

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Bill No. 9 — An Act to amend The Mineral Taxation Act,
1983**

Clause 1 (continued)

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to answer the question that was asked at 5 o'clock if I can remember the question as accurately as possible. If not, I am sure that the member opposite will ask the question again or remind me of the things that I didn't say.

As I recall, the question asked had something to do with what impact the 50 cents per acre would have on particularly the Kindersley area where a lot of the wells are fairly marginal. And we did some checking between 5 o'clock and now, that the average well in the Kindersley area is about 3.2 barrels a day. So we have some that are slightly less and some that are slightly more, but it's not great production.

I'd like to report, Mr. Chairman, that in the Kindersley area 75 per cent of the wells in that area are from Crown minerals. The Crown owns the minerals. So 25 per cent would be from freehold . . . where the freehold mineral rights are held by other than the Crown.

And given the impact that this might have on one well on a 40-acre field, as an example, the tax increase would be about \$20 for that 40-acre field at 50 cents an acre. And you work that out over the course of a month and it's \$1.66 a month, and on a daily basis it's about 5 cents a day on a well. And again I would like to say that with those kind of numbers I find it difficult to accept the fact that 5 cents a day is going to have a serious impact on the viability of a well in the Kindersley area.

Mr. Swenson: — Well that may be very true, Mr. Minister, if that were the only tax that these individuals were dealing with. However, as you know, there are a wide range of costs associated with oil production, one of which is the proposed change that you are talking about here tonight. Six hundred and forty dollars to 960, Minister, is more than \$80 a quarter section. So you are talking about, for an individual producer, far more than just that \$20 per well.

Mr. Minister, what effect will this have on the area of hard rock minerals? What will be the amount of land that will be turned back to the province? Or what is anticipated, given the change, in particularly the area of individual prospectors, that sort of thing?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, the answer to that question is that the tax only applies in the southern part of the province. So it doesn't affect the northern half of the province because the northern half of the province, the minerals are all in the Crown. So the freehold mineral rights are only in the southern half of the province. So it wouldn't affect anybody in the northern half.

Mr. Swenson: — In other words, Mr. Minister, this Bill is

strictly limited to oil and gas properties? There's nothing else that would be included in here?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — No, it's not entirely limited to oil and gas properties — also potash. Potash companies own large tracks of land where the freehold mineral rights would apply to them. I'm not sure what other minerals it would apply to in the southern half of the province. But I think basically it is oil and gas with a few other minerals involved.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, first of all it's been enlightening to hear you attempt to give straightforward answers without a lot of rhetoric about other things that don't concern your particular portfolio, and I appreciate that.

I have to say though that I'm a little unhappy with your answer to the one question which was, whom did you consult with? And my question is: as your reply was that you hadn't consulted with anyone, why did you not consult with people from the petroleum industry? They do have an organization, I understand. And why were no studies done before you went into this process?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, I think I need to correct one of the things the member has suggested. I did not say we did not consult with anyone. I said we did not get numbers from the industry as to how many acres would be turned back. I think that was the previous question, if I remember correctly.

We did consult with the industry. We had meetings with IPAC (Independent Petroleum Association of Canada), with CPA (Canadian Petroleum Association), with the uranium miners, the potash miners. We had extensive consultations and early in April we invited all these groups into a meeting and we indicated to them the general direction that we were going. Now we did not indicate to them the numbers because that would be considered as a budget leak if we'd have given them the numbers. But we did indicate to them the general direction we were going and the industry was aware of the fact that there was a possibility of taxes going up on their property, on their behalf. And we had extensive consultations.

If I've had one meeting with the industry since November 1, I've probably met with them 100 times on different occasions and on different topics, so we've had extensive consultations. And they were aware of the fact that we were considering an increase in taxation because they were also aware of the fact the situation we face in the province.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm glad that I gave you the opportunity to clear that up because I'm sure a lot of people didn't pick that up earlier in your comments.

And it's interesting then that you have stated that since November you have been in consultation with people from the industry. In view of that, it has been expressed to me and I think probably to yourself that the industry has had a rather fearful winter wondering just exactly where

the province would be taking them.

And while this particular tax is not the one that is so greatly prohibitive to the industry, along coupled with, in an accumulating effect with those others that are proposed, we have been led to believe that there may be some grounds for assuming that the industry has basically shut down its operations in the province. And to try to find a conclusion for those thoughts and to discover whether or not in fact this is reality, could you provide for us how many new wells have been drilled in the province of Saskatchewan since October 21, 1991. And could you also provide us with a background for a comparison of how many wells were drilled in each of the years for, say, the 20 years preceding.

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, we were just trying to find the numbers here, but unfortunately we just can't put our hands on them right now. If we can, before the evening is over we'll be happy to pass them on to you. If not, we'll see that you get the numbers for the last . . . did you say 20 years? We'd be happy to provide you with those numbers.

In answer to your first part of the question, however, the activity in the oil patch in western Canada has not been great in the last year. Not only in Saskatchewan has it been poor; it has also been poor in Alberta and also in British Columbia. The reason for the activity being low is basically price. Oil and gas companies are active in the drilling industry. If the price is good, if there's a dollar to be made, they're active in the industry. If there's no money to be made they slow down. And that's just the way those companies operate. And I'm sure you're familiar with that scenario very well.

We've checked across the western part of the province and Alberta's drilling is proportionally down as ours is down. And we're not pleased with that but there isn't anything we can do as far as the price is concerned. We have not changed the royalty regime in any way at all. So it's not the royalty regime that's turning them off. I think it's basically the price.

If we can find the numbers we'll pass them on to you.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. We appreciate the fact that you will get those figures for us.

Now you have made a point of saying two things that are of interest to me. First of all, you said that the petroleum industry is in a slack period all over so, therefore, we are down proportionately with everyone else. You have also stated that this particular tax is insignificant and shouldn't bother anybody.

However, the scenario we get is that there is a fear of what is going to happen in Saskatchewan with taxation and with royalty changes that you're proposing, and that in fact that fear has now shut the industry down. And with that, I ask you, sir, how many physical crews have been working in the province of Saskatchewan in January, February, March, and April of this year as compared to those working in Alberta?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Again I'd like to say I don't have

those numbers with me here, but we can provide you with those numbers as well, so . . . I don't have those numbers.

I'd like to just respond to the other point that you made is the concept of fear that the industry has of coming into Saskatchewan. And I was hoping that we could keep this whole discussion on a factual level and not get into any of the politics here. But I can't avoid mentioning this one item, that during the election campaign the only fear that was generated in the oil industry was generated by members of the opposition in saying that the NDP (New Democratic Party) were going to shut down the oil patch. They ran huge ads in the papers, in the newspapers, trying to instil fear in the hearts of the oil companies.

I want to say to the members opposite that there is no fear in the oil patch of this government. In fact I think we have built up a very good relationship with the oil industry and the gas industry and the whole mining sector. And we have their confidence. They believe what we're telling them and they trust us, and I don't think that there's any fear being instilled in the hearts of the oil industry because we raised the tax on freehold mineral rights by 50 cents an acre.

Mr. Goohsen: — Mr. Minister, with all due respect, I have in my hand, with me tonight, the *C.P.A. Review*, May 1992. And you don't have the figures so I'll just give them to you. In Saskatchewan, in January, you had one geophysical crew working and in Alberta you had 36. In February you had three in Saskatchewan; you had 30 in Alberta. In March you had three in Saskatchewan; you have 26, in March, in Alberta. And on it goes.

Now my next question, sir. Even though you say that we're doing so well and that there is no fear of this government by the petroleum industry, could you tell me how your new tax structure is affecting land sales in the province of Saskatchewan as compared to other provinces?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, I would say that this tax has not affected land sales in any way at all because we haven't had any land sales since this tax has been in effect. So this particular tax hasn't affected land sales at all.

If you're asking me, how did land sales at March go in comparison to other years, the land sales in March were down. But when I compare the land sales in March in Saskatchewan to those in Alberta, they were not down any more than they were in Alberta. So this is not a phenomenon that is peculiar to Saskatchewan. This is true in the entire industry all across western Canada. And to lay the blame of low land sales or low activity on a tax — a 50 cent tax on freehold holdings — I think is ludicrous to say the least.

Mr. Goohsen: — Well, Mr. Minister, you might think it's ludicrous for us to ask these questions but you just finished saying that you had no land sales and turned right around and said you had one in March that didn't go so well. So maybe you could think a little bit about what you're saying there before you jump all over us. The fact of the matter is that land sales are disastrously down in

this province and the reason for that is because they are afraid to come into this province and spend any money for fear that you will tax them out of existence and cause them to go broke before they ever get a chance to start.

My next question, sir, is what has this particular piece of legislation, this increase in taxation, done to the drilling activity in the province of Saskatchewan since December to March, as compared to, say, Alberta?

(1915)

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, I just want to correct the member in something that he's accused me of saying that I did not say. I said we've had no land sales since this tax has been implemented. And this tax was not implemented in March so I was perfectly consistent in what I said. We had a land sale in March. We haven't had any since this tax has been implemented. So I think that's perfectly consistent.

Just to put this in perspective, you're talking about poor land sales in Saskatchewan. The *Oilweek* says the first-ever cancellation of Alberta land sales was announced by the province in the wake of discontinued dismal results. So if you think that things are bad in Saskatchewan and if you think this tax is contributing to the dismal situation, look at the neighbouring province of Alberta. They cancelled their land sales. They didn't even have one. So I don't think that you can put the blame on this land sale . . . pardon me, on this tax, for any loss of land sales.

Again, I don't have the statistics for your other question. If you wish, my department will be happy to supply those for you.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Again with all the respect in the world, you may not have had a land sale since the tax went in but you, by your own words, said that you have negotiated with the petroleum industry since November and that you were bringing them fully up to date on what general principles you were going to evoke. Our contention is that those general principles have scared the industry out and that, in fact, in March your land sales didn't go well as a result of what you were proposing to the industry.

Now in the drilling activity area in Alberta you had 133 drilled in December and in Saskatchewan you had 10. I can give you the rest of the figures in case you can't find the book.

My next question, Mr. Minister: as every indication has shown that the general principles that you are about to undertake in are going to probably stall the oil industry, if not finish it altogether, would you reconsider some of these moves that are going to take place in the more important areas of royalty structures? The second thing I want to ask you about is, more specifically, I have received a phone call from an individual that tells me that 56 gas wells have been capped in the Leader area this winter. Could you confirm that that figure is correct or not? And could you tell us why that happened?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, I'll answer the last

part of your question first. Our statistics showed there were 44 wells were capped in the Liebenthal area and there may have been a few others around. And the reason for those wells being capped is they simply were uneconomic, they were not producing enough to make it viable for the company to operate at today's prices.

I'd like to respond to your first statement just briefly here. You keep talking about changes in royalty. I want to emphasize again there have been no changes in royalties whatsoever. So if the companies, if the industry is leaving Saskatchewan because of royalties, it's because of the royalties that your government put in place that they're leaving. We haven't changed the royalties. We haven't touched them.

We have talked to the industry about royalty structures. We have asked them for input and we will continue to ask them for input into the royalty structure, but we have not changed the royalty. I think we have to be very clear on that. We have not changed the royalty structure. We have instituted a 50 cents an acre tax on freehold mineral rights.

You say that our policies are probably going to stall or finish the industry. That's absolute nonsense. You know, and I know, that 50 cents an acre, 5 cents a day on a well, is not going to stall an industry. That's not going to stall the industry. What is stalling the industry in this province and in western Canada is the price of the product. It's got absolutely nothing to do with a 50 cents an acre.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Just for your information that there is legitimate reason why the petroleum industry would be concerned about your proposed moves in the royalties area. And that reason, just for your information, is the fact that in the past election the NDP candidate went around our constituency campaigning on the note that there would be changes to the royalty structure if an NDP government were elected.

In fact, that became a bone of contention in the area so that in fact the petroleum industry demanded to know more about this. And there was a meeting held in Richmond, Saskatchewan where only people who were invited were allowed to come. I wasn't one of those allowed to come because I wasn't invited, but apparently the NDP Energy critic at the time did attend that meeting and did go over several points of what was going to be changed in the royalty system and structures.

And at that point, the petroleum industry contacted me and said that if anything like this happens, we're out of Saskatchewan totally and completely because the increases in the taxation all accumulated together will be such that we will no longer be able to make a profit in the industry and therefore we may as well not be here and may as well not continue drilling.

So you do have an effect with 50 cents an acre or 5 cents a day if you add it on to all of the other bills that you put an industry through. It's just like 1 cent more on tax for farmers for gas. You know, it may it not be a whole bunch but it does have an effect, sir.

Now I would like to know, sir, in that light, what have the crude oil prices done in the past while? You've alluded to the fact that this is a major problem for us and I would like to know exactly what those figures are. Could you give us the prices that our particular kinds of crude oil in Saskatchewan would bring for a producer for the past few months, as compared to other years in the past 20 years as well, so that we can get a picture of just exactly where we're going.

Hon. Mr. Penner: — In response to your question regarding the prices, the West Texas Intermediate prices since we've been in power have ranged anywhere from \$19 to \$20.50 U.S. (United States). The heavy crude, however, has done much, much worse and it's been as low as \$8 and 8.50 to \$9 a barrel. The price of heavy crude right now is probably in the range of \$12 a barrel, which is fairly low in comparison to the West Texas Intermediate.

In response to your suggestion over there that the member that was running in Maple Creek for the New Democratic Party during the election indicated that there would be royalty changes, he may have said that. I don't know whether he said that or not. But the point I'd like to make is that I recall in 1982 very clearly, some members opposite, and certainly members of that party, running all over Saskatchewan saying they would eliminate the 5 per cent sales tax in their first term of office. What they did in respect to the sales tax is increase it to 7 per cent.

So what our member or our candidate said in Maple Creek, I can't tell you what he said and I'm not responsible for what he said. I'm simply saying what we have done. And we have not touched the royalty structure, but we will be consulting with the industry over the course of next year as to royalties and we want their input and we'll give our input as well.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. It's interesting that you come up with these figures on crude oil and at the same time have alluded to the fact that it is the low prices that have caused all of the misery in the oil patch.

I want to take you back to the late 1960s at which time crude oil was at \$2 a barrel. A bushel of wheat was worth exactly the same amount of money. Now a bushel of wheat is worth about \$1.85 or something in that area depending whether it's durum or hard wheat at the elevator. And oil you say is worth \$12 a barrel. So certainly agriculture is surviving at a much lower standard than the petroleum industry is.

And so I say, and suggest to you, sir, that if the petroleum industry is in trouble, it is because of taxation in this province and not as a result so much of world prices. Because certainly there are many farmers surviving on less money per bushel than they got for wheat 25 years ago, and yet the petroleum industry is getting more money per barrel and yet they don't have it to use in their operations. So taxation must be the villain that is taking that money away.

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I suppose you can speculate on whatever you want to speculate on as what causes the problems in the oil industry or the farm

industry. And there are all kinds of things we could debate here all evening and all night if we wanted to, but the point that I want to make, and I'll make it again — the royalties have not changed. The taxation that we are putting on here at this time is approximately 5 cents a well per day, which is not an exorbitant amount. So I think with that, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to leave the answer.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have just a couple of brief questions for the minister. And I'm wondering, in a field like the oil patch surrounding Kindersley, the constituency I represent, whether you have any indication that you might be able to give us tonight, whether there'll be any negative impact with respect to jobs in the Kindersley area?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, I would say that I don't anticipate any impact or reduction in jobs. Now I'm not a fortune-teller, so I can't tell you that for sure, but I don't anticipate that there'll be reduction in jobs and I certainly hope that there won't be. All I can do is sort of take you back to a few years ago, when in 1986 this tax on freehold mineral rights was 50 cents an acre. The previous government raised it to a dollar an acre in 1987. And that was a 100 per cent increase and there was no significant impact on the production of oil or the drilling effect or the employment effects . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Because there was very . . . significant impact, therefore a 50 per cent increase in the taxation, I don't think is going to have any significant impact on the drilling.

I think we have to remember that this tax is on the owners of the freehold mineral rights. And some of the owners are not capable of passing this on to the people that they lease it to. It is not on the company that drills for the oil, necessarily, particularly if they have somebody else . . . It's on the owners of the freehold mineral rights.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Minister, the concern that there always is in a marginal field like the one around Kindersley is that any increase, any increase whatsoever, puts additional wells under serious question. And I'm wondering, is there any indication of what kind of impact this measure will have with respect to the capping of wells?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, again in reference to the Kindersley field, and we seem to be talking at a particular field here, and I can understand why we are because it's a marginal field and there's more concern probably there with loss of jobs and wells closing down, I don't think that this tax is going to have any impact on closing down or shutting down any wells.

I spent some time in Kindersley late March, early April, and I made it a point to visit some of these people who are operating the marginal wells. I went out to the field with a fellow who does a lot of swabbing and I also visited the Westar field. And I spent a considerable amount of time talking to these people, asking them about the viability of the field in Kindersley. And there's no question that whenever a tax is imposed on anybody, there are people who will come up and say that it's going to have a serious impact on the industry. We all say that.

If there's any fear being distributed or being produced in

the oil patch, it's by remarks that I hear from members opposite that are creating that kind of fear. The industry hasn't given me that indication, and I have spent a lot of time talking to them. And I don't think that there are going to be any wells capped because of this particular tax on the freehold mineral rights.

Mr. Boyd: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister, for that assurance. We sincerely hope that you're correct in that. In a field like the one at Kindersley that is very marginal, I suspect that it will have some impact on it, and we will see some wells closed there as some of the oil people that I had the opportunity to speak with . . . And I suspect the same gentleman you're referring to that does swabbing is the same gentleman I'm thinking of when I allude to that.

I believe you will see some shut-downs in capping of wells in the Kindersley field as a result of this measure. And I just want to reinforce the point that any increase in a marginal field makes for a lot of wells in serious jeopardy. And I think you have to, when you're examining taxation measures, keep that in mind. This one may not be the straw that breaks the camel's back in that area, but any additional tax certainly will.

The Chair: — Why is the member on her feet?

Ms. Murray: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like leave to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

(1930)

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Murray: — Mr. Chairman, I'm delighted to introduce to the Assembly 23 scouts from the High Prairie Scout Group seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are accompanied by Scouter Ed, Scouter Gord, Scouter Jack, Scouter Laurie and parent helper Bob. I've had the opportunity to meet with these scouts before and I'm looking forward to spending some time with them this evening. And I would like to ask everyone here to give them a warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to add my welcome to that of the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden to the scouts in the gallery here. Welcome to the legislature.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 9 (continued)

Clause 1 (continued)

Hon. Mr. Penner: — In response to the question from the member opposite, I think we are now dealing in semantics. He says, I believe and you believe. Well I'm glad that we both believe. You believe there's going to be losses in jobs. I believe it's not going to. We can argue that point for ever if we want to. We're not going to get anywhere, because neither one of us has proof. You

haven't got proof that the wells are closing down and jobs are being lost. I don't have any proof right now that jobs are being created. So this business of you believe one thing and I believe another thing is really not getting us anywhere, Mr. Chairman.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 5 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry. I would like to thank the officials for coming here first this afternoon and again this evening. They provided me with valuable information. And I hope that the information that the members opposite want can be supplied by the department. We'd be happy to do so.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I do want to thank the officials for their answers and we'll be looking forward to the material coming over as soon as possible. Thank you.

Bill No. 11 — An Act to amend The Marriage Act

The Chair: — Would the minister please introduce her officials.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you. I'd like to introduce the officials who will help us tonight. To my left is Susan Amrud, Crown solicitor with the legislative services department of Justice; to my right is Madeline Robertson; and behind me is Brent Prenevost.

Clause 1

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, welcome to the minister and to her officials who . . . was a pleasure to work with over the past two or three years. And I think I can indicate that due to their diligence we're not going to spend a lot of time on the Bills that are before us tonight.

Number one, one question: this . . . I guess you could say, in retrospect, The Marriage Act is really an increase in fees. It's not really increasing the fees, but certainly everyone is going to be required to purchase a marriage licence now, and I'm just wondering if the department has any knowledge of the anticipated revenue through this process?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — The estimated revenue is 26,000 a year. I should point out, however, that I have been advised that the churches are very anxious to have this change made in as much as it reduces the necessity for them to comply with the Act in the technical manner that they've had to in the past. So it makes it easier for churches. Banns can still be published, but the legal requirement with respect to the Act doesn't exist any longer because a licence would be obtained. So although it does increase revenues, it also makes it easier from the point of view of the churches.

Mr. Toth: — Well I'm glad to hear that obviously there's been some consultation with a number of the groups and the church groups out there. I wonder if it's possible for

the minister and her staff to indicate which groups they've contacted or consulted regarding the proposed changes?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I understand that there has been a fair amount of consultation but primarily the consultation has centred on the churches who use them the most — the Roman Catholic, the Mennonite, United, and Anglican churches.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 29 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 15 — An Act to amend The Wills Act

Clause 1

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if Madam Minister would just explain what the purpose is behind the changes to The Wills Act.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — There were amendments to The Intestate Succession Act in 1990 that increased the preferential share for surviving spouses under The Intestate Succession Act when there isn't a will. Section 32 of The Wills Act refers to the preferential share and brings it in line with the increased amount that was changed in The Intestate Succession Act.

This amendment is retroactive to 1990, but not so as to upset any estates that may have been distributed in the interim.

But it's to bring The Wills Act in line with the amendments that were made to The Intestate Succession Act increasing the preferential share of a spouse from 40,000 to 100,000.

Clause 1 agreed.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 16 — An Act to amend The Jury Act

Clause 1

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the minister shared with us the other day the reasons for the changes to the Act — a couple of questions that were raised and just bring to her attention again this evening.

First of all, I think that most people would probably recognize that registered or certified mail is something that you can certainly identify as something, as a form of being certain that a person has received that mail or received notice of an event or whatever. And a question we had the other day was, by deleting this and just going regular mail, if it wouldn't create a few problems. And I wonder if the minister would just fill the Assembly in regarding that concern.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Under the provision with respect to

registered mail, what occurred is that a juror who did not attend and did not show up would have . . . The onus would be on that person to establish that they did not receive the notification. What this does is it says, it doesn't have to be sent by registered mail. It would be sent by the ordinary course of mail, and the onus is no longer on the juror to establish that they did not receive. If a juror was accused of not attending and having received, they would simply have to make a statement to the effect that they had not received the mail and they wouldn't have the onus to establish they didn't receive. A statement would be adequate. So although the service is done in a more ordinary, inconsequential fashion, what the juror . . . the onus, or the duty on the juror, is also reduced commensurate with that. What would happen is, if the person failed to respond and a charge was laid, the person named in the summons would simply be legally required to offer an explanation that the summons and information was not received or was not received on time.

In the past, there was a reverse onus, and they had to establish they didn't receive it. If they gave an explanation that they had not received it, then the Crown would have an onus to establish they did. And obviously they wouldn't be able to do that if it was sent through ordinary mail and the person simply didn't receive it and stood up and said, I didn't receive it or I didn't get it on time. So practically speaking, there's a substantial reduction in the onus on the juror.

(1945)

Mr. Toth: — Madam Minister, just another question I would have is, what process would be followed through, then? Say this mail was . . . and as part of the document which says, "deemed to have been received," if the prospective juror hasn't received or isn't aware of a call to juror duty, and what process is then followed up. Because obviously that prospective juror is going to have to give that explanation. There must be a format that is followed to inform the individual of jury duty.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — The general process is as follows. The sheriff would mail a jury summons and jury information return to each person on his jury list. The jury information return asks the person to fill out certain questions respecting capacity and availability to serve, for example. The person to whom it is mailed places the return in a self-addressed envelope supplied in the kit, addressed to the sheriff. The sheriff reviews the returns to determine if a person is eligible to serve, or should be excused.

Now — and this is the part of the question that you were asking — if the jury information return does not come back, the sheriff will attempt to contact the person named, to serve that person again or serve him personally. If they don't get the return back from the person that it's sent to by ordinary mail, the sheriff will then try and contact that person.

Now if that person, obviously, just simply gives an explanation that, I didn't receive it, the sheriff will try to serve personally if there's still time to have the person there, or may take some other action, but isn't going to pursue charges. Now if that person is belligerent and

can't give an explanation, then there may be a charge that ensues.

The person named in the summons is legally required then to offer an explanation, that the summons and information return was not received or received on time. And the person will be found not guilty unless the Crown provides contrary evidence. So if the person simply gives an explanation at that point, if they've been charged, the Crown would then have an obligation to establish contrary evidence that contradicts what the person indicated.

Mr. Toth: — Madam Minister, with the changes, wouldn't it be possible that it would become a little more complicated, or the process of selecting or informing jurors may become delayed? Because if I'm not mistaken, registered or certified mail, if it isn't picked up within a matter of . . . I'm not sure what the day period is . . . automatically goes back to the sender whereas regular mail could just sit in the post office for a determined period of time. There must be some guidelines that would be followed up on, I would think.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I am advised that . . . Well first of all, let me say that in a number of different legal situations today, they are moving to ordinary mail as opposed to certified mail. This is happening in other cases as well. I also want to say that the intent is for the whole process of jury selection to start sooner so that if there is any delay because of ordinary mail that it doesn't actually hold up the process.

Mr. Toth: — So, Madam Minister, what process would then be followed? Say a person's out of province for a while or out of the country. And even in the winter-time, we know many people tend to be away for a month at a time, maybe two months at a time. Is there a process or do we have a process in place that recognizes people who tend to be away so that you can follow up and speed up the process of selecting a jury?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Well what would happen in a case like that is we would expect the sheriff to use his or her common sense. And if the person isn't there, obviously they're going to be aware of the situation when they attempt to get in touch with that individual. And I think in a situation where people are away for winter months, it'll just be the common sense of the sheriff that applies in a case like that. And if the person's not available because they're away, they obviously haven't received the mail and therefore wouldn't be charged.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 17 — An Act to amend The Commissioners for Oaths Act

Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 18 — An Act to promote Regulatory Reform in Saskatchewan by repealing Certain Obsolete Statutes

Clauses 1 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to thank the minister and her officials. And we trust that as we move further through this legislative session we will have the same type of co-operation, and certainly the same quality of effort put into bringing forward straightforward Bills that we can work through as easily. Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Yes, I too would like to thank the opposition for their co-operation and the officials for the help they have given us. And they actually have been on stand-by for some time so we really appreciate their help. Thank you.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 12 — An Act to amend The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act

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

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

Bill No. 8 — An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act

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

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

Bill No. 5 — An Act to amend The Wascana Centre Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move this Bill now be read a third time and passed under its title.

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

Bill No. 6 — An Act to amend The Meewasin Valley Authority Act

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

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

(2000)

Bill No. 4 — An Act to amend The Wakamow Valley Authority Act

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

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

Bill No. 9 — An Act to amend The Mineral Taxation Act, 1983

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

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

Bill No. 11 — An Act to amend The Marriage Act

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

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

Bill No. 15 — An Act to amend The Wills Act

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

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

Bill No. 16 — An Act to amend The Jury Act, 1981

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

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

Bill No. 17 — An Act to amend The Commissioners for Oaths Act

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

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

Bill No. 18 — An Act to promote regulatory Reform in Saskatchewan by repealing Certain Obsolete Statutes

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

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**Consolidated Fund Expenditure
Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation
Vote 53**

The Chair: — Mr. Minister, will you please introduce your officials. And I might say we're dealing on page 80.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Okay, the officials are the same as they were the other day; in fact they're seated in the same places. Beside me is the acting president, Don

McMillan. Next to him is Barry Hilsen, the assistant vice-president of human resource services. Norman Drummond is sitting immediately behind Mr. McMillan. He's the corporate comptroller. Immediately behind me is Rob Isbister, director of financial planning.

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Mr. Minister, I guess it's about 10 days since we started SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) but it was so long ago that I did have to go back through *Hansard* and see what questions you did answer and which ones you didn't answer. And actually we did quite well, Mr. Minister. We had some good answers, except I guess you and I kind of had a little . . . we didn't agree on the people that had been eliminated or lost their jobs or fired or whatever.

We had a little disagreement there on what date you could give us. And I'm going to be asking you that question tonight, for a firmer commitment when you can give me that answer that we discussed the other day on . . . And I realize it can't be tomorrow or the next day or a month from tomorrow, but I don't want it open for a couple of years like you . . . or for the end of the session.

So I'm going to be asking you that later on, but I'm going to start with a series of other questions, Mr. Minister. I wonder if you could provide a list of all advertising done by the department since November 1, '91. I'll see what you have and then I'll tell you the different ones that I want.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — While the officials are reviewing their notes to see if that's . . . how readily available that is, I'm going to ask one of the pages to take across to the member, a file. It contains the responses to all of the undertakings which I gave you the other day.

I just want to point out for all members present that this was a courtesy which we in opposition almost never got. It was very, very common to have members opposite give us undertakings which were never fulfilled. I remember writing letters to you people when you sat on the treasury benches. Months later, the next year, we'd ask you for undertakings of a year ago. You never completed them. I just want it noted, Mr. Member, that we complete our undertakings within a week.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, while they're looking up some of that information I'd just like to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'll pass it on by page. This, the officials believe, is all the advertising that was done. They obviously haven't had time to check the records, but that is their belief that that is what has been done since November.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, these are just figures here. I'd like to ask if it includes the following, because I wouldn't know what it all includes. Because I want to make sure that this is included.

Now what I am saying, Mr. Minister, is does it include the production and distribution of the direct mail, pamphlets, news-letters, print ads, broadcast ads, speaking tours, public displays and exhibitions? I'm giving you a lot at once here but I want to know. We'll go back and go over it one at a time. Promotional items such as pens and key chains, media relations, and all other communication vehicles, all these things — are they included in this advertising?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The answer is they are not because we haven't spent any money on those things. The advertising which you got is virtually all tender calls and routine departmental advertising. Things you mention there have not been done by the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

Mr. Muirhead: — You're saying that there's been no news-letters, no print ads, none of this has ever happened, just never happened since November. Is that what you're saying, Mr. Minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay.

All right, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, we'll accept that, that there's been absolutely . . . all these things I've mentioned, that they haven't done. And I thank you for the response here.

But I want to respond. It was nice of you to get up and make that few remarks that we're getting all this information to you so quickly; that we never had this happen under the other government.

Well now giving me a remark like that doesn't just make me too happy. Because I was minister of Crop Insurance for three and a half years, and if you could ever find, Mr. Minister . . .

Mr. Chairman, I can't get anybody to listen here. We're either into estimates or we're not. Mr. Chairman, the members opposite asked tonight if we can hurry this along and get it done in a few hours. If we're going to have all this heckling from the back rows and we're going to have all this yack-yacking, I can tell you, we'll be here a long time. And I mean a long time. And if you can find out, when I was minister, if I held any information back, well then go back in the books and show me. You'll have to show me. These are fine for you to make these accusations — that you never got any information, ever, from the departments when you were in government. Now that's a pretty broad accusation, to say I never got any information — because you did get information. Because we'd still be here if you hadn't have. You didn't quit until you got everything you wanted.

(2015)

Now let's just see how you're going to respond when we get finished asking questions. Maybe like for after you making that remark tonight, maybe we'll hang on here for days and days of questions and see, Mr. Minister, if you can respond as quickly as you did here. But I have to peruse through this information and I can't do it and keep asking you questions. We'll turn it over to some of my other colleagues after a while while I go through this.

Because just handing me a package and saying, there's everything you asked for . . . I'll tell you whether it's everything I asked for when I see it. And I take your word for it that you probably did.

Can you, Mr. Minister, provide a list of all trips paid for by the department since November 1, 1991 whether in the province or outside the province.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Are you speaking of trips, ministerial trips, ministerial travel? I just wasn't sure of the scope of the member's question.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, I will repeat it again. Provide a list of all trips paid for by the department since November 1 whether in the province or outside. That would be the entire department.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We can undertake to provide that to you. We don't have a list here in the Assembly. And I so give the undertaking.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister. It's going to be hard for all these . . . I want to include a bunch of questions so it's best if they got it out of *Hansard*. Because if you can't provide it tonight, then you'll be able to get it out of *Hansard* in the morning because I'm going to add these particulars to that: the names of all persons on the trip, indicating which persons were paid for by the department and which were not; a breakdown of the costs of each trip by person including transportation, meals, accommodation, and any other cost; destination, dates, and purposes of each trip; the method of travel and the name of the travel supplier; name of hotel or other institution that provided accommodation; the results of each trip, including a copy of any tangible evidence showing a benefit to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, that's the kind of questions that I want answered.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes. We will undertake to provide that. I will venture to say it's all going to fit on one side of an eight and a half by eleven too. There's been very little travel.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, can you tell the committee — and I'll be asking this as well vote by vote when we get to it — whether or not the department has spent any money in the 1992-93 fiscal year that we're being asked to include in the '91-92 fiscal year.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Perhaps the member can give us some explanation of how such a thing might occur.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, I'll add this to it and it might help you. And can you ensure the committee that all the monies being requested in the supplementary estimates and the main estimates that is attributed to the '91-92 fiscal was actually used before March 31, 1991. And further, if you choose to make the expenditures prior to March 31, assure us that the product, services, or obligations were actually and really received, consumed, delivered or executed in the 1991-92 fiscal year. Don't

ask me. You tell me.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The answer to your questions is yes, of course you may . . . the member will understand, your veteran member will understand, that we would include the supplementary estimates when we use the word estimates in general terms. But the answer is yes, as long as you include supplementary estimates.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, will you be providing that in more detail to me or is that your final answer for the whole thing?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — If all expenditures taken into the estimates were for things actually used or received in 1991-2, my answer was yes, it was all used. There is no further detail to be provided, I don't think.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, you said you don't think. Now are you real sure? You're not asking your officials. Be real sure of that, because you know, you ended up like you did 10 days ago. You would say that several times — this didn't happen, and then you'd say afterwards, I'm not sure. You said, I think. So be sure how you think it.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — When I think it, it's so. I say to the minister, it is so.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Is the department making payments into RRSPs (registered retirement savings plan) on behalf of any individuals?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, could you inform this Assembly if any of the ministerial staff or any department heads have credit cards.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes they do, as a matter of departmental policy, utilize credit cards and are issued credit cards in some cases.

Mr. Muirhead: — Could you tell us who has credit cards and who hasn't? I don't mean the individuals, but that's left pretty loose, how many. I don't expect you to say the exact individual that has them, but what people in your . . . how many individuals in your personal staff and how many in the department. I don't want you to give names.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, there aren't any credit cards issued in the name of any individuals. That practice was stopped. The credit cards are now all in the name of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. They're basically just for fuel — basically to purchase fuel.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, could you provide a list of all persons who have cellular phones for which the department is responsible, the supplier of the phone, whether the phone is rented, leased or owned.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We'll have to undertake to get back to you on that. That's . . . we do not have that information with us, and there will be some field employees who will have them and be permitted to use them in connection with their work. So we'll have to

undertake to get that to you.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, while they're doing that . . . I think in this case with the cellular phones we need to know the purpose of why they have them and the person that has the phone. I think in this instance we'd like to know of cellular phones, the individual that has them and the purpose why they have them. And also a breakdown of the cost associated with the phones since November 1 of '91 — a breakdown of the cost.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We can provide that.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you. Could you, Mr. Minister, provide a list of all persons who have lap-top computers for which the department is responsible for?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We're going to have to undertake to provide you with that as well. They're not a large number. There are a large number of desk-top computers, but not a large number of lap-top computers, but there are more than we would safely be able to give you orally. So we'll have to undertake to give you that.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, how long . . . the last few questions I've asked you, you said you could provide it, how long is it going to take to get this information?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — This information won't take long. We got back to you in a week last time, and I wouldn't imagine it would be a lot more than that. This won't take long.

Mr. Muirhead: — Could you also provide a list of the fax machines that the department have and are responsible for, the locations of the machines indicating whether the machines are situated such that they are for general use or for use of one individual. In the offices, or whatever, are they for the use of an individual, or how many you have, or are they just for the whole department, or how many do you have.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Once again, it's a very short list. But to be on the safe side, we'll supply it to the member in writing.

We are supplying the number of fax machines which are for departmental use . . . for the corporation's use. This corporation supplies fax machines to all the government. I assume that's not what you want within the scope of these estimates. What you want is the fax machines which are supplied for the use of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I'll add some more questions to that question. And you'll have to take it from *Hansard* too, because it would be pretty hard to remember that. I just want this added to it. Seeing you're coming back with the answers, as I said before, best to get it from *Hansard*.

If there is fax machines for one individual, we'd like the name and the title of that individual, not if they're for the department use and for a group of people. But if they're just for one individual, whether each machine is rented, leased, or owned; the name of the vendor; the date the

machine was obtained; a breakdown of costs associated with the machine including long distance, service contracts, lease, rental, and purchase payments.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — There are no fax machines assigned to any individual.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, what about televisions, VCRs (video cassette recorder), camcorders, and other audio-visual equipment including production equipment for which the department is responsible.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Again there are no televisions, camcorders, or VCRs assigned to any individual.

Mr. Muirhead: — Well on this one here, I didn't say individual; I'm talking about the department. Is there any televisions for the department, VCRs, camcorders, and other audio-visual equipment for the . . . including the entire department, not individual. Just that one question was, back there, talking individual, not this one.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — There are a very few. Again this is going to fit on a very small piece of paper but just to be certain we got it accurate, we'll supply in writing.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Although there are other questions I have, I'll be waiting for information that you said you'd be able to supply.

Would you be able to provide a list of all the contracts, verbal or written, which are not of an employment nature to which the department is a party.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — That's impossible to supply a list of all verbal contracts. That includes a great variety of different undertakings. The answer is we're not able to do that. There's no . . . I mean your question is incapable of being answered.

Mr. Muirhead: — All right, we'll narrow it by . . . I said verbal or written. That's what the question was — verbal or written. I didn't say it had to be just verbal — verbal or written.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, but verbal contracts includes a wide variety of contracts of different degrees of formality. Unless you can narrow the scope, I don't think we can give you that answer.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, if this government is giving out so many verbal contracts that they can't even count them, I think we better stop here and get serious. We better get real serious because I've heard more talk about verbal contracts and people with verbal . . . Even their salary ranges are verbal.

Now you said that there's so many . . . If you've only got a . . . Why would you ever in the department any place have a verbal contract? Why would there ever be a verbal contract? I ask you verbal or written, and if you haven't got any verbal, then say you haven't got any and then answer me about the written ones. But if you have verbal, I want to . . . Somebody has to know, somebody in the department. You're not going to fool me that you don't know exactly how many verbal agreements there are. If

you've got 10 or 2,010, somebody has to be able to tell you exactly.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — By the very nature of the term, verbal contract, it's very informal. Every time somebody pulls up to a service station and asks for some gas, that's a verbal contract. You asked this evening for some different information — a perfectly valid interpretation of the word, verbal contract, because each one of those is a verbal contract. The term, verbal contract, is too vague and too indefinite for us to be able to respond to your question. The member has to be able to focus his question a bit better because it's incapable of being answered as it is now.

Mr. Muirhead: — I'll read what I have here in its entirety and maybe it'll help us. I'll start over again, Mr. Minister, because maybe I wasn't fair to you by being so abrupt.

Provide a list of all contracts, verbal or written, which are not of an employment nature, to which the department is party, if the contract is not bound by confidentiality provisions. A true copy of the contract. If the contract is covered by confidentiality provisions, provide details of those provisions and to the extent that the provisions allow, the names of the parties to the contract, the purpose of the contract, all costs associated with the contract. Was the contract obtained by tender? Was the need for the service or contract advertised? Now I . . .

(2030)

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I say to the member opposite, this hasn't changed since October 21, 1991. There are hundreds of thousands if not millions of contracts entered into by this government every year, most of them by this particular Crown Corporation. Your question is going to . . . If we just gave you all the written contracts, your question would elicit tons and tons of paper. It really would. Every requisition . . . You would want a copy of virtually every piece of paper put out by the department. Your question is far too vague and general. If you can focus it so we know what information you really want, we'll provide it. But your question is simply incapable of being answered.

As for verbal contracts, I think I made that clear, it includes a wide variety of different commitments, most of them extremely informal and there is no list of them kept. So I just don't think we can answer the member's question; you have to be more specific.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I don't think we're understanding each other, if a government has, you said millions of contracts, now that's a lot of contracts. All right you're the ones that when you went out on the campaign trail said the books will always be open, the public will know everything, now maybe we'll have to get more . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . maybe we'll have to, but I don't think we should have to, I think you should be able to supply, I said verbal or written and the written contract should not be a big thing for you to supply. You got a written contract, well just give me an idea so then maybe I'll know where I'm at. Get your officials to tell you what's approximately the volume we're talking about in written contracts. Are we talking

about hundreds or thousands or millions?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Certainly the latter. We're not going to need more officials. If we're to answer the question, we're going to need a bigger room. You can't get it all in here. Every time we requisition something, and it's done every day, it's repeated many times a day by branches, by the head office, that's a contract. Every time we have any dealings with anyone, that's a contract. The question is simply incapable of being answered and if we were to go to the expense it would be incapable of being used by you. It's an unmanageably large amount of information. You'll have to be more specific.

Mr. Swenson: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, you and I both know that we aren't talking about requisitioning of pencils and pens and that sort of stuff. I fully realize that you can put whatever kind of legal jargon you want on it. I will give you a number, Mr. Minister, I think that will help your process. How many contracts, either written or verbal, above \$10,000 would you enter into?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes that is a more manageable figure. That in fact, if my memory serves me correctly, is the cut-off for *Public Accounts* and this isn't included in *Public Accounts* but we think we can provide it with some exceptions which the member will understand. The one that comes to mind is real estate leases. We don't provide those and the member from Arm River and I had a discussion about that the other night. But except for real estate contracts and other contracts of a confidential nature, we can supply that. We can supply that information as if SPMC were a line department.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, how many contracts would you have with the confidentiality provisions attached to them?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The only one we can think of is the real estate contracts. There may be something . . . I just pointed out to the member that when we review these extensively, there may be something else come up. We're not undertaking to break the law here, but at the moment the only one that comes to mind is real estate leases.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, does your department have any personal services contracts either written or verbal?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm sorry, I was distracted.

Mr. Swenson: — Does your department have any personal services contracts which are written or verbal?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — There are very few. And I'll give the member this undertaking. We will supply to you any personal services contracts which we would be required to supply under the freedom of information Act. Perhaps that would serve as a fair guideline for what ought to be supplied. We'll supply to you anything we're required to supply in the freedom of information Act.

Mr. Swenson: — Are you saying, Mr. Minister, that you would have some which you think are outside the freedom of information Act?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I just do not know at this point in time.

Mr. Swenson: — Well I would hope, Mr. Minister, that we won't have to use the freedom of information Act to access that information.

Mr. Minister, on your tendering policy, do you have any tenders occurring now or in the past which would be by invitation only?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The answer is no.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, has your agency done any polling in the last seven months?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, within your agency there was a program called "coaching for results" in the past. Can you tell me if that program is still in existence?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We can't because none of the officials have ever heard of it. The member probably knows something about the operation of this department that we don't, but none of the officials here ever heard of the program.

Mr. Swenson: — I think, Mr. Minister, I had some of your duties mixed up. That was to deal with another area that . . . Mr. Minister, there have been a number of firings associated with your agency in the last seven months. Can you tell me who conducted those firings?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The list of . . . I don't know if the member was here the other night when we were doing estimates. We referred to the list of February 5. And if your member has that list or if you can get it from your colleague, the first four of that list were vice-presidents. It was done by the acting president. The balance were done by their immediate supervisors.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, I'm aware of the list of individuals that you provided. Were there any legal counsel involved along with the department officials in those firings?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, there was a law firm. To anticipate your next question, who were they? Olive Waller Waller.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, what type of fees were paid to that particular law firm for conducting the firings of the SPMC employees?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Very modest, but we don't have the figure here. We would have to undertake to provide the member with the fees.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, I understand two of the individuals that were fired were later rehired, that your legal people had messed up in some way, that you had to rehire them. Is that true?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No. To the best of the

knowledge of the officials — and the member from Thunder Creek will realize I came to these responsibilities on March 23 — but to the best of the memory of the officials, there were no rehiring.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, my information is that two individuals, one by the last name of Coppin and one by the last name of Brown, were fired and later rehired. Is that true, sir?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We were dealing with the list of February 5. We now understand the member is dealing with the lay-offs which occurred as a result of the budget. These were not firings in the normal sense that one uses that term, dismissal for cause. These were lay-offs. That's not normally referred to as a firing. At any rate, there were the two that you mentioned which were given lay-off notices and then their services were retained.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I suppose we all can put interpretations on, and I suppose these two individuals weren't involved in your ID of the department that I'm sure your party did when you did your firings previously. And I am glad to see that people did come to their senses over there and rehire good, working civil servants.

Mr. Minister, given that these individuals were rehired, for whatever reason you wish to attach to it, can you absolutely confirm to this legislature that there weren't any mistakes made with any of the other individuals who were either fired or, as you say, laid off for various reasons?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No. The member will understand that, with respect to those which are in scope, there is the normal provisions under collective bargaining for bumping and so on. But these were the only two who were eventually reinstated in their positions, I guess one would say.

Mr. Martens: — Yes, Mr. Chairman. Would you be able to give us an explanation of which parts of your capital program in Health, for example, which hospitals you're funding now, which ones you moved into the Department of Health, which ones are you still retaining, if any, through the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, the member will be aware that as of . . . one of the recommendations of the Gass Commission was that that type of capital funding be moved to the departments. And those third-party capital provisions are now all in the departments and there is none of them left in SPMC.

(2045)

Mr. Martens: — There's none of them in Health? None of them in Education?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The opposite's true. There's none of them in SPMC. They've now all been moved to the line departments.

Mr. Martens: — Yes, that's what I meant. They're moved

over. Are there any other of the capital projects that are at all involved with Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, either in Justice or in Rural Development, or any of the other agencies?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, there are no other third party . . . no other capital projects of that third-party nature.

Mr. Martens: — So that I would assume then that the College of Agriculture was moved over for that same reason from note in the budget?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — That's correct.

Mr. Martens: — So we will have to take a look at each of those in its own capacity. Did you have any write-offs of any of the volumes in Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation of any of the hospitals? Any of the level 4 care facilities or any of the other schools? Or anything like that?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Does the member want the detail of how this was handled? As the member will know, the Gass Commission recommended this be done and we did it in total. I can give you the detail in writing if you want it.

Mr. Martens: — I'd like the detail in writing of each of the capital projects that you moved over and the details of whether there was a Consolidated Fund write-off. I can ask the departments when I get to them but from your side of it, when you transferred this to the department, whether you had a write-off or who had the write-off, and if there was one, who took it.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We don't have that here, but we will undertake to provide it to the member.

Mr. Martens: — That will make for some very important discussions, Mr. Minister, and we would like to have that available to us when we go into each of the departments, so if we could have an undertaking for that to be done as quickly as we could, then we would be able to deal with each of the different departments in the framework that they are attached to that.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We can have that for you in a matter of a very few days. I asked the officials if it were now compiled, I would have it faxed over to the building tonight but it's apparently not in that state but you will have it within a day or so, I'm told by the officials.

Mr. Martens: — Do you have any other buildings that you own that you have done that? For example, you made the decision to do that with level 4 care facilities, health care, hospitals and schools, what about other facilities? Liquor Board, do you own them or does the Liquor Board own them? Have you got any other facilities that you own that are in that same position, that you still own and haven't written off?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, there were some loans for tenant improvements. All of those were all written off, and that problem was finalized.

Mr. Martens: — Tenant improvements, you said . . .

(inaudible interjection) . . . right that's what I said. Tenant improvements, can you give me a list of all of those that you wrote off and the value of them in determining what the volume of that would be?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, we'll give you that on the ticket.

Mr. Martens: — Did you write them off in '92, '93 or '91-92?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — They were all done in the last fiscal year.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, I find that one interesting because there is another reason why you bloated your deficit in 1991 and '92 and that'll be very interesting to find out how many dollars that really is. So on these tenant improvements, how many tenant improvements, how many of them did you have to do in the province and how many did you write off?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, we just still do not have that level of detail. We'll have to provide the member with the list.

Mr. Martens: — On a normal basis on vehicles, do you have the same depreciation kind of focus that you take on a normal annual basis where you remove your vehicles and have that depreciation also accrue to that year or how do you deal with those functions on planes and cars and different kinds of vehicles like that?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm told it's depreciated over a five-year rate and that the system hasn't changed since the members opposite were on the treasury benches.

Mr. Martens: — Would the minister be able to give us a volume on that on the loss carried forward or the volume of depreciation that is taken for all of those? And then also can you add into that the depreciation, if there is any, on the buildings that you still own, and if that is accruing on an annual basis also?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We can give you the, certainly the global figure with respect to the vehicles. I'm told the global figure with respect to buildings may not be immediately available. It is under discussion with the auditors I gather — the facts of which I don't thoroughly understand. But the global position on that may await the completion of the discussion with the auditors.

Mr. Martens: — The question then becomes, why is it different to do it with health care facilities on one hand, and the Walter Scott Building on the other hand, or the T.C. Douglas Building, in that same context? Why is it necessary to have the capitalization go to the department when you don't do that with the Walter Scott Building, and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development use that facility?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Well the comments made in the Gass Commission were that these were . . . that there was no income out of which these loans could be repaid except the Consolidated Fund. And therefore, they didn't truly represent a legitimate capital project, that this would

not truly represent the financial picture of the province. Thus, in keeping with the Gass Commission, these were transferred to the line departments to carry rather than have these third parties carry them.

The clear effect, according to the Gass Commission, was to allow members opposite, when they were in government, to understate the province's debt by allowing a significant portion of the debt to be borne by third parties, supposedly outside the system.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, do you have any idea whether you supplied any of the money in the warrants that were given in April and in May, that they paid for anything prior to the for the '91-92 year? And did any of that depreciation or any of that occur? Because the member from Arm River asked you a question that was similar to that, but I would like to know that for sure.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The answer to your question is no. While we've been talking, the officials have also got together the amount of the global figure on depreciation which I will now send to the members opposite.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had a few quick questions for the minister with respect to the building that used to house the Saskatchewan Pension Plan in Kindersley. I'm wondering about the . . . What is the length of the term of the lease?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I am told the term is five years.

Mr. Boyd: — And, Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could tell us what the annual cost of that lease is.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The officials are struggling to find the answer, which should have been easier to find than it has been. If the member has some other questions, we'll have it in a moment. Perhaps the member might go on with other questions he might have.

Mr. Boyd: — I'm wondering what the government's plans are for this building now that it's being . . . the lease is being terminated.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — As yet undetermined. That's the best answer I can give the member. We have not yet made a final determination as to what will be done. I'm not being coy. That's just the only answer we have. We haven't yet finally determined that.

Mr. Boyd: — Do the plans then include transferring of other government departments there, or buying out the lease with the gentleman who owns the building, or will you be looking at a whole range of options, or what?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, the only proper answer I guess is the latter one — a whole range of options is the best answer I can give you.

Mr. Boyd: — I appreciate your finding those answers for us. I think it's important that we recognize that the Pension Plan was moved into the town of Kindersley approximately a year and a half ago, and I think it's important that we recognize that there is not only a cost to the Saskatchewan Pension Plan holders by having their

pension cut out, but there is also a cost to the people who own that building. I think it's important that we know that cost.

(2100)

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm sorry. I didn't catch the member's question.

Mr. Boyd: — That was fine. We were just wanting to be sure we had that figure as well as the complete terms of that agreement, to recognize the fact that there is a cost associated with closing the place.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, in the figures that you gave to the member from Arm River on the volume of space divided by the cost, does that include the vacant space too?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes.

Mr. Martens: — Would you be able to give me an estimate of the volume of vacant space that is there?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Perhaps I can interrupt the member, I'm sorry, to go back and answer the question that had been asked by the member from Kindersley. The figure is \$5,112 rent per month.

Mr. Martens: — We're talking about vacant space, okay. And I'd like to know the percentage . . . or the volume of vacant space in relation to that number that you gave to the member from Arm River.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The vacancy rate is 1.4 per cent.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I want to go back for a little bit more detail on a question that my colleague was discussing with you earlier, and it has to do with the credit cards that are issued.

In your statement you stated something to the effect that you no longer issue credit cards in individuals' names, and you seemed to imply that that allowed for some sort of indiscretions to occur. And then you said that all credit cards are now issued in the name of the corporation. And so I would like you to explain to me how that better serves the interests of honesty or accountability, and who in fact has authority within the corporation now — or outside of it — to use those credit cards and to sign for them. And you might as well, at the same time, allude to the limits of the amounts of dollars that are allowed to be charged to these credit cards. Is it \$25 a month, or a year, or \$5 million a year, or what kind of figures are we looking at?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The difficulty with credit cards issued in the name of individuals, as I understand it, is the statements may come to the individuals and not to the department. The credit cards are now all in the name of the department. Virtually the only credit cards that are issued in the name of the department are for fuel purchases. I'm informed that the purchase allows up to \$100 at any given time, after which they must phone in for permission to spend more than that at a given time.

Mr. Goohsen: — Does that suggest, sir, that you could go

to 10 service stations and charge up \$99 at each one on one particular day, and not have to call in?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I think that's accurate. I don't know how you burn that much fuel in one day, but I suppose that's accurate. That's why credit cards are not used extensively except for the purchase of fuel. As I said at the beginning, these credit cards we now have are virtually all for the purchase of fuel. And that's why credit cards are not used extensively, is because they are not easy to control.

Mr. Goohsen: — I certainly have to agree with you that this wouldn't be easy to control if you can allow people to run helter-skelter with something that they don't even have their own name on and charge up any number of gallons of petroleum, for example, that they may put into their own car or the neighbour's car or the neighbour's wife's car or somebody down the road's car. So you think you've missed the point of getting your credibility into this thing with what you've done there.

My next question, sir, goes on to the subject of contracts that my colleagues were dealing with. And I'm wondering, for example, in the Department of Rural Development which was discussed, are rural farm service centres owned by the corporation or are they leased from private individuals?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The rural service centres are both owned and leased. In some cases there is rural service centres within existing government buildings, so of course that's owned space. In many cases they are leased from a wide variety of different landlords.

Mr. Goohsen: — Mr. Minister, could you supply me with a list of the names of those people that lease property to you and the amounts that you pay in lease fees to each of those?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm forwarding to the member a list of the spaces and the payees for the space. You can conclude in all cases that the payee is also the lessor.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. My next question is, in the area of these private contracts with private individuals, are there provisions within the contracts to have those leases broken if you decide to close the farm and rural service centres?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — As the member will know, you have a lengthy list of spaces there in front of you. The general rule, however, is that there is no provision to terminate the contract if the space isn't used. We would have to negotiate some arrangement with the landlord. There's generally no right to give notice if the space isn't used.

Mr. Goohsen: — I may have read this rather quickly, but I don't see any terms of the lease in terms of length of time. Is that also on this list or am I missing it or can you provide it for us?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We can provide the term of the leases.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. That will be greatly appreciated. Have you to date sent any termination notices to any of the people involved with either the leased facilities, or have you any indication of destroying any of the buildings that are owned by the government or knocking them down or eliminating them in any way?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, I am told that we have not terminated any leases.

Mr. Goohsen: — I appreciate that, Mr. Minister. It would be a great relief to the people in the rural areas to know that none of these actions have been taken, and that their farm service centres are for the moment intact. I have this list here but I don't have the numbers. Are all of the rural service centres listed on here, did you say?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I am told that's a comprehensive list.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering, does the department have any oral employment contracts?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No we don't. If the page will come, I can give you the . . . What I tore off that sheet was the rent per square foot. The member will know that that's not . . . We don't normally provide that. I will give you the expiry of the leases. It was just torn off because you hadn't asked for it when I gave you that list.

Mr. Boyd: — I'm wondering if the minister would be able to provide for us the contracts of the president and vice-president of the corporation.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, there are no such contracts. There is no president at the moment, and the vice-presidents have not been replaced either.

Mr. Boyd: — Is there an acting president that has a contract?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — There's an acting president but no contract has been signed.

Mr. Boyd: — How does he get paid?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm told by the acting president that he hasn't been yet. I'm told by the acting president that he hasn't yet been paid.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, that's not humorous, and I'm sure he's not working for nothing.

What's he going to get paid the first time he gets paid in lieu of the services that he has rendered to this point? And if there are others in the corporation that have the same kind of flippant, as the minister portrays it, cursory of employment contracts, then would you be able to provide them for us?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes. I didn't mean to be flippant. The contract has not yet been finalized. When it is, it'll be made public. The policy of this government, as the member knows, is that all of these contracts are made

public.

Mr. Martens: — The acting president is going to have a contract. How many vice-presidents do you have under Property Management Corporation?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — None.

Mr. Martens: — Okay, the heads of the departments within the SPMC, the ones that manage certain areas, are they part of a overall . . . Can you give me the titles of each one of them and their position in relation to the chain of command, or if you want to put it that way, for the department heads or the branch heads.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'll ask the page to assist me. There are no contracts with those people. I'm giving you a list of the names, the positions, and the salaries, which the member may treat with confidentiality, I'm sure.

Mr. Martens: — When does the minister anticipate that his acting president is going to have a contract?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We expect it to be finalized in a matter of days.

Mr. Martens: — Will he then be making him the president?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Well that doesn't necessarily follow. He's being appointed as acting president. That's not the same as being appointed as president.

Mr. Martens: — Does he report directly to you, and if so do you have any people in your staff in your office who he reports to, or you report to have that individual in your office report to you, about the affairs of the Property Management Corporation?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, he reports directly to the minister — through the board to the minister, the member will understand. There's a board of directors to whom he appoints in a technical sense. There's nobody in my office who is interspaced between myself and the acting president. He reports directly to me.

(2115)

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Minister, so when I call your office about some things in relation to Property Management Corporation, who do I have there that I talk to? Do I talk to the acting president or do I try and get a hold of you? Who do I talk to in your office that would handle that for me?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I have some very able ministerial assistants, the details of which I gave the member the other night and will give you again if you want them. If you called my office you'd probably be put in touch with one of the ministerial assistants who would in turn get the information from the acting president.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Minister, you have made, and other ministers have made, some very significant points about the responsibilities of the individuals and their relationship to Crown corporations. Now I'm going to ask you this question. We had people in our offices who were

paid for by Crown corporations but who also responded to information under Crown corporations. And if you don't have anybody that is . . . you have a department person being paid for by the department and not responsible to the SPMC, then you are just as much in error as we were if that's what you're saying.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, I didn't understand the member's question. The practice of having people in ministerial offices or reporting directly to ministers but paid for by Crown corporations has been brought to an end by the Premier. That practice no longer exists in my office or at any other minister's office in this government.

Mr. Martens: — That's precisely the point I wanted to make. Then you are curtailing the work of the Department of Finance by requiring that someone in the Department of Finance be responsible for SPMC matters. When I phone you about SPMC problems, then you refer that to your Department of Finance paid employees, which is just as much in error as what you said that we were doing when we had Crown corporations paying individuals and they were supposed to report for service to the minister.

You can't do this one way or the other. It's equally misappropriating funds, if you want to put it that way. And when you say that you're not doing it because we did it the other way does not make that wrong and you right.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The members opposite were clearly, according to the Provincial Auditor . . . went well beyond what the member just described. It is apparent from the special report of the Provincial Auditor that the former government was concealing workers who worked for the government by putting them in the Crown corporations. In an effort to ensure that that comes to an end and that this government is fully accountable, all the staff for the ministers' offices must be in the budget of a line department so it will appear in *Public Accounts*.

I'm surprised the member doesn't understand the problems which the Provincial Auditor found with your system. You were concealing the size of the staff which served ministers, and your government was also concealing other expenditures which properly ought to have been disclosed. That practice has been brought to an end. There are some of my staff are in the Department of Finance and some are in the Public Service Commission. All that detail was given to the member from Arm River. But we do not have staff in the Crown corporations because the existing accounting system doesn't properly disclose them. And we have given our undertaking to the public, and to the members of this Assembly, that we will follow sound accounting practices in disclosing our expenditures.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, the point is: who are they working for? Are they working for the minister and the Department of Finance or are they reporting and working on behalf of problems that occur in the province when SPMC has a problem? And that's the point that I want to make.

If SPMC has a problem and I phone your office then you should disregard it and allow me to go to SPMC and have

the answer there. But what . . . and that's not the right way to do it in my view and nor probably in yours. However, your Department of Finance is paying for that responsibility when it isn't the Department of Finance's responsibility. It is SPMC's responsibility. And that's the point that I want to make.

And the auditor can say what he wants about where the item is identified. And I have no problem identifying it and where it should be. However, the important part is who pays for what service? And that's what he identified and I don't think you're any different than we were in relation to the Crowns.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Well I'm sorry to hear the member say that because it means you entirely missed the concern expressed by the Provincial Auditor. The concern expressed by the Provincial Auditor was that you were concealing — in a fashion that approached the fraudulent — you were concealing expenditures in ministers' offices.

The argument of the member opposite is ludicrous. You seem to suggest that if a staff person in my office is responsible for relating to a commission . . . and are they paid for by such a person. I would have a very large office if I did that. I have responsibilities for the Gaming Commission. I have responsibilities for CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan). I'm the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. I have responsibilities to Finance. I have responsibilities to the Public Service Commission. Is the member suggesting I need a separate executive assistant for all those responsibilities, all paid for by the separate agencies? That's ludicrous. That's ludicrous, Mr. Member.

Mr. Martens: — Now you're beginning to understand the position that I take in this, Mr. Minister, and that is, that is, that the service needs to be paid for by the demand placed on that from your office. And that is the point that I think the auditor makes. The second point that I believe that he makes is that it needs to be accounted for. And that is also a part of what needs to be done. I have no quarrel with that. But what I have a quarrel with is you saying that the Department of Finance shall pay for SPMC concerns that are raised by constituents or provincial items and that is where I think that you're just as much in error if you're going to do it that way, because then Property Management Corporation is not carrying their responsibility in relation to your department and your office.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Nothing they can do, Mr. Chairman, about what the member opposite thinks. He is no doubt going to continue. All I can say is, no one else thinks as the member opposite thinks. The Provincial Auditor doesn't think that way, neither do other accountants who specialize in the public service or most significantly, the taxpayers do not think that way. I can't do a thing about what the member opposite thinks. Let's just say he's experiencing a fair amount of independence and individualism in that particular line of thought.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Minister, if you would go back to 1982, you would find that there were many, many times

when you had people working in Sask. Potash Corporation. You had other people working in there who were paid by departments and vice versa. So it isn't new to the system and the accountability has to be there but it's not new to the system, I want to point that out to you too, sir.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I would have to take a moment to turn my mind through the ministers' offices prior to '82; I don't think that was the practice. I think everybody who worked in a minister's office was accounted for by a line department, the name and salary appeared in the *Public Accounts*. I'm virtually certain that's the case. If the member can cite some examples, I'd be interested to hear it, but I don't think that was the practice. That was a practice which members opposite devised. Why? Because you wanted to conceal the staff which you had working in the minister's offices.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I have a few more questions I'd like to ask you. I wonder if you could provide a list of all employees that have been reclassified since November 1, '91?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm sorry, I didn't catch the member's question.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, provide a list of all employees that have been reclassified since November 1, '91.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — There have been no reclassifications made since November 1, '91.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Could you provide a total cost to the department for all days for which employees were paid but during which employees did not actually work, including all earned days, special days off, sick leave, any other paid days off, breaking down the totals by category and the reason for the days off?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Again, the member has a capacity to ask some very, very broad questions. There's a thousand employees. Virtually everyone of them since November 1 would have some of those days off, etc. I completely fail to understand what the member's . . . what information the member's trying to elicit.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, those are the kind of questions you used to ask us in details . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, you certainly did. You talk about asking for information tonight that may bring in . . . you said it wouldn't hold in this . . . information, the answer is this building wouldn't hold them. You made that statement.

I can remember in 1965 when your government was in opposition and the Liberals were in government, you asked some questions that were so . . . you thought they were so ridiculous but the government of the day, the Liberals, supplied it. And I have the headlines in the paper yet, where they backed in a truck outside the buildings and had Jack Harrington and Jack Nichol and seven or eight people brought in boxes and piled right up against the wall back there.

Now we're not asking you for anything as ridiculous as that. I know that cost a lot of money. But you just try to make light of it all the time when we're asking something that's a little bit out of the ordinary, and something that I want to know.

And I don't think that it's a big thing because I think we have to get control on. You've tried to get control on everything you could in the last six months. You've cut back and cut back and cut back. You've fired people. We talked about it in question period today, where we've got so many people on unemployment and how we're going to handle it and how we're going to even police it. And it got to be . . . We've got no answers on it.

And we know that you fired so many people and we've got a list of the people you fired here. And we know there's going to be such a list of people on unemployment that you're going to have to have maybe boxes of names to bring in here and it'll pile up because these people are going to be on unemployment. They haven't got any jobs.

So I just asked you . . . I think it's important that maybe we look at . . . If you think it's funny to cut people off medicine and what not that affects your everyday health, if you think that's funny and still you can pay people . . . If you want to cut back, why don't you make people . . . change your positions and not have these days off? Don't give them that. Let them work that 10 days.

And if they're going to take that nine days off, or work nine days and take one off every two weeks then let them not get paid. So I'm asking how much it costs. That's shouldn't be a big thing to come up with.

And I'll repeat it again — the cost to the department for all days of which employees were paid but during which employees did not actually work. Now that's not a big question to ask, Mr. Minister. What did it cost your department for people that took a day off and got paid and didn't work?

So maybe you want to cut back on people like this, and let them go without salary or work 10 days rather than cut somebody off their insulin that may die in 48 hours. Now get serious.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Well I am serious when I tell the member that that's a lot of work. It cannot be compiled. I am informed by the officials it cannot be compiled by the computer. It would have to be done manually. It's an enormous amount of work given the staff the size of what works in the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. I would have more sympathy for the member if I could make any sense out of the question. But, as many of the questions asked by the member opposite, I simply cannot make any sense out of them. I do not know why you want it.

If the member could make some estimates, but I don't know why the member wants the cost of every day off, every sick day, every earned day off. To provide you with a precise calculation is a lot of work.

Mr. Muirhead: — All right, Mr. Minister, let's do it this

way. I realize that it's a big request to ask. But I guess you can understand why I'm asking. Cause I'm asking the question, I want to know how much it's going to cost. Cause maybe it's where your department and all departments in government can start cutting back.

(2130)

We talked about it today. People on social welfare that are offered jobs and won't work, and you're still going to pay them. If you got people in your department and all departments in government, if they're going to take a day off, not work their 10 days a week, will you at least answer me this? What about the philosophy of it? Look into it and see if you can save some money by cutting back on these people. You fired hundreds of them. They're going to be thousands of people lose their jobs over your tax grabs and your cut backs. They have no jobs at all. So if you want to save a few dollars, maybe we have to get serious and everybody that works for government maybe shouldn't be. . . they have their regular holidays, but maybe they haven't got a day off at one in every ten days.

Just see if you're interested in looking at that philosophy. And I realize it would be asking you a lot of . . . I'm trying to get out a philosophy here more than I am to ask you to do some work that's impossible. I just say, give me your response to the philosophy of that.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — With respect to the in scope, these were negotiated as part of a collective agreement. And my personal philosophy I am not sure is terribly relevant to that process. They were part of a collective agreement. As I understand, the member refers to earned days off, sick leave, that's all been part of a collective agreement. And if we felt that — and I emphasize the word if — if we felt that a useful way to save money, it's not something we could unilaterally do, couldn't unilaterally cancel those things. The contracts would have to be renegotiated.

Mr. Muirhead: — Well, Mr. Minister, you've . . . the union people and the working class people in Saskatchewan are the mainly the people that elected you and they're all angry at you now so you might as well have them a little angry, more angry, and open up the collective bargaining and take a look at it. Because I'm sure that they're the type of people that would want to have this province survive. So maybe we have to look at it.

If you're a person that got fired completely . . . You got a list of people we're going to talk about a little more here, a list of people up and got fired and laid off. Now what are these people supposed to do? What are they supposed to do?

If you're 40 to 50, middle-aged person, 30 to 50-60 years old in this here province and you all of a sudden got no job, and you worked for government for 20-30 years or whatever and you got house payments, and you got maybe 15-20 years to go yet before you can get any pensions, what are they supposed to do? In a year when their unemployment's used up, they're going to be on welfare.

So if you want to cut back, maybe you should get serious and look at these things. You've done everything else. Even my doctor in the town of Craik has been molested by the Department of Health saying they can't have . . . he had to tell his senior citizens that come for treatments to the doctor's office: they're told that I can't have you come so often because the medicare system says cut back, cut back. We don't want you to get sick. You can't afford to get sick.

So maybe you can take a serious look at it. I mean you've cut back and cut back. And I'm just talking about a philosophy here that maybe you and all your departments . . . you're in the front row of Cabinet and you've been there a long time and I don't think it's wrong to ask you to . . . we didn't do that when we were in government, I understand that . . . but you're trying to cut back, and we realize we're in a serious financial state.

Maybe we have to have the people in this government, people that work, people that work for a living in Saskatchewan, maybe have to have the philosophy that I was brought up with, and the older people here were brought up with: a day's work for a day's pay.

So I'm just saying maybe these people that work nine days and get paid ten and then still get their holidays — you have to look at it a little different matter.

Mr. Minister, can you tell me what the long-distance telephone bill for the department for '91-92 was?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The officials are looking for that and will have that in a moment. Let me say with respect to member's . . . the question before the last one. Your question is a good one and your point is a good one. Members of this government have a responsibility to achieve administrative savings first before we cut back on programs and before we increase taxes, and we certainly intend to do that where possible.

It will be . . . members of this government will be reviewing their departments and the Crown corporations in as thorough a fashion as time will permit in order to try to achieve administrative savings. The public have asked that of us and we intend to achieve that.

Some things will be easier than others and I don't know whether we'll specifically be able to . . . whether we'll specifically negotiate any changes with respect to earned days off. But the general thrust of your question is a very sound one and I suspect a great many people in Saskatchewan would agree with you.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I appreciate your remarks and I'll just wait now until you have that answer to the question.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The long-distance charges for '91-92 were \$251,007.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you. Do you have a projected long-distance bill for '92-93?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The budget forecast for '82-83 is \$280,418.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, do you have a list of all committees, if any, created by the department or in which the department participates, including each instance? Do you have anything like that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Just so we understand the member, is the member interested in committees within the corporation or you want a list of all the committees on which we have a representative sitting? I'm not entirely sure I understood the thrust of the member's question. Perhaps the member can tell me his concern and we'll try to answer it.

Mr. Muirhead: — Any committee that's been created by the department, especially since November 1, any committee created by the department.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — There have been none created by the department since November 1, 1991.

Mr. Muirhead: — Has the department got a list of boards or commissions or agencies? Do you have a board or a commission or agencies that are appointed under this department?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The only board which is appointed by myself, or which I play a role in, is the board of directors. It's the only board which I play any role in. There are internal committees within the corporation but I'm sure the member doesn't want that. There are internal management committees but I'm sure the member doesn't want that. The only board that I participate in is the board of directors.

Mr. Muirhead: — Can we have a list of the board of directors?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — They're all members of Executive Council. The member from Canora, the member from Melfort, the member from Regina Plainsview . . . Got that wrong. Yes, I'm sorry, Regina Dewdney, and the member from Churchill Downs.

Mr. Muirhead: — So, Mr. Minister, the board of directors are all elected officials. They're not just party members or whatever. They're all elected officials.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Actually, they're all members of Executive Council at the moment.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you. That's fine. A question I was going to ask the other day when we were talking, Mr. Minister, about space, and different contracts you have throughout the province for all the different space — rentals and you own and what not — has there been any new space purchased or rented by any new individual since November 1, '91? Any new agreements?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'll ask again for the assistance of the page and we'll forward to you a list of leases which have been renewed or which are new. They're all on the same page. There are, I see, three leases which are new: one, a garage in the village of Pense; and a couple of buildings on the University of Regina campus for the Saskatchewan Police Commission. Those are the new ones.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Now we'll go back to . . . Just to close off here. We're not going to be too much longer, Mr. Minister. We'll finish this here quite easily this evening.

I've just got a few more questions, going back to where we were when we started 10 days ago. I asked the question, Mr. Minister, and this is one of the questions that you supplied me with tonight, the written information, a list of all employees, fired, laid off, retired, or otherwise terminated since November 1, '91. Now the list of names, Mr. Minister, are they the ones . . . Which list does that match, because it doesn't say what jobs they had. There's about approximately 80 or 90 names on that list and I don't know where that matches with, what jobs or whether they connect with the list that you gave me the other day. It just gives positions without names, because the list you gave me the other day only had names of positions, and I didn't ask you for the individual names, which I was going to tonight. And I was wondering if this matches that or is this a different group. Because this says, space, listing of employees who left employment since November 1 — the list that you gave me tonight.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — That includes the people who were terminated on May . . . who were laid off on May 7. I incorrectly used the word terminate. They were given their notice. Some would bump and go down and so on and so forth. The list you got tonight included the list of May 7 and it also included the list on February 5.

Mr. Muirhead: — All right. Just, Mr. Minister, so I have it straight, the list that you gave me 10 days ago or whatever day it was, a week ago Friday, it started out with customer services, 23 in scope on the top of the page. That's the list that you gave me that day you had prepared, and it's postal clerk 2, part-time, and then AM 3, area manager, permanent. Is that the list that matches?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, Mr. Member. I'm told by the officials it does not include the list of May 7. This is a list of people who have quit for whatever reason. They may have quit because their spouse has left the community; they may have found better employment. This does not include the list of May 7. This is the names of everybody else who left for whatever reason.

(2145)

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, there's approximately 80 names on here and I see some of them even appear on some other lists. There's some of the names that still appear on lists that were laid off or abolished. Now are you telling me, when people are so short of jobs in this province, that . . . are you really telling me that 80 of these . . . these 80 people — 80 or 90 here; I didn't count them exactly, but approximately — that they just up and quit? That they weren't encouraged to quit? That you haven't got a secret contract with them or done something? Because I just can't hardly believe that 80 people just up and quit. I know people get moved around when you have a change in government — which you people have done a masterful job of moving people more than any government I've ever seen — but I can't see people that just up and quit on their own.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I want to add as well, for the benefit of the member opposite, this includes temporary and casual as well. It also includes the people who left on February 5. What it does not include is the people who were laid off on May 7. It includes everybody else — permanent, temporary, casual, for whatever reason they left.

Mr. Muirhead: — Let's just talk about one name on here. I can ask the question: what was Art Battiste? Was he permanent or was he temporary or what was he? His separation date was November 5, '91.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — He was part of Fair Share Saskatchewan. When Fair Share Saskatchewan was terminated, so it was the need for Mr. Battiste's employment.

Mr. Muirhead: — Now, when I go through this I see quite a few names. So that's not . . . no connection then, Mr. Minister, of this list that you gave me a week ago. So now can you supply me with the individual names of the list given me before, like . . . what it starts out with postal clerk no. 2. Can you supply the list of the names that matches each one of those?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Dealing with the list of those who were terminated May 7?

Mr. Muirhead: — Well, the paper you sent over tonight, it said: the attached list is the list of the abolished and terminated positions with associated salaries. And the question that I had asked, that you were responding to, the salary and benefits associated with each position including related costs. Now that's what's in that page and that's the same one that you gave me. It's a repeat of exactly the same one you gave me 10 days ago, that you gave to me tonight. But there was never any name attached. So is that page there, Mr. Minister . . . There's about 4 or 5 pages, maybe 80 or 90 people, and I have no names. I can't seem to match up the names. Can you supply the names for that . . .

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The list which the member refers to was in response to a request that we provided you with the salaries which were attached to the positions which were abolished. That's what this is. There's no names attached. This simply provides you with the salaries which were attached to the positions which were abolished.

Mr. Muirhead: — Yes, but there must have been positions abolished, but you got it right down to clerk 2, and area manager, there's clerk typist 3, technician 1. There must have been a name there at one time or another. Maybe the position is abolished. Well then give us a list of when that position was abolished, a list of the personnel that filled those positions.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm sorry. I was talking to the assistant Government Whip here about the night's proceedings. Can the member ask his question again?

Mr. Muirhead: — Yes, Mr. Minister. Now you say these positions are abolished and they're not there any more.

But there must be some name attached to these positions because you've got each one's exactly what the salary was — postal clerk 2, postal clerk 1, property officer, area manager. I mean it's all itemized and their exact salaries. There have to be a name attached if there's all these . . . There has to be a name attached to these. So maybe they're not there now, it's an abolished position, but I need to know what the names are of each individual.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I refer the member to our discussion the other night and our comment about our undertakings with respect to the May 7 abolitions. I simply refer you to those discussions. We gave you an undertaking. I think it's all . . . We gave you some undertakings with respect to the names to be attached to the abolished positions. I honestly think it's the best we can do.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, I'll take you back to *Hansard* when the question was asked in the first place when you sent this list over. This is the list that you happened to have with you when we first started estimates 10 days ago. I said I'd like to have, Mr. Minister, a list of all positions that have been eliminated in departments since November 1, 1991. Now I didn't say names, I said positions, and that's the list that was provided.

So now what I'm asking you for is: the names attached to each one of those positions.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, I think I told you the other night our limitations in providing that information. The week hasn't changed that. We will stand by the undertakings we give to you the other night and we cannot expand upon them.

Mr. Muirhead: — Now, Mr. Minister, that's got to be ridiculous because we were talking about what you said you could have a problem in supplying is where these people go to after they've lost their job if they got . . . because I've made it very clear that I don't believe that all these people lost their positions, and are just going to be left, hung out there to dry.

I know that the people that had a PC card would be left, hung out to dry. And maybe that's the way it should be. But I know that your own card-carrying people, and there were lots of them among these, that they're going to find jobs throughout government some place. And that's the position, and that's the question that you weren't able to answer and you said it would take awhile. And I can understand that. But there is no excuse for not knowing, who belongs, what individual belonged to the first name, postal clerk 2, part time, Saskatoon, \$23,743 and it goes on through for about 80 or 90 names. That has to be impossible for you not to be able to attach a name to that and that's what I figured 10 days ago. You didn't want to attach a name because there's where your politics is hit right in this here paper.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I say something to the member opposite so we can resolve this. We could probably give you the name of the person who was in the position on the morning of May 7, just as long as you understand that those people didn't necessarily leave the public service,

as that term is generally understood. They may have bumped and gone elsewhere. But if the member wants the name of the person who was in the position on the morning of May 7, we can probably supply you with that.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, that wasn't even my question. So that means that you didn't answer my question right or give me the proper information. You misled me 10 days ago, because I didn't say anything about May 7. You're the one that's adding May 7 in. My question was clearly: a list of all positions that have been eliminated in the department since November 1 and that's the list I have. I'm not worrying about whether it's May 7 or March 10 or December 6, it's everyone and that's supposed to be them all.

Okay if this, Mr. Minister, if that's the list, since November 1, then I want the last name, the name that's attached to each one and every salary and position because it should be very easy. It's got, I can go through, they've got where they were at: Moose Jaw, it's got clerk typist 2, part time, Moose Jaw; clerk 3, permanent, telecommunications, Regina, and the salary beside each one. You'd have to have a name. You couldn't have sent these cheques to them. It would have been impossible. So these are the names that I want.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I think I'm going to give the member what he wants. It's the name of the person who was in the position at the time it was abolished. I think that's what he wants. However we are now bereft of pages. Perhaps I could . . . no I can't. Well I'll have to get it to you when a page returns. Well I'll give it to you.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, when we were having discussions here the last time we were on, approximately 10 days ago like I said, I asked you . . . one of my first questions was, of these lay-offs, firings, abolishing positions, how many of them were political firings? And I ask you again, as a minister that's under oath in this House, to say there was no political firings, or there was.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, there were no political firings. These were job abolitions done with a view to achieving the best administration in the corporation.

Mr. Muirhead: — Well, Mr. Minister, I don't know who you're trying to kid. Because I say you're misleading the people in this House and you're misleading everybody in the province of Saskatchewan. Because you're not going to make me believe that these 10 names here that I'm going to read to you . . . It says, other SPMC terminations for the months November, December — right after the election. And it says their salary and the date of their separation: Art Battiste, RoseMarie Frischholz, Dennis McKenzie, Norma Morrow, Ron Dedman, Rod Hiltz, Gord Dobrowolsky, Claire Watson, Wayne Walker, John Bradley.

Are you going to tell me that these people aren't political hacks that worked for us, political people? Well of course they were. Of course they were. These people here were card-carrying Tories, nearly all of them; I think nearly every one of them. And rightly so. And they worked for us and I make no bones about it at all.

But I'm saying to you, Mr. Minister, that you said, your Premier said very clearly when he was Leader of the Opposition that we'll never do such things; we will never, ever have a political firing; we will never have a political hiring.

Now I give you 10 names and you cannot stand up in your position, Mr. Minister, and tell me that you didn't mislead me 10 days ago when you said there was no political firings. And you've done it again today. So you have absolutely misled this House.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No I didn't. You asked me the other night if any portion of the May 7 firings were political. I said no. This list, if the member would read the title, it says, other SPMC terminations for the months of November, December '91. The first four were employed by Fair Share Saskatchewan and there was no need for their services when the program was abolished. The balance, well I can only refer and thank the member for his assistance in answering that question.

As you have described them, they were your political hacks. It is normal on a time of a change in government that political assistants change with the government. It goes with the position. But you did not ask me the other day about any changes that might have occurred at the time the government changed. You asked me about May 7 and that was my answer. These were people who were terminated at the time the government changed. The member is confusing — and that's the most charitable thing I can say about your question — the member is confusing the two different terminations.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker, I have never mentioned . . . you'll never find in *Hansard* where I ever mentioned a date, May 7. I said eliminated, fired, or otherwise, since November 1. And you very clearly . . . because you can read the *Hansard* here and find out yourself, because it says here that there were none.

I asked you the question, "a list of all positions that have been eliminated in the department since November 1", and, Mr. Minister, I did not say May 7 or March 5 or December or whatever. And your answer was very clearly that there was none.

And so, Mr. Minister, I'm glad that we finally, after sitting in December . . . we sat in this House in December, we sat here for a month now and finally we have a minister that admits . . . He has admitted that they're firing the political people.

So why . . . I ask you this last question. That's the last question I'm going to ask you. Why did you mislead this House in saying that there was none, no political, no political firings when you have fired people every department, you've fired and you've fired political hacks. And you just finished saying well it's kind of the procedure of government that you do that when you change government.

Well now, what is your Premier going to say when you finally admitted what they would never admit for months here. They would never admit it, that . . . oh no, we just reorganized . . . You said it right in here. It's in *Hansard*.

All we are doing you said to the member from Arm River is reorganizing. And there isn't going to be any of them are going to be back in that reorganization. Then you get up and qualified yourself and said well there's four or five of the directors or vice-presidents that may be around for the reorganization.

(2200)

So you will not fool me, Mr. Minister. You will not fool the people in this Assembly. You will not fool your back-benchers. You will not fool the voters in the province of Saskatchewan, that you have been firing like I've never seen. I've never seen anybody that's out and just blatantly fired people.

You are so terrible at it and you've got the people . . . I met people out there in Arm River that said well you know they've fired people, but why are they firing their own. Out in Crop Insurance I know some card-carrying NDP that got fired. But I followed it through and they've got a job again. You're fooling people.

And that's what I told you 10 days ago here, that these people . . . And we're going to watch these names. We're going to follow these names through. If you think that you're going to get away with leaving it for one or two years to tell me where these people went . . . cause we're going to follow them and your card carriers are going to come back into the position. You're not that foolish. But you fired a few NDP, you done it, and your own people, just to make the public think well we're just down-sizing. But watch them come back in.

And you've admitted tonight, and I thank you, Mr. Minister, I thank you for admitting that we do once in a while get rid of some hacks. You finally admit it, and I thank you for that.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Well, I'm pleased to end this discussion on such a harmonious note.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, other than just the disagreement we've had about the political hirings and firings and where they're all going to go, I think we've still had three or four hours of good estimates. And I will say to the minister, thank you for giving your information. And I do believe that your department will be supplying the rest of the information.

So this is my last remark, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, that I thank you, Mr. Minister, other than holding back for about several hours on this business of political firings, and I do thank all your people that's here, the people that's here helping from the department, your assistants, and I thank them. And I thank you, Mr. Minister, for being very straightforward and straightforward in saying yes, we do fire some political hacks once in a while.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I want to thank the members opposite for what I thought were a useful set of estimates. We explored a number of issues and I think many of them would have been a concern to the members' constituents.

Mr. Chairman, we're aware, Mr. Chairman, that these are the estimates of . . . which include a period of time when

those members were in office. Some of my colleagues who are not here at 10 o'clock at night, may have some questions.

We're therefore I think going to adjourn these estimates and call PSC (Public Service Commission) estimates. And we'll deal with the PSC estimates now, but I think we're going to technically adjourn these and not go through the subvotes.

The committee reported progress.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Expenditure Public Service Commission Vote 33

Item 1

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I was going to suggest to the members opposite that the officials will be here momentarily. Why don't you begin with your questions. We will reserve them if it's something I need assistance for; if not, I will answer them. Why don't the members begin with their questions and we'll begin the exchange.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, we'll just do a few of these here questions that will be . . . but you'll have to get them from your department. I understand that. We'll start with . . . maybe you'll know this, Mr. Minister — your own staff that's responsible for Public Service Commission.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — What I'm going to give you is the résumés. I will just wait a second and welcome the new chairman of the Public Service Commission to the Assembly. I'd ask members to join me in welcoming the new chairman of the Public Service Commission, Shiela Bailey, who has joined me.

I will provide the member with the résumés of the people who are working in my office. It provides not only their names but also their qualifications. And we once again do not have a page. As soon as a page comes back I'll send it over.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, I can't get through that now. Does that include the people in the department that report to you, or just in your office?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — It's just the staff in my ministerial office. It includes three people paid for by Finance and three people paid for by the Public Service Commission.

Mr. Muirhead: — Is there duplicates here, because I haven't had a chance to look at those names, Mr. Minister, that are responsible for SPMC also?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — As I explained to the member when we were doing the SPMC estimates, there's nobody in my office who is paid for by SPMC. Certainly the staff will relate to and service the public as matters come up with respect to SPMC, but none of them are paid for out of SPMC.

Mr. Muirhead: — So this is kind of going back to SPMC,

but SPMC and Public Service Commission, either one or none of your staff are paid by those departments or paid by the Department of Finance. Is that right, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Finance pays for three and SPMC pays for three. They divide it equally.

Mr. Muirhead: — Finance pays for three. I don't understand, Mr. Minister, that you would allow this. Because I have heard this . . . not that it isn't all right with me, and I don't see what is wrong with it. But you condemned the last premier of this province when he had his Executive Council paid from other departments. We've found several times where you have had people working . . . we found last December that we had a Marj Benson who was working for Ruby Vallement and was being paid out of Agriculture, and still you condemn us for that. Now, is this a common practice in your government that there will be certain people in the minister's offices that will be paid out of the department?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — It isn't common practice, it is the only practice. All the staff of all the ministers are now paid for out of a budget of one of the line departments. None are in Crown corporations. That was the abuse to which the Premier addressed himself and which he brought an end to.

Mr. Muirhead: — Well that's policy and there is nothing wrong with that. It is just that . . . well, there is nothing wrong with it as long as we on this side of the House can follow them through to see who they are and where the money comes from. Because we were sure condemned when we had someone that was paid from another department. I had staff working for me paid from another department. I was condemned over that.

An Hon. Member: — You should have been.

Mr. Muirhead: — Somebody said, you should have been. But the minister just stood to his feet tonight and said that's going to be the new policy. So I mean, come on now let's be fair here. We don't need back-benchers saying something that we were wrong in doing and that the policy of the new government is fine. Now, Mr. Minister, the rest of the department, a list of all the positions that have been eliminated in that department since November 1.

The Chair: — Prior to answering the question, if the Minister might introduce the other officials that have joined him.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — As accustomed as I am to my responsibilities, Shiela Bailey is sitting beside me. Immediately behind Shiela Bailey is Ray Smith. He is the executive director of the employment services. And Mary Kutarna is behind me. She is the director of administrative and information services division.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, you seem to be so flippant tonight. And I don't mean to be rude by saying that, but I asked you a question. Your memory don't seem to be very long. Maybe you don't want to remember this question any more than . . . because that's where we got into a problem in SPMC. I asked for a list of all positions that

have been eliminated in the department since November 1, '91.

The Chair: — Order. Let's respect those who are asking the questions and those who are providing the answers.

(2215)

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm providing the list as given to me by the officials.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, so we don't get into that problem like we did in SPMC, can you supply the names of all these positions — the names of the individuals.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The officials assure me we can supply that tomorrow. They just don't actually have it with them this evening. They didn't anticipate it.

Mr. Muirhead: — I can understand that. And also, Mr. Minister, when they're getting the names, if we could have a job description of each position eliminated, or is that in this? No, it's where they work but the job position's not here. So if we could also have the job position, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, we'll give you that undertaking.

Mr. Muirhead: — Now let's make this very clear so we don't get into a problem again. The name of the person, if any, holding the position when it was eliminated. So that's what . . . we finally did get it straightened out. If we can have the same commitment there, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, I've already given you that. We'll supply that.

Mr. Muirhead: — Now, Mr. Minister, it looks like, just glancing at this page you sent over, it looks like the numbers are quite high here.

I would like to have also the rationale for the elimination of each position of this here list you sent over. The rationale for eliminating or firing or abolish or whatever.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — In the light of budgetary restraints, it was felt that those positions were in excess of our needs.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, when you're providing the information so things will go quicker, could they have a breakdown on it so we know the ones that the positions that were abolished, the ones that were eliminated, the ones that were . . . the positions were abolished or eliminated, and the ones that were strictly fired, and the ones that will be replaced. And I'll need the same information if you can follow through to see where these people are going.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — There were no terminations in the same way . . . There were no firings in the same way there were on the change of government. There's no equivalent here. The only positions which were terminated was done as a part of the budgetary exercise on May 7. There was nothing earlier than that and no

firings or terminations here, I'm told by the officials.

Mr. Muirhead: — Am I reading this paper right, Mr. Minister, when it's giving under the different positions, when it adds up to these here figures, 154, and 85, 69, 318, 349. Is that the . . . What is the total positions? Kind of hard to read this paper. Is it 349 we're talking about, total positions?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — That's correct.

Mr. Muirhead: — Now that's a lot of positions, and we're going to have quite a job following these through to see where they go, but we're going to ask you to do the same thing, Mr. Minister. We'll want to know where these people have gone, and how many are working for government now, and if they got new jobs, or just whatever. The same information that we asked in SPMC, Mr. Minister — we'll want the same information.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Again, I think we can supply that. I think that's a reasonable request. We'll supply that when the process is complete. The chairman of the Public Service Commission informs me she anticipates it will be about three months before the bumping process is complete. When it is, we'll supply you with the list of names.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, we haven't got much time left and tonight I think we'll . . . instead of going on to the questions that the departments would have to get information for, I'd like to maybe wrap up tonight on asking you about an article I seen in the *Leader-Post*, a month or two ago or sometime this late winter, early spring. Where the students . . . all student jobs . . . I don't recall, Mr. Minister, but you would, it's regarding student positions and student jobs.

And the article said that if the student had a position maybe one or two years or more, they won't automatically be going back to that position like they have been in the past. That it's going to start absolutely afresh. Could you explain what this was all about, Mr. Minister, and why that . . . as you recall that article. If you could explain what that was all about, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — What it was all about was, it meant was, the patronage . . . it was the raw, shameless patronage engaged in by members opposite when they were in government. Students were hired through the ministers' offices. The member opposite will recall — I think he'll recall very well — how the students were hired. They were hired through the members . . . through the elected members.

As a means of ensuring some degree of fairness — because many of the former students had not obtained their employment in a fashion which anyone would regard as fair — as a means of ensuring fairness, the names were chosen at random by a computer. There was by and large no system for permitting people who had worked in a department to return there — that was a part of the problem.

And so it is now cleansed. Another year there may be modifications to the program which will allow students

who worked in a department or worked in a given agency or area, it will allow them to return to the area providing they're satisfied and the department's satisfied.

Frankly, the system that you people engaged in was so raw, so — I'll use the word — outright corrupt, that we wanted to bring it to an end, and we did. And the system was done this year with fairness and without any patronage involved.

The article to which you refer in the *Leader-Post* was a complimentary article. And if the member's memory is failing him, I'll read the article for you. It was quite a complimentary article.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, the minister is not going to give his political rhetoric to me and get away with it. Because you're looking at a man, the member from Arm River, that has many students that had positions, and you're saying that you didn't let them have their jobs back because you're going to clean them out. But I've had students phone me for the first time that I ever knew them — never knew them before, didn't know what politics, didn't even have any idea what they were — that, we have lost our job. And then I'll find another person, I'll hear about them, that were my strong supporter, and they're still working and have their jobs.

So there was no rationale for what you did. So don't tell me that you just up and said there was no politics. Because you can't tell the member from Arm River that you didn't just clean this out, clean this out, Mr. Minister, stop all positions. Because you can't tell me that many MLAs, if not all, are getting phone calls from their political hacks that, I need a job for my children. You can't tell me that isn't happening because it's automatically happened. It happened to me; it happened to all of us.

But I'm going to tell you how the member from Arm River did it. And so don't you tell me that I played politics with my kids because I didn't. If I had somebody in the town of Davidson, Craik, Holdfast, as soon as I'd have a student that would apply for a job through the Public Service Commission, they would . . . I couldn't stop the call. They would phone and say: Mr. Muirhead, is there any way that you can help me get that job? I said, if you've applied, you're either going to get the job or you're not.

And I followed that through. And then when somebody would get a job, I would have . . . and I'm thinking of one particular from my town of Craik. A little girl came to me, just got out of grade 12 and said, Mr. Muirhead, is there any way you can help me get a job? How do I get a job? And they worked against me. They were polling captains for the NDP.

And I would not use politics on a child. I would not do it. You people can scoff me, you can do what you want, but you can go to Craik, Davidson, Holdfast, and you can ask. I would not take my politics out on children and students. You people are going to do it because that's why you had this change. That's why you've had the change. But I can tell you that if you go check out, you go check out the people that had jobs in my constituency and check out their politics. Mr. Minister . . .

The Chair: — Order. Order.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It seems to be that if I say something in this . . . I've been here for 14 years and as soon as I say something that kind of touches the heart of somebody, they get to be an awful noisy bunch. It's been going on for 14 years. They're a group that can't stand the facts. Because we know that we're talking about Mr. Fairness back here. We know the member from Quill Lakes. He used to sit over here and we used to ask him, have you got any family that hasn't got a job in government? Have you got any family, have you got any family that hasn't got a job in government?

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, we know for a fact that this is the most . . . We've been watching politics through SPMC, we've been watching politics in the Public Service Commission. We're going to see it like you've never seen it before. You're going to tell me that your president and your workers aren't having their kids phone them for jobs. You got rid of anybody you possibly could to get jobs, jobs . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, Mr. Minister, I won't talk the clock out tonight. I'll let you put it on the record right now because it won't be true.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Well I want to read some correspondence for the member opposite. The first is a letter which begins:

Dear Gerald: (It says) How are you all? (It's in a lady's handwriting. How are you all.) We spent the winter in Calgary and will be there until next spring.

And then it says:

Our daughter, Carmen and her husband Dean Norrish, good supporters of the P.C. Party, have asked me if I would just add a note concerning their son Bradley, 16 . . .

The letter goes on to describe in glowing terms both the lad's qualifications and the loyalty of the parents, if I may put it that way. And that is dated . . . is undated actually, the note is undated.

Then there's a letter signed by one Gerald Muirhead. I think the rules allow me to use the name on the letter to one Colin Maxwell. I have enclosed a letter from the above mentioned.

He is interested in a summer position with your department.

Please . . . consider him for any available position, as I feel he would be . . . energetic and enthusiastic . . .

Then there's a letter back to . . . from Mr. Muirhead to Mr. Norrish.

Thank you for sending me your letter regarding your interest in summer position.

I . . . forwarded a copy of your letter to the Honourable Colin Maxwell, Minister of Parks,

Culture and Recreation. He will contact you directly in this regard.

Then there is a memo from Dolores to Colin Maxwell's office, June 8. It says:

re: Bradley Norrish. Résumé will go through the system in the usual fashion — Don Pringle and Cy McDonald.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Then the last letter is again dated August 4, 1987, signed by one Gerald Muirhead. I'll just read the first paragraph. It says: On behalf of the government of Saskatchewan, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on obtaining summer employment.

That, Mr. Member, is your system.

The Chair: — It being 10 . . . Order, order, order.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Chairman, I would ask the minister to table that correspondence so that we can see if this was privileged information from individuals through the minister's department.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We'll relieve members opposite of their misery and move that this committee rise and report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The Speaker: — Order. Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Martens: — If the minister wouldn't mind having his officials leave because they are not allowed in when the Speaker is in. You did that the other day already, Mr. Minister, and I don't think it's proper for the etiquette of this House.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:32 p.m.