money that they would have to save would only be about \$90 for a four-month period.

Now if you're saying \$1,135, one would almost think then that maybe this young person is still living at home. So if you've got a person that's living at home, even if they

were working on minimum wage and not having to pay any living costs, I would think in that period of time should be able to save a substantial amount of money. But I don't know what the particular situation is.

So there are those opportunities there. The information is available and I think that the young people have to make some plans on their own. They have to make a decision at some point what they're going to take a look at. And if the person's coming out of high school, the information should have been available there.

We also, I think, are not expecting too much if the young person really only has to identify a minimum number of employers that she would have talked to in seeking work. Even over a four-month period of time, anyone should be able to keep in mind some of the places that they have gone to try and get work. And we take the student's word for that. We're not hard-hearted on this. There is a lot of flexibility here. So don't make it sound like the person is being unfairly treated by the student loan fund and the people that are working there, because that is not the case at all. So minimum requirements are needed. We are there to help out as many students as we can. And of course many of these students as well do have a lot of loan forgiveness or remission of loans; they don't pay interest while they're going to school. So lots of opportunity there for them.

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Minister, just let me be clear. This is a young person whose life story is very similar to many other young people. She's been out of high school for a while, like a lot of people have. She's not been just a graduate from high school whose graduated with a form in her hand from your department about how to get student loans. Yes, she's gone to a college to enrol in a program and been accepted and wants to start right away. Obviously, she got the information about the student loans because she's applied for one. But her life has been a hectic search for work. She was away from home, now she is back at home because she hasn't got any other alternative. And she wants to get into this program quite quickly. That's the situation; that's the information, and she's been told that she has to show that she's looked for work. Now she has not kept that record, like many young people don't keep that record.

And I wanted to question you in a general way in terms of the policies of your department, because it struck me that this case was a fairly typical one. I see a lot of young people having to go back home after they've been away trying to work and live on their own. They've graduated from high school and they think that they can maybe get some work that would keep them in independence, and they're finding that's not possible and they're trying to get back to school. And this particular person had an opportunity to go into a program right away and has been denied access to a Saskatchewan student loan because of the hoops they have to go through, as you've just described, Mr. Minister.

And I just want to express my regret that the young people are being denied this financial assistance because it's hard on their families. These are families that don't have large incomes, Mr. Minister. These are families that are having to take their young people back into their homes

to try to get them through their schooling, and it's tough on all of them, it's tough on all the family members. I wanted to make that point here in the legislature and hear what you had to say, rather than take a phone call from your assistant.

I appreciate your discussion here tonight. I understand that you're not prepared to help the people in the way that I think they should be helped. I think that your description of people having to look after themselves and be responsible is just exactly what this young woman is trying to do. She's trying to get through a program, she asked for some help, and your department couldn't give it to her, and that's too bad.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, let me point out to the member that we help students out in whatever way we can. And my suggestion to her would be this: that she has an obligation, I think, to help her constituent here, and it sounds to me like these are extenuating circumstances. And what I would suggest to her is that where there are extenuating circumstances, that she could help this individual with the appeal process, and that is something that is open to situations such as this, where they can . . . Maybe as you say, it's going through more hoops, but at the same time, we're not always aware of the extenuating circumstances that do exist. But I suggest to you that there is a way that you can do good service for your constituent and you can also work with us at the same time, and we will see if there are any other ways that we can help this person.

I certainly commend anyone who is willing to go back to school and try to improve their situation, try to improve their education so that they can in fact go out and get into the work force.

So we're willing to work with you on that and provide you whatever assistance we can in going through this appeal process, and it sounds like you could be very beneficial in this case.

Ms. Smart: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, I'll share that information with this particular constituent.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, tomorrow in much more detail I will continue with what the member from Saskatoon Centre has brought up this evening. Now I have a number of cases, and again I don't want you to feel that I'm being accusatory of yourself, not on the matter of student loans. On the other matters that we brought up this evening, yes I was.

But, Mr. Minister, I do want to return for just a minute to the change in the corporate body office from Regina to Saskatoon. Can I get some assurances, Mr. Minister. You know when the crop insurance was moved from Regina to Melville, there were some assurances given by your government to those employees who felt it was impossible for them to move from Regina to Melville. There are also some employees who are very concerned about having to leave Regina for Saskatoon. And parenthetically speaking, Mr. Minister, I just can't fathom that as to why they wouldn't want to move to Saskatoon, but they do feel that way.

Mr. Minister, can I obtain from you this evening some assurances that these people will be given a guarantee of employment elsewhere rather than being outrightly dismissed if they do not take the transfer to Saskatoon. Can you give me some assurances on that this evening?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I know that it will possibly cause some concern in some cases with regard to the employees that would be moving to Saskatoon. I think that for the most part everyone is very much in favour of the office moving, but at the same time, if you've got individuals who are deeply rooted in the community here in Regina, it may be a little bit more difficult.

I would hope that SIAST will treat all of the employees fairly. I am sure that they will, in the same way as he has indicated that other similar situations have been done, but the decision there will be up to the SIAST board of governors and I am sure that they will want to treat all of these employees in a fair manner.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I appreciate that concern, but I guess what they are looking for is a little more from the minister to, in this particular case, discuss it with the chairman of the board and the board of directors if need be, to make absolutely certain that these people are protected and that alternate employment will be sought for them here in Regina if that is the case.

And I would hope that the minister would do more than just say, well it's up to the board. I would hope that you'd use some of your influence and to indicate to the board that, yes, these people came to work with us with the understanding that they would have their employment here in Regina; now a decision is made to move the office and I think they want some assurances. And I just want to ask you again, Mr. Minister, will you use your influence with the chairman of the board or the board to see whether or not these people can have some protection when this move is made.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, I'm sure that the majority of the staff will be moving to Saskatoon. I agree with the member opposite; I couldn't see any reason why they wouldn't want to. But at the same time, if there are some of those who won't be moving, I would hope that they will be treated fairly, whether or not it's a move to another position or whatever the case might be, but I would hope indeed that would be the case.

Mr. Rolfes: — I guess, Mr. Minister, what I wanted from you is: will you give them the same assurances, or will you seek to obtain the same assurances, from the chairman of the board or the board of directors as the employees received from the crop insurance.

I think that's the question that I wanted to ask. Do you agree with me that we should try and seek the same assurances from the board as the employees received who were working for the crop insurance and who did not move to Melville? Will you try and seek that assurance.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — I would think that the same practice would be followed, Mr. Chairman, as has been

the case in the past. And so when we can see how many people are not going to be moving, I think that SIAST board then will be dealing with that in a fair and just manner.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I just have a small item in here. Mr. Minister, you may not have the information tomorrow morning, so I want to ask you a question on the Kelsey Campus extension calendar, and not so much to ask for the materials that are inside, but I want to ask a question tomorrow morning — if we resume our estimates on Education — on the advertising of private vocational schools in the calendar, not only the programs, but the actual advertising of the private vocational school. And I'm not opposed to that. My question is this: do the private vocational schools contribute to the cost of this calendar and if not, then why are we advertising the courses that are being offered by some of the private vocational schools? And why are we putting in ads in the calendar of private vocational schools?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Chairman, as I understand it, this is a practice that has been going on for many years. These would be paid ads, and so there's nothing different with this year's calendar, as I understand it, than what has been happening in the past. So if they've got space in that catalogue, they must be paying for it.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, just a distinction . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that. We'll be finished with this particular topic in one minute.

Mr. Minister, I want to . . . I assume that this will be a paid ad by the private vocational school. But my question is, they're also advertising classes in this calendar. And, Mr. Minister, what my concern is, is simply that some of the classes that are being offered are the very ones that I'm going to be criticizing tomorrow where the standards are not being met. And they're not recognized out there. And if they're contained in here, my concern is that they're in here, then the people out there will think that they're being endorsed by SIAST. And that is a concern. I'd like you to answer that for me tomorrow, okay?

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10 p.m.