

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**General Revenue Fund
Education, Training and Employment
Vote 5**

Item 1

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, just quickly looking through some of the information you provided us earlier, on one of the pages concerned with advertising and communications, you have a phone questionnaire and focus group for \$43,700. What was that for? It was Tanka Research.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, unfortunately I haven't noticed until this moment that we have here vast quantities of information on sheets that are not numbered, but the member makes a reference to Tanka Research, and to my recollection that firm . . . There was a competition and that firm was selected to carry out a survey with respect to the high school review committee that's ongoing now. There were focus groups. There was a questionnaire circulated. I think in fact this is probably one of the most broad consultations that's ever been done, and Tanka was engaged in that competition to carry out that review on behalf of the committee.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I wonder if it would be possible to get a copy of their report.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I would expect that in due course that at least a summary of the findings would be available, but it's still being used in the internal exercise by their review committee. The results are still being compiled and reviewed by the committee so there hasn't been . . . I haven't even myself received a final report.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, would you give the commitment to supply us with the full report from Tanka Research once it's been used and compiled by the committee?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, my only hesitation to making an undertaking in response to the member's question is that this is an independent review committee, so the material that was commissioned by them would really be their property and I wouldn't want to undertake to release it all without their consent. But with that qualifier I certainly have no hesitation. I think that the results of the survey will be made public in due course so with that proviso that the consent of the committee would be required, it's not a problem.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Madam Minister. Well since it's provincial money, legislative money, that went to pay for this survey, I feel that it's pertinent that the members of the legislature have

access to it. So I take that from your comments that you will try and make that available to us.

I'm just wondering, Madam Minister, we see in the K to 12 system that teachers are being asked to provide more and more social service-type service with their duties to provide an education to children. I'm wondering if the department has provided any sort of a breakdown as to how much work a teacher would do that could be called, to some context, social service-type work as compared to educational-type work.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, this is ongoing, and as the member alludes to, it's certainly a situation where the classroom teacher in the K to 12 system is faced more and more on a daily basis with students who are affected by social issues that are not directly involved with education, but still has to deal with them in order to make sure that the students are ready and in a fit condition to learn.

In that respect there are discussions going on and it probably wouldn't be appropriate for me to discuss it here now because it's a subject at the bargaining table with our partners, the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association) and STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), on the definition of the role of the teacher.

But beyond that, in recognition of how things are changing at the classroom level, we have initiated in this past year the program called children first, coordinated community action. And it is . . . we have a number of pilot projects up and running and in the planning stages now, where the departments of Health, Social Services, Justice, together with Education, are working with community groups and parents' groups, using the school as a base to try to address the needs of students, all the needs of students, in a more holistic way.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, I believe that we could use our schools a lot more efficiently than we currently do. The school should not simply be a building that we utilize from 9 o'clock in the morning till 3:30 in the afternoon, that there is a lot more that we could be doing with those buildings and perhaps this children's first program is one of that type of thing.

But when you talk about Education as not the only ones involved, does Health, Social Services, and Justice provide any of the funding towards this program or is all of this funding coming out of the Education budget?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, that's exactly the focus of this program. is to have recognition from broad sectors in our society and across government that coordinated action is necessary to meet the needs that are in the classroom and that dollars and energy in the form of manpower has to make a contribution at the classroom level to meet the needs of those students.

There isn't any particular additional budget for this. What we're saying is that if we do work cooperatively that we should be able to meet the needs of students better without additional money.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, it's my concern that while the students do need the proper nutrition, proper social atmosphere to learn and progress, that by moving all of these activities into the Education budget you're actually masking the amount of costs that may be to Health or may be to Social Services and disguising the actual amount of money that is being spent on the educational component.

I would contend that Social Services should be the vehicle to deliver those kind of programs within the school structure. It should be in the Social Services budget and not in the Education budget. If there's a breakfast program or a hot meal program within the educational institutions, that that should be provided by some other agency other than Education, that that's a social program and should be supplied through a social agency and not through Education, Madam Minister. Is any consideration being given to that?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I repeat that that is the focus of this program. And certainly there are examples within these pilot projects of where, if they include a feeding program, then Social Services is involved in it. There are situations . . . and when it's community-based obviously there's no one model that's right for every community, so each community defines their own needs based in the school.

It could include such things as feeding programs where Social Services would cooperate. It could include day care facilities so that parents who want to become volunteers in other programs that are being carried on at the school could bring their younger children to be looked after. It could expand to . . . well it has in fact, in some of the pilots, to include mental health workers and social workers. So there is in that respect, although we don't have part of the budget isolated as a dollar allocation for this, there is a contribution being made in terms of manpower and dollars from other departments for these initiatives.

And we certainly are all on the same wavelength in terms of making better use of the capital and using the school as a centre to extend it into evening programs for parenting, for adult education opportunities.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, I think it's very important that we do that, extend the school day across the province, not for the students but for the building; that the buildings be used for other issues other than simply education of K to 12. There's a lot of adult education programs that can be carried on within the schools, in the rural communities especially. The school structure, the gymnasiums, etc., can be used for community events. And I think it's important that that be encouraged.

Madam Minister, there's been a number of studies over the last year and projected onwards. I'm just

wondering how many committees, how many studies have been done and at what cost?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — While I'm looking for the numbers on the studies, Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to address the first point that the member made in terms of the use of facilities. And I just want to highlight the changes in our capital funding formula for education facilities where we have highlighted and emphasized the importance of both multi-use facilities and relocatable facilities.

And in the multi-use for example, just let me give you one example of a plan that I saw for facilities in a small town, and this is how ingenious people are if they can use their creativity at the local level. That there is a home ec lab in the school being the kitchen and there was one wing on the school then that was the hockey rink where the home ec kitchen could serve as a concession in the evenings. And then there was another wing that was the curling rink and a potential auditorium where events could be catered and the same kitchen could be used for that.

So if people are allowed to use their creativity at the local level, to use their ingenuity to meet their own community needs, then we have said in our new formula for facilities that we want to encourage that kind of use. And I hope that communities will do that. I think they will.

As to the studies, we have done the regional colleges review which is the most recent one reported on. It was \$136,342. It made 41 recommendations and the cost included a number of public hearings which were very well attended throughout the province. I think they were attended by over 1,000 people and more than 400 briefs were received.

One of the others was the private vocational schools review at a cost of 69,000. The university program review, which we talked about earlier, was 119,228. The SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) review, which was initiated early in 1992, the cost is at 116,000. The student financial assistance review was done . . . is not quite complete. It's in its second phase now and it's been done mostly internally, but there was an external cost of 36,000. Then there was the post-secondary distance education report which cost about \$30,000. That study or review process was actually initiated in 1989, I think, in your administration, so you would be familiar with it. We have a number of other advisory committees on curriculum and that sort of area, but most of the people that are on those particular committees are salaried people and there's not a large cost associated with them.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. In the information you sent over to us, did you include any people who may have been under contract for these studies?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, yes, I can confirm that those costs would include any per diems or travel expenses related to the studies for people

who are contracted to do them, and review members and chairmen.

(1915)

Mr. D'Autremont: — They would be in the files that you sent over to us, would they — the information?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I don't think that the . . . because those people were not employees and the contracts would be short term, and I believe each review committee was established by order in council so they wouldn't be included in the lists of employees, and the material, I think, that the member refers to that we provided him with a copy of. But we certainly have no problem — it's a matter of public record, being subject of orders in council — in providing the names.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister, if you would please.

I'd like to move on to some of the regional colleges, Madam Minister, in the Cumberland Regional College part in the year ending in 1992, so it'd be not part of this upcoming budget, but their expenditures for contractual and professional service took a very significant increase. I wonder if you could explain why it went from 154,000 in 1991 to 296,000 in 1992.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure what page that's on exactly, and I wouldn't be able to confirm for the member at this time what it would be because they may have undertaken some surveys; they may have had some legal expenses or something of that nature. But same situation as the universities, they are self-governing and as long as they operate within the budget then how they spend the money is not within our purview, it's the decision of the board of directors of the regional college.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Madam Minister. The only problem with them being autonomous bodies is that this is the only avenue we have to question their expenditures.

So I really would like to know why Cumberland Regional College contracted professional services went up by \$142,000 in 1992. I'm particularly interested to know if that was indeed legal fees. That could have been involved in severances; that could have been involved in the dismissal of various professionals employed by that regional college.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I don't think I have the same numbers that the member does, unless he's referring to information from the annual report. I can't locate it in the copy of the material that we gave him.

But in fact . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member is referring to the college's annual report. And I think that . . . Well I am aware that there was a change in management and there may have been legal expenses and may have

included severance for employees.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Would the minister undertake to provide us with that information?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, in so far as I am able to get the information from the regional college. Because like the member opposite, we do not approve in advance in any detail the budgets of the regional colleges.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, these regional colleges operate under your authority. And it's your responsibility on how the taxpayers' money is spent through the Department of Education. I would think that you would want to know where the regional colleges were spending their money and accept the responsibility that comes along with being the Minister of Education.

I would respectfully ask that you do look into this issue and find out exactly what that money is being spent on and provide that information to the legislature.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Well, Mr. Chairman, it was the administration of the member opposite who established in 1987, the Act respecting Regional Colleges, would set up these autonomous bodies. The only other question I guess I might raise or point I might make is I'm not sure when we're discussing the estimates for '93-94 whether expenses that occurred in 1982 are germane to this discussion.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, we're not talking about 1982; we're talking about 1992 which is part of your administration. And in 1987 I was not part of the previous administration since I was elected at the same time you were on October 21, '91.

And I still think it's important that you, as the Minister of Education, know what your department is doing and how the agencies of your department are spending their money, Madam Minister. Therefore it's up to you to know what this \$142,000 was spent on. It's within your realm to find out because you're the person who signs the cheque that gives the regional colleges their money. And if you're not scrutinizing that duty properly, well then perhaps some changes need to be made.

Madam Minister, will you look in to this please and provide us with the information?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I can certainly do that to the extent that it's relevant because there was a change of board members. If we're talking . . . if we're going back into history here and talking about 1992. If I said '82, I'm sorry; I meant '92. And there was a change of board, so the governing body would have changed. And I am aware, as I have mentioned, that there were some problems with management. There were some legal fees, and there may have been a severance. But I will try to define what those were.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. While you're looking at those, will you also look at the

other regional colleges and the SIAST boards to see what kind of monies were spent in those areas for legal fees and what portion of those legal fees that were spent were for severance packages were for litigations dealing with determination of employees — employees or boards.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I won't have any difficulty whatsoever with the regional colleges because of the extensive review that has taken place so recently, and our analysis of their costs including their administration and contract costs. And I would like to say just one word about SIAST . . . is that they recently held a competition or issued a request for proposals for accounting services, and I think that if my memory serves me correctly, they will be saving about \$35,000 in this fiscal year by reviewing that area of outside professional advice.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. When it comes time to look at the legal fees occurred by the regional colleges and SIAST, particularly those dealing with severance, would it also be possible once it's all settled and done, out of the court system, to have you provide the names of those firms who did the work for the various colleges or SIAST as the case may be?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, there aren't, to begin with, that many, and I don't think it's any problem to advise you of the names of the legal firms that were used, but I wouldn't have that information at hand.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. If you would simply supply that when the information becomes available, that will be fine.

Madam Minister, the Department of Education recently went through some dramatic changes within the administrative structures. There were a number of people who were let go, a number of other people that were hired. Are any of the people who were recently hired to replace those that were terminated, are any of those collecting a government pension or a taxpayer-supported pension?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I would first like to clarify that although there have been a number of changes in the department and there were some people who were laid off, but there has been since that time and concurrent with those terminations, I think not one, single, permanent employee that has been hired to replace those people. We have a few people that were available on short notice and for a short term who are in acting positions.

To my knowledge there are two that are receiving pensions from . . . they're retired teachers or administrators. Those are very short-term positions. And in fact, you may have noticed on the weekend in Saturday's paper, May 8, we ran an ad seeking to engage two assistant deputy ministers to replace those who are acting in that capacity on a short term.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Those people that you recently

hired for the short terms, are they on written contracts?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, they are on written contracts.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Would the minister table those contracts, please.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I haven't personally seen the contracts. I wouldn't want to make an undertaking to table them without knowing whether there is an element of confidentiality, and certainly I wouldn't want to discuss the details without first having the consent of the individuals who are named in them.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, if I'm not mistaken, I believe your Premier stated that contracts — in this particular case, Crown corporation contracts — would be tabled. We asked for the contract of one Jack Messer as president of SaskPower, and the response was that that table would be tabled. Unfortunately it was an oral contract and therefore could not be tabled at that time. I believe that we have since received a copy of that. So, Madam Minister, I think that it is possible to table contracts of employees and I would ask that you seriously consider doing so, please.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I certainly haven't ruled it out but I would want to seek advice, and out of respect for the privacy of the individuals I would want to discuss it with them first.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, I think it's very important, when we consider the statements being made by the Premier during the election, that if elected his would be an open, honest, and accountable government. We've already seen some of the difficulties that the government has had with being accountable for the regional colleges and SIAST, that your response is that they're autonomous bodies, self-governing. But, Madam Minister, you supply the money; therefore they have to be accountable to you. You as a representative of the Crown are accountable to this legislature. Openness is a very important part of that accountability.

The accountability that the Premier talked about during the election, Madam Minister, I think is very important that in this openness, that contracts — written contracts as opposed to oral contracts or verbal contracts — be tabled in the legislature when requested. And I do think that it is possible for you to do so, madam.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I certainly haven't — I just repeat — ruled that out. I've just said that I would want to have advice and I would want to at least inform the individuals who are . . . whose employment is the subject of those contracts, prior to doing that.

And in terms of the reporting of the autonomous institutions, I just want to say that they do report to the legislature. In fact the member earlier was reading

from the annual report that was tabled in this legislature.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, part of the accountability is being able to ask questions concerning those annual reports also and receiving the answers. Madam Minister, on the contract issue we're prepared to accept your word that you will supply that to us. And until such time as you're prepared to do that, we're prepared to continue with these estimates.

Madam Minister, concerning the two gentlemen that you mention that were on a short-term contract, are they receiving their retired teachers' pensions or are there some other pensions that they would also be receiving which would be supported by the taxpayer?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, these two gentlemen that we're speaking of — and guess we all know who they are — have had a long and distinguished career in education. They have been teachers, directors of education, and so they would . . . I'm not exactly sure of the nature of the pensions to which they would now be entitled, given their service and their age. But we know that there are restrictions on permanent employment for people who are on public service pensions and we will make sure that the terms of employment and the time span doesn't violate those agreements.

(1930)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I was reviewing question period from April 7, when I asked you the very same questions: were these gentlemen receiving a pension? I'm glad to find out now that the answer is yes because we had suspected that all along. But in your answer of April 7 there was no indication then, Madam Minister, that they were indeed receiving a pension even though that was the questions.

Madam Minister, last year during estimates you stated that funding for school construction would only be allowed on an emergency basis, and yet we found out in December that the Loreburn school was receiving a significant amount of funding. I wonder if you would mind explaining what the emergency was at the Loreburn school.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the situation there was that the local school division, the Outlook School Division, was in the process of making decisions of rationalizing the accommodation of students as between Strongfield, Elbow and Loreburn. And the decision was made to consolidate the programs at the Loreburn school. And I haven't got the numbers just exactly before me, but in brief, earlier in the year that decision was made. Then an approval was given for funding to make some necessary repairs at Loreburn.

Then it happened that there were some structural problems, and there were roof repairs, some occupational health issues that had to be addressed.

And the amount that was required was increased, but the board renewed its request and wanted to proceed with that particular configuration. And as far as I know, all the necessary approvals were given to accommodate the requests that would allow them to carry out their decision. The work is proceeding now and I believe the movement of the students will happen in the fall of 1993.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, last year in estimates and question period at various times, you stated that construction would only be allowed to take place if it was an emergency. In August of last year you stated that \$438,000 was going to be allocated to the Loreburn school for that emergency funding. And yet at Christmas time, or during . . . between Christmas and New Year's, the citizens of that area found out that actually 1.4 million had been allocated just shortly before that, totalling up to 1.4 million for the additional construction at that school. And yet as you've described it, I find it difficult to believe that that would constitute an emergency.

Now there are other places around this province that have been condemned by the Fire Marshall. I would suspect that those are potential emergency situations. But the fact that the school division there wished to amalgamate three schools into Loreburn, I don't really see that as being an emergency, Madam Minister. It may have saved the local school board some money through not running three plants, but that is not an emergency, Madam Minister. So what was the real emergency at the Loreburn school?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Well, Mr. Chairman, there was some structural damage and it was classified as emergency roof repairs. So that was the portion that was approved in 1992. There is a project that they're requesting for in 1993, that is portable classrooms or relocatable classrooms. But the allocation in 19 . . . in the past fiscal year all qualified under the heading of emergency funding.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, how much did the Loreburn school receive for capital funding under emergency funding in the 1992 budget year, 1992-93?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we have a breakdown that shows that it's \$1.439 million. That is the renovations that relates to structural repairs — roof, ventilation, flooring replacement — that sort of repair that all falls under the . . . all qualifies under emergency. The relocatable classrooms request is in addition to that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, I find flooring repairs as an emergency kind of difficult to swallow.

The relocatable classrooms — are they being budgeted for in the '93-94 year or were they under '92-93?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — The request for the relocatable classrooms has just been submitted in

1993 and it's currently under consideration but has not yet, to my knowledge, received approval.

But the other emergency repairs that are under way, or fairly close to completing, all have to do with the structural problems — hazards — and occupational health and safety issues in terms of ventilation and that kind of thing.

And we do think . . . we do consider those things emergencies because we feel it's very important to provide a safe and secure environment for the students in our province.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, would you provide a list and the reasons why the other capital projects in the '92-93 year were done. Was there anyone else who received an amount anywhere near what the Loreburn school did — 1.4-plus million?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we can undertake to provide a breakdown. I can't say at this time whether the whole . . . the entire allocation that was budgeted for was used, and by whom, at this point. We would be referring to the fiscal year ending March 31, 1993. So if there were projects in progress at the time, it would be too soon to be definitive about how the costs broke down.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Madam Minister. In the Education budget, since it's education, training, and employment, how much of the funds allocated would be for retraining? And would any of this retraining be done under other government programs? What I'm thinking of here — is there anything say from Workers' Compensation that would be done under the Education budget?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the reorganization of the department, there would be . . . the things that would be the easiest to isolate in terms of programs would be the New Careers, which moved from Social Services into Education, Training and Employment, and I guess will be the subject of its own separate set of estimates later on, I hope tonight.

Then there were eight people brought over . . . they were a labour market planning unit that was in the Department of Labour that was brought into the Department of Education. And there was the summer and student employment program, that we're calling Partnerships '93, that came from the Department of Labour into the Department of Education.

And it would really be difficult to define exactly how much was spent on those labour areas because there are a number of federal programs that buy spaces directly in the post-secondary institutions, so those dollars and those programs wouldn't be part of the Education budget. There might be some coordination services that we would provide, but a lot of those dollars would flow directly to those other institutions.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister, because it's one of my concerns that with the

amalgamation of these various departments under Education that, again, some of the money that would seem to be allocated for Education will be siphoned off into other areas that should perhaps be earmarked as being outside of what we normally consider to be Education, that's the K-12 and post-secondary education systems.

That manpower retraining, while it is an educational component and a very important one for adults as they move through life, is not under what we would normally, or have normally, thought of as being the educational component. And I was hoping that that would be somehow earmarked or segregated so that people would know what the different things were being spent for.

Is it possible to do that? If not now, at least for the next budget period?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, unless the member opposite can clarify just exactly what it is when he talks about the programs, it really is very broad and it would include, I'm assuming his question would include, things like the number of seats, training seats, that the federal programs would buy in SIAST and the regional colleges, in the SIIT, the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, and all of those programs.

And some of them are funded jointly between the provincial and federal government. There is sharing. But I think contrary to the member's fear that money will be siphoned out of our regular education system through these additions of labour and the new focus, I think it's contrary to that, that we will be better positioned to make sure that we access as many of those federal training dollars as possible to benefit people in this province, be it people that are graduating from high school and entering post-secondary or apprenticeship training or whether it's adults who want to retrain.

As the member may know, our average age now in SIAST and the university campus is 28 and rising, so we know that there is in this changing technology and the changing world of work that we live in a greater and greater need for enhanced training of people who are already skilled and of retraining. So that's one of the reasons for the new focus in the department, is to make sure that we meet all of those needs.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, I believe it is important that adults have the opportunity to retrain, that it not just simply be a one-time . . . education be a one-time thing, that once you graduate from post-secondary school or high school that you're no longer in the education system, that you're no longer learning.

So it is important to carry on. But it's also important that when we talk of a global budget for education of \$871 million that people not be given the misimpression that \$871 million is being spent on K to 12, post-secondary, and university because some of that money is being used for other items, such as

manpower retraining. So I think that type of component is what my concern is, is that it at least be identified as such.

On the first page of the *Estimates*, Education, Training and Employment, page 33, it talks there of post-secondary education and skill training. It talks of student financial assistance and employment. I'm just wondering what's the breakdown of those: the post-secondary education versus skill training and the student financial assistance versus employment?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Now, Mr. Chairman, first I would like to address the member's first comments first, in his reference to the budget for Education being \$871 million. And that of course is the provincial contribution. Then there's approximately another half a billion raised from property taxes in the province at the local level. Then if you add to that the federal dollars that do come into those training programs, the tuitions and the revenue generated by the universities and the institutions, the amount that is actually invested in education in this province far exceeds the billion dollars. It's probably been closer to two billion.

On his question about the breakdown, if you would turn to . . . like on page 33 is the summary and on page 35 is the breakdown under point 5 where it says post-secondary education and skill training, subvote ED05 — I think that's the breakdown you seek.

(1945)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, you talk of distance education in the same summary of expenses. What kind of programs are delivered with distance education and how are they delivered?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we have inherited a number of different kinds of networks for carriage, and this is one of the challenges that we face, is that in order to make sure that in the future there is adequate and equal access by rural students to educational opportunities, distance education will be a very important factor in that.

Right now we have the SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network Corporation) which has the broadcast band and the satellite band with approximately 50-odd receiving sites in the province, which is utilized extensively by the regional colleges. We have some fibre optic networks that are operated with the cooperation of SaskTel, and we have an interagency committee, if you like, working on rationalizing that and trying to make sure that those institutions in the field that have invested in hardware to receive a certain kind of signal will get a definitive direction on which signal is the most appropriate and where we should concentrate our resources.

Meanwhile, because we recognize it as being one of the most critical ways that we can deliver on our promise to the education community and the cornerstone of our policy being equality of opportunity no matter where in the province you live, and equity in taxation, we are doing our best in

cooperation with the other institutions to develop the most cost effective and effective distance education system. And I think we're already on the leading edge of that in the world, but we need to refine it, and we need to expand it. And this budget does point towards that expansion and a further investment in that medium.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Madam Minister. With the funding cut-backs across the province to education, I think it's going to be very important that the schools have access to well-qualified teachers, and the ability to communicate back and forth, because not every school is going to be able to afford to have a physics teacher, or a chemistry teacher, or whatever one it's going to be.

So I think some type of communication back and forth, as is being done — I believe it's in the Elrose school division with their distance communication, with the telephone lines, and the computers, etc., TV cameras — I think it's going to be very important. And I would encourage the department to continue to pursue that. Because to many schools that is going to be their only method to provide the proper kind of an education to the students in rural Saskatchewan in particular.

One of the problems that is happening in rural Saskatchewan, because of the funding cut-backs, is the closure of a good many rural schools. I've been contacted by people in the Buchanan area concerning their school and its closure. Their students were moved from Buchanan to Canora. And yet the front page of the *Canora Courier*, about a month ago, the director of education was lamenting the poor state of affairs at the Canora school, and how there was poor ventilation, there wasn't enough room for the students, there wasn't enough room for their books and their lunch kits, etc.

Why, Madam Minister, when it came time to make the approval to close the Buchanan school, which the parents — I have never visited the school — but the parents tell me was a school that was in good condition, would you have authorized this school division to move the students from Buchanan over to Canora if that school was indeed in the deplorable shape that the director of education there stated it was on the front page of the local paper?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, as the member opposite knows, we . . . the Department of Education and the government doesn't authorize the closures of schools and doesn't interfere in the decisions that the local board makes. But our facilities branch certainly would look at the state of the facilities. But beyond that the local school board makes those decisions.

The member opposite has touched on a subject that's very close to my heart. Having been a parent of rural school children and a school bus driver, I think, and I know, that one of the considerations that boards take when they make these decisions is the distance that children have to travel, particularly young children.

I'm assured that the division board in that area has taken these factors into account.

I know that it's always very difficult. The school in our rural area closed in 1966. The community bought it and uses it as a community hall so it's still a very alive place in terms of neighbourhood rural events and ball games and all of that. But I still get a lump in my throat every time I drive by it, so I certainly have some feeling after those, I guess, 27 years now since it's been closed. And I know how emotional it is and how difficult it is for parents and children that are affected by those decisions and how difficult it is for division boards to make those decisions. But they do have that responsibility and I think that . . . I know that they're handling it as well as they can.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, perhaps you can correct me if I'm wrong, but do not school closure notices come to you for your signature? I know in The Education Amendment Act that we did last session, that you put into place two three-month periods of time in which the school divisions had to follow certain procedures. Do you or do you not receive notification of those?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the answer is no, we do not. The procedure for and the steps that a division board must follow in terms of consulting and the steps in making their decision are outlined in the Act, and as the member will remember, were the subject of some changes last year in the legislation. But we're not consulted and in fact not even notified formally. There's no requirement to formally notify us of a school closure. It's entirely within the purview of the local rural school division.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, do you have department officials who go out and inspect schools to ensure that they're meeting the provincial standards?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we do have staff in the facilities branch that does monitor the conditions of schools. I'm not sure exactly how often they would go out on an inspection tour, but they would certainly respond to a call.

And in addition to that, beyond our purview, there are fire inspections and inspections by officers of occupational health and safety that would be independent of the Department of Education that would make such inspections of facilities.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Do you know if such inspections have taken place in the Canora school?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I wouldn't have knowledge of that now. I certainly wouldn't have any problem with disclosing to the member opposite any information that we might have. I do have a recollection that one of the changes that had to be made there, or is being made, is to accommodate some special needs students.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, I would

appreciate it if you would investigate that because the parents of the Buchanan area in particular, and reading the comments by the director of education for that school, feel that there is a problem there.

I can't find my copy of the front page of the *Canora Courier* right now, but it seemed to be in the article that the concern was not so much the state of the school as it related to the students but the state of the school as it related to the neighbouring school divisions because it seems that there's talk of amalgamation taking place with Timberline and I believe Kamsack school divisions.

And from the article one could infer that the director of education and perhaps the board of this school division board were concerned that if their school did not have the student population at Canora, if their school did not receive funding to upgrade the facilities, that they would be placed at a disadvantage if an amalgamation was to take place with Timberline and Kamsack. And this seemed to be more the direction in which those officials were moving rather than looking after the needs of the students.

So I would appreciate it, Madam Minister, if you would investigate that situation, investigate whether or not the officials have looked at that, and if they haven't, if you could possibly look at that.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we will be glad to look into that matter. We are aware of course that there are discussions taking place on many levels throughout the province on amalgamations. But as far as I am aware, the request for this particular project in Canora is not affected by those discussions that are going on. But we will provide a report on the current situation as we find it.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. On page 33 again, just for a point of clarification for my own information, you have FTE staff utilization; what does FTE stand for?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the acronym FTE represents full-time equivalent, and so it converts part time and other employees into the equivalent full-time establishment.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Under item 1 of the votes where it talks of salaries, how many people would be in the department? Have you supplied that information with the pamphlet you sent over?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, on the first page on item 33, where the full-time equivalency is that the member referred to, it will show that in 1993-94 there are 457 in the department and in the revolving funds, 48.6.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Under accommodations and central services, item no. 2, there was a significant increase of almost \$900,000 over the previous year. What were those for, Madam Minister?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, this accommodation and central services and the apparent increase there simply reflects change in the policy of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation whereby they used to have . . . well some call it a system; I would call it hocus-pocus, called a participation credit. So departments found it difficult to estimate their costs because they sometimes got — you could call it — a dividend back.

SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) has changed their pricing policy to simplify it. And those departments and agencies that had owned space will be charged less, and those who are leasing will be paying . . . their costs will reflect the actual cost of the lease without the so-called participation credit.

So we have virtually exactly the same facilities, but it's just a change in the pricing policy that affects it. We haven't leased any additional space, and no prices have gone up that we're aware of. That item also includes mail service, records management, and some other small administrative items.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Under item no. 3, K-12 education, total expenditures there are 421 million, which is a drop of almost \$40 million from last year. Have there been a significant amount of enrolment changes in the K to 12 system for this year, or even for next year — because this budget is for '93-94 — compared to the '92-93 year? Is enrolment up? Is it down? Has it changed significantly?

(2000)

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to report . . . I guess it's a reflection of the return of prosperity to our province, I think, is that the enrolment in the K to 12 system has risen by almost 300 — I believe 299 students. It's an upward movement in the numbers for the first time in years.

In rural school divisions it's gone down slightly. In northern divisions it's also gone down slightly; but not because of a loss of population, but because of band-run schools. And in the urban areas, it's increased by 300.

The other dramatic difference would be with respect to the grants to schools, and our change to accrual accounting. Where last year's budget showed 65 million, this year's budget will show just actual expenses, and interest on previous commitments. But from now on, all capital will be fully expensed in the year that the project goes ahead. So that's the change there.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, would you please supply us with a list of which schools are receiving capital construction grants, and for what amount, and for what purpose.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I would have

to ask the member to clarify which year. Because we would know for the past fiscal year what's been done. But we're just in the process within the budget that's here, of talking to the school boards. They're redefining their needs. And so there is approval in principle for a number of projects, but it hasn't yet been determined exactly what the costs will be, and whether they will all go ahead or not.

Mr. D'Autremont: — On what basis, Madam Minister, then have you allocated the \$38 million for capital construction?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, there's really only . . . There's \$20 million that has been allocated for new construction, the provincial share of new construction. And that's an estimate based upon those projects that are applied for that we have approved in principle.

The other \$18-odd million is that portion that I mentioned that is to service debts for construction done in previous years. So there's about nine and a half million dollars again of that 38 is for emergency funding. This is for roof repairs, air quality, things that come up. The approval-in-principle projects are a portion, ten and a half million. The post-secondary capital for the universities and the other post-secondary sectors is 6.1 million. And then interest is 12 million, for a total of 38.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, would you please supply us with a list of the capital construction projects for the last budget year? And for those that you have given tentative approval to for the coming budgetary year?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we have no problem in undertaking to provide that information to the member.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Same item, under education development fund, the EDF fund, there's been a very significant drop there, from 6.7 million to 2.2 million. Just wondering, Madam Minister, what the EDF funding will now be available to use for, since there's such a dramatic cut, or are you expecting these school divisions to back-fill that loss of \$4.5 million?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, what we're doing — and again this refers partly to the change to accrual accounting — where there's a carry-over commitment for those school divisions that didn't subscribe to the total that they might have accessed under EDF earlier in the program, so that the amount that will be paid out over a three-year period, in addition to what is shown here, is the past contribution to the past years of the program. And it will be \$5.8 million this year and \$3.7 million over the next two years. That's the accrued liability that will be paid out in those three steps in addition to the portion that's shown in this year's estimates as being this year's contribution. So it isn't decreased as much as it appears.

And what we want to do is revisit the principle of the EDF — we think it's a very good one — together with the distance-education initiatives and come up with a different kind of a package and approach for subsequent years.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. You said that there's an additional \$5.8 million being spent on EDF this year? And a further 3.7 for the next two years. Where would this 5.8 show up in the budget?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry. The amount that I said would be the 5.8 — that includes the part that's shown in the *Estimates*. So it's somewhat reduced from last year but not as dramatically as it would appear. And then the other two years, the out years — '94-95 and '95-96 — are as I said, 3.7 million over those two years.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, I can understand not having the \$3.7 million in this budget because it's not monies that are allocated out of this fiscal year. But I don't understand how you're going to spend \$5.8 million on EDF (education development fund) funds when you're only showing \$2.2 million as being spent this year. Obviously some place within this text that other \$3.6 million should be hiding here some place. Now where is it?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we're not hiding it anywhere. It is actually part of the deficit because it was — of the accumulated deficit — because it was a commitment made in past years and not paid out. So that is a past obligation. So what we're showing in the *Estimates* book is our current year's contribution from the consolidated revenue fund in this fiscal year.

That's the 2.25 million. And then the 3.55 — there's a total of nine and a half million dollars of carry-over commitment which is part of the accumulated deficit, and being a commitment from previous fiscal periods. So it will be paid out with 3.55 this year and then the balance in the out years.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, are we dealing here with the magic of accrual accounting or why . . . If you're going to spend money this year, I would have to assume that it should be shown in the budget some place as being spent this year. That if last year you budgeted \$10 million for an item and you only spent 5, and that other \$5 million didn't get spent but you're going to spend it this year, then it should show up in the budget this year as having been spent for this fiscal year and that you would only show in your revised budgetary *Estimates* an expenditure of \$5 million last year.

Now under the magic of accrual accounting I understand that you would show it when it's actually allocated or actually spent. So you could have the \$10 million spent last year and not show anything this year, even though you're spending all of the money this year. Is that what we're dealing with in this case, Madam Minister?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — My sense of it is, I think, the same as yours but I would come about the words in a little different way — is that the obligation was . . . I mean promises had been made, commitments were made to projects in previous years but the work hadn't been done so the money wasn't paid out. But it was a recognized obligation and could be defined. So that portion is going to be paid out over the next three years in addition to . . . And this year's apportionment comes to 2.25 of expense in this year, which is in the book, and 3.55 being part of what was committed to in previous years and is now being paid out. But it was already accounted for in previous years and that means a total of \$5.8 million for this year as opposed to \$6.7 million last year.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, if I go down to my local credit union and I take out a loan to buy a vehicle and I'm going to do it over three years, and this is the second year of that loan, I can't say, well I budgeted for all of that money in the first year because I showed that I had a liability there, and I don't have to show anything in my budget this year because I did it last year. I still have to pay for it this year. I have to make my payments. And that's what you're going to do here, is you're going to make a payment of \$3.6 million on that EDF fund this year, even though it was budgeted for, or the commitment was made last year and not spent. So I would really suggest that there should be an additional \$3.6 million shown here some place unless we're dealing with accrual accounting. Are we dealing with accrual accounting on this?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, yes, I thought I said that at the outset, that the difference was because of the change to the accrual accounting. And in this case, it's not so much the change policy-wide to accrual accounting, but that these commitments were made.

Say a school division embarked on a project three years ago and it was going to be done in stages. Before they started the first phase, they would want to be assured that there was funding available at the time of approval for completion in stages. And in a number of cases that approval was given. So the commitment was there that they would receive the money even though it wasn't spent. But it was allowed for and there was a pool, the EDF pool; it was there.

So it has already been committed and accounted for and accrued, and it will be paid out as the projects qualify.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, are you suggesting that there's actually a pot of cash some place called the EDF fund that has not been spent? Or is this . . . you just continue to make the commitment from the funds allocated to the Department of Education.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, no, I wish accrual accounting was magic and that it would uncover pots of cash. But no there wasn't a pot of

cash, there was just an obligation and a commitment made.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. As you can tell, accrual accounting is a mystery to me.

I'd like to talk about the teachers' pension funds and the benefits. In the auditor's report, he suggested that it was impossible to tell how much money should actually be allocated to the teachers' pension fund. I wonder if the amount that the government has allocated this year meets the requirements for the teachers' pension fund. Is it more than the legal requirement? Is it less than the legal requirement, and what is the legal requirement?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure. You would call it a legal requirement but it's also the teachers' pension plan is unique in that the provisions of the pension plan are the subject of provisions in the collective agreement.

And last year we did spend . . . or our contribution to the teachers' pension plan was less than budgeted last year because of changes in interest rates and so forth. I think last year for teachers' pensions and benefits we had budgeted, I think, a total of 126,000 . . . or million, and we spent considerably less than that because of changes in interest rates.

So this year we revised our estimate to 101 million for the pensions alone, as you can see there. And it's difficult to project because we don't know how many . . . we can estimate, but we can't be sure exactly how many teachers will stop working and go onto their pension; how many superannuated teachers will expire. And so it's based on actuarial, on sound actuarial estimates, but it's impossible to be completely precise. But this year we have reduced our estimate from last year's estimate to bring it closer to what we actually allocated in the previous year.

(2015)

Mr. D'Autremont: — How does the formula for that work, Madam Minister? I wonder if you could explain that please.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure whether this information that I have at hand is what the member wants. If he thinks that accrual accounting is a mystery, he should wade into the field of pension plans.

But I think what he's asking is how the benefit formula operates. And it's 2 per cent of the average of the five best years or highest salary years of a teacher's career, times the years of service. And then there are retirement options: at age 65 with one year of service; age 60 with 20 years of service; age 60 where the sum of age, contributory service, income continuance plan service, and qualifying service equals 85; age 55 where the sum of age and contributory service is 85; and any age where the teacher has at least 30 years of contributions.

So the number of allowances currently being paid out to superannuates is 6,840; and the number of active teachers still contributing to the plan is 11,297. I hope that's the information that the member wanted to have.

Mr. D'Autremont: — That helps, Madam Minister. How much of the funds do the teachers provide themselves and how much of the grant that the government provides, does that cover the entire amount that the pension fund is being drawn down by the superannuates, the 6,840 people? Is the funds that the teachers supply, the 11,000 teachers that are currently paying into the system, and the grant that the government provides, does that cover off all of the money that the 6,840 teachers draw down?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, no, there is a large unfunded liability in the teachers' pension plan pursuant to rules prior to 1980. Since 1980 the teachers' pension plan has been the subject of what is known as a money purchase plan, which is contributory and which is actuarially sound.

But previous to that, it wasn't that way. And that's what we're living with now, in terms of many teachers who would be retiring at this particular point would have had a large number of their years of service in the previous era prior to the money purchase plan. And provision was not made in those earlier days, as with many pension plans, for it to be funded.

So now as the teachers who are in that plan retire, in order to keep the commitment and provide them with their pensions, there has to be an annual contribution from the consolidated revenue fund, in addition to the interest that accumulates on the funds that are there.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. How much shortfall is there this year to make up for the teachers' pension plan?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, that would be shown in item 4, the 101,282,000 where it says pensions and cost of living. That would be our annual contribution from the consolidated revenue fund. Then the next line where it says 13,500,000, that would be as the employer, the government as the employer, would be our contribution to the current plan for those 11,000-plus teachers that are still working.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, if all teachers were eligible to retire this year, what would be the shortfall in the teachers' pension fund? How much is it underfunded currently?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, it can only be determined through actuarial estimates. But the estimate at the current time, given the demographics of the teacher population and the current superannuates that were in the unfunded plan, is 1.87 billion.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. You flabbergasted your colleague over there by

knowing the answer to that.

I'd like to return to the K to 12 subvote. What are the grants to local authorities and other third parties? What do they deal with?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I might ask the member to clarify his question. I can't find a section that's headed that way.

Mr. D'Autremont: — It's under the K-12 education subvote ED03, under expenses by type: grants to local authorities and other third parties.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry, I was looking for a separate heading there and I wasn't looking under the K to 12. That grants to local authorities and other third parties shown this year as being three hundred and sixty million, seven hundred and ninety-one, that would be the grants to school divisions that we would pay out as a provincial contribution in this year. Then the capital grants that we've already dealt with are shown under that. That 360 million would be the total pool that would be distributed according to the foundation grant formula.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, I wonder if it'd be possible if we could have a list of the school divisions and the funds that were allocated to each?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we're not having a problem with providing that. We just want to know because it really is very complex and it's a lot of paper, so if you wouldn't mind just defining how much detail you want it in, and then we'll be pleased to provide it.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'm not just sure how much detail you have there, Madam Minister, but if we could have a detailed breakdown . . . They must submit . . . The school divisions have a budget, I would assume, and you pay out based on that budget on a portion of student population, etc. If we could have that kind of a breakdown? I have some of the information, Madam Minister, from the school boards themselves, but if you could provide what the department provides.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, just to clarify then. You want just a list of what our contribution to each . . . the provincial contribution to the budget of each school division in the province is?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, Madam Minister, and if you could include in that the student populations because that's part of what that funding will be based on.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, although that's only one of the factors. But we have no problem with providing that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. And can you do the same thing for post-secondary education and skill training?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, if the member's question is, could we provide a breakdown of how much our contribution is in grants to third parties to each of those institutions, we'll certainly do that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. In distance education, item no. 7, there was a significant increase in Saskatchewan Communications Network. I wonder if you'd mind explaining why the increase there.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, as you know, the Saskatchewan Communications Network when it was established had a . . . SCN had a five-year agreement with the federal government which delivered a total over that five-year period of I believe it was \$18 million as the federal contribution towards that initiative. This will be the final year and it's been on a declining balance. I think their contribution this year is about . . . is 3.2 million as opposed to a somewhat larger amount last year.

So while we did reduce the total budget of SCN, I guess the answer is that we have replaced with a provincial contribution the declining federal funding in order to keep it operating and provide the services to the regional colleges and universities and the parts of the system that are using it until . . . to give us a year so that we can rationalize it.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. The *Report of the Provincial Auditor* discusses the Department of Education and it has a number of questions here about the various regional colleges: the correspondence school revolving fund, the Saskatchewan book bureau, Indian college, and SIAST, etc. He seems to have some questions here dealing with that.

One of the questions or items that he has in here deals with the funding for the official minority language office. And for the year ending in 1992, the estimates were originally \$1 million for that service, and yet it ended up being \$10 million. I wonder if you could explain that, Madam Minister.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we wouldn't find that kind of information in the estimates. I think the member is referring to numbers in the auditor's report. What we have to understand is that that program, where there is federal funding, where we have to spend the money and then recover it from the federal government, in most cases or very many cases for French immersion programs and that sort of programing, it's 100 per cent recoverable from the federal government. So what we show in estimates, or in our program expense estimates, would be the net cost. And there never was an increase in the total net amount. There might have been some timing of the grants or some timing of recovery from the federal government but there was never that discrepancy between the budget and what was actually spent.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. One last question on the teachers' pension. How

much do the teachers contribute towards their own pension? I'm thinking of what percentage of their personal income.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the answer to that question is it would vary slightly but it would be approximately 7 per cent of a teacher's salary.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Does the taxpayer match that, Madam Minister?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, yes, that is matched by the Consolidated Fund, or the government, being the employer, and that would be represented in that 13 million, \$13.5 million figure there. In addition to that, there is an agreement . . . well as I said before, part of the collective agreement, of which the pension plan is a subject, that certain interest that accrues on funds that are contributed also stays in the plan for the benefit of teachers.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, that 13 million that actually goes into the pot along with the funds contributed by the province, do they not . . . set up into a separate account or does it go into the Consolidated Fund?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the . . . let's call it the old plan — the one that shows the \$101 million — that is administered by the teachers' superannuation fund, which is a separate unit within the department. And the other one, the Saskatchewan teachers' retirement plan — where we as an employer contribute thirteen-and-a-half million — that is administered by the teachers' federation, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I have here a newspaper article from the P.A. (Prince Albert) *Herald* of January 14, '93, where it's quoting you, Madam Minister: "But . . ." it says here:

But keeping divisions viable by shifting students to still-open schools may not be the answer.

They're talking about the closure of schools. And you've said here:

You can't expect an elementary school student to be at par with his peers in a classroom if he's already spent an hour and a half on the bus and he's been out of bed for three hours before he even gets to school.

Madam Minister, I agree with those sentiments, that it is very difficult particularly for the younger students when they have to travel a great distance to get to their school. But how do you square that with the funding cuts that you're imposing on rural school divisions?

(2030)

I've received quite a number of letters from school divisions around this province and in a good enough number of those, there are school closures actually

taking place. I mentioned Buchanan already. We've talked about Elbow and Strongfield; Wood Mountain is another one, in the far south, right along the border. And there's quite a number of schools across this province that, if they have not already closed, are being threatened with closure, or will be closed over the next year or two.

How do you square that, Madam Minister, with your own statements that students should not be expected to travel great distances for a long period of time and still perform up to par within the education system?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I would think that I was expressing whoever was quoting me there — I don't know the origin of the article — was expressing the same sentiments that I did earlier in terms of my experience of being a parent of rural children and the driver of a school bus. And I know that many school boards have . . . your school divisions have already consolidated almost as much as they can without resulting in moves that provide long bus rides for kids and not a good quality of life for them.

But this year, we project that there will be 16 schools closed this year. There were only seven in 1992, and there were 20 in the last year of your former administration. So I think what we're trying to do is, by putting emphasis on the distance-education option, by setting up a committee within the department which consists of people from our Department of Finance, STF, SSTA, LEADS (League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents), and now SASBO (Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials) since we amended the Act the other day, that we're looking at the utilization of resources and finances to try to make some changes. Well we will make some changes with their agreement, I'm sure, in the foundation grant to ensure good outcomes for rural students in so far as possible.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, I'll go back to the situation up at Canora where it seems to be in the best interest of the school division, or at least the major town in that school division, to close some of the other schools in that division, to move the students into their own school because at some point in time amalgamation will take place with the various school divisions around them, and they wish to be in a stronger bargaining position.

While capital projects are being approved, do you look at those types of local political considerations when it comes time to close a school and renovate another or provide capital funding for another? Because I can see that happening in a number of locations, Madam Minister, where local small "p" politics plays a part in the decisions that are made, where one community because of its size, its lack of political power within the local process, is closed to provide a benefit for another community.

And that may not necessarily provide the best educational opportunities for

the students. If their school closes, they don't have the opportunities for distance education. Madam Minister, do you look at any of that type of incident when you're considering capital construction?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we certainly would take into account not the local decision-making process, but whether or not the request for capital, if one came, was in keeping with the well-being of the whole school division; and in our new capital proposal, takes into account as well facilities in neighbouring divisions because sometimes you have schools that, while they're fairly close together, are in different school divisions, so that the application, for instance, of the small-schools factor is somewhat skewed.

And there are those considerations. But I certainly overall have confidence — although some school boards obviously manage better than others, all being human beings — but I do have confidence overall in the integrity of the local school boards and the division boards who are elected by the local people to serve their best interests, to be above that kind of consideration, and for their primary objective to be the very best possible outcome for the students that they're serving in their local division.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I have another question, or set of questions, on renovations. And this deals with the William Grayson school. And this comes out of the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald*. The department approved \$223,000 to renovations for the basement in that particular structure, but when it came time to do the work or as the work was proceeding, it was found that there was a need for \$525,000 to complete the work.

When a school board comes to you and applies for capital construction, do you review that application to ensure that the numbers are accurate, that the dollar figures that they give you will meet the requirements to complete the facility as designed? Or do you allow them the ability to say, well we only need \$223,000; we'll put up our share of the money compared; start to proceed with the project and then find out that they need twice as much money. What accountability is there?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I can't comment specifically on the Grayson project at this time, but I certainly am aware of a number of instances where, although it's been examined as closely as possible from the exterior, that once they actually get into the project that other factors are found. And for instance, consider the incident that happened in Saskatoon last year or the year before at the John Dolan School, where it appeared to be perfectly structurally sound and it actually collapsed. So I mean there are areas where you can't test for the complete structural soundness or the costing of the project until you actually begin doing the renovations. I don't think there . . . well I know there are not very many instances where there is a great deviation, but certainly there is a potential for it.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, I think

it's one of the areas that perhaps the department needs to consider reviewing to ensure that when applications on B1s come forward that the numbers and the projects are actually what is required in those locations and that the proper funding is being requested.

Madam Minister, standardized testing has been an ongoing saga in this province, the requests for it by various groups. Across the country, it's come and gone. Most provinces are now in it. Ontario had withdrawn and has come back in to the national standards testing again.

Where is Saskatchewan in this process? Are we giving it any consideration? I realize that we're not in it at the present time. There's a good many parents who believe that we should be involved in this program. There was some newspaper articles from students in April of this year stating that they felt that it would be best for them if standardized testing was in place, that they would feel more competent being judged against their peers across the province than not knowing where they stood compared to the rest of the country. What is the current policy? Is the government reviewing that with an objective of seriously looking at starting or becoming part of the national testing?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I think there are about three parts to the answer, the first one being that we are certainly not opposed to testing in any way. We did take place . . . or we did take part, I should say, in the international assessment of education programs which was . . . there was one in 1991 and one in 1992. The one in 1991 was from 19 countries and 8 Canadian provinces, and Saskatchewan tested in 9- and 13-year-olds significantly higher than any of the participants, including all the other Canadian provinces, except Korea and Taiwan in science. So we were second of all from 19 countries and 8 provinces.

In spring of 1992, we did take part in another one where our students, Saskatchewan students, outperformed other provinces in almost all of the test areas which was reading, spelling, language, study skills, and mathematics. So it's been demonstrated that we do perform well. However because we are implementing a new curriculum, as you know, we feel it's important to establish some benchmarks in terms of our own indicators and our own testing program based on that curriculum so that as it develops we can do the test on a continual basis to measure the appropriateness and the effectiveness of our own curriculum.

Now on the national test, the SAIP (school achievement indicators program), that is the one where we took a decision in December of 1991 . . . was sort of D-day; you have to decide whether you're in or you're out. And at that point the test was not well developed yet. There was very poor provisions for its funding, and we were concerned about its effectiveness. We still have some of those concerns, and we are monitoring it. We have not ruled out that we would ever do it, but we think it's very important

that the test be constructed in such a way that we will learn something about how we do things from the test and that there will be real comparisons between students and types of schools and that kind of thing.

And a lot of the people who are saying, and the editorial writers who are saying, oh Saskatchewan should be in this particular national test have expectations from the results of it that are not realistic. If only they would take the time to discover the nature of that particular test and what the results will show, it will not show them what they want. Like the chamber of commerce, for instance, says they want comparisons between schools, comparisons between teachers, comparisons between provinces. This particular test is not set up to do that. And so we think that before they berate us for not being in it, they should discover what the nature of it is.

So we are monitoring it. If we ever have a national test which we think will be effective and that we can all learn something from rather than just doing it for the sake of being on board, then we'll certainly be there. But in the meantime, we want to concentrate on our own provincial indicators.

And we have a committee working on that that is partly internal. We have invited representatives of the business community, the chamber of commerce and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, as well as parents and students and educators to help us develop those. They will be . . . instead of being administered at the age groups that the national test is, they'll be a grade 5, grade 8, and grade 11, and there will be a report published and made public every year on the results of that test, so that people can compare, and so that they can have the accountability they feel, and we feel, that they're entitled to.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Madam Minister. When you stay outside of the process though, across the country when it comes to standardized testing, then you have no ability to have input into insuring that the tests are of a manner that suit the needs of Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan students.

If you were to enter into discussions to build that kind of a test, then perhaps across Canada you could develop the kind of a test that would suit your purposes, and suit the purposes of the other provinces.

You talk about our curriculum, that the test you designed for the province matches the curriculum that we provide within this province. Madam Minister, when students graduate from grade 12 in Saskatchewan, they don't all go to university or post-secondary education in Saskatchewan. They fan out across the province, across the country in a lot of cases.

So our curriculum has to provide those students with the educational base to meet the needs of those other universities. And that's part of what a standardized test would indicate to those students, to those parents that are paying, where those students stand in relationship

to other students across the province, across the country.

One of the things that you mention, the independent business, the chamber of commerce, what they're looking for in part, Madam Minister, is value for the dollars that are spent on education. They seem to . . . they want to know that the dollars that are being spent provide the proper return — not in dollars but in educated students. And they would like to be able to see a comparison between Saskatchewan and the other provinces in Canada.

(2045)

And that is part of the reason why they want to see standardized testing implemented across the country and not just piecemeal, bit by bit. And it seems Saskatchewan is one of those provinces that is very, very reluctant to get involved in this process for some reason. And I'm not entirely sure of the reason.

You can say that our curriculum is somewhat different, and the test that you have designed suits the needs as you see it, as the department sees it within Saskatchewan. But other departments, other provinces must have similar concerns when they enter into this kind of a test. But they have gone forward and become part of the process that developed that test.

And, Madam Minister, I think that Saskatchewan should become involved, not necessarily this budget year or next budget year, but become part of the process in developing the tests that would meet the requirements of Saskatchewan as well as the other provinces. And this type of test may very well suit the needs of the chamber of commerce and the independent business, or it may not. But if it suits the needs of the provinces and the parents, of the students and the parents across Canada, well then I think it would be well served.

One of the items that has come up over a good period of time, and it's coming forward every year through the SSTA, is the bargaining position . . . not the bargaining position, the bargaining structure, with the government, the SSTA, and the teachers' unions. The SSTA is very interested — they passed resolutions at their last convention — that the bargaining committee be structured as four, four, and one: four provincial, four SSTA, and one independent. What is the government's policy on that, Madam Minister? Are you reconsidering this position?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to go back for a moment to my hon. friend's comments on testing before I talk about bargaining. I wanted to assure him that we have been part of the design of the tests. We have been involved. In fact it was our concern at the very outset when it was being designed that cultural differences in students be paid attention to and that students weren't disadvantaged in the test because they were Northerners or aboriginals or rural people. So we have been involved in the design and we continue to monitor that.

Also, I did point out that we do take part in the international tests, which includes all the other . . . a number of other countries as well as all the other provinces. And we think that really when we're talking about operating in a global context — and you're talking about our students leaving Saskatchewan; they go all over the world, not just to other provinces — that that is a very good test. And I just don't know how many times or how much energy you use at this time when teachers and students are so pressed and short of resources, to keep on testing over and over again. I mean we've done it once a year for the last number of years on the international basis, and I think that's why the design is so important. Because you can take a driver's test, a written driver's test, every week and pass it and still go out and drive into a tree, you know. So I mean I think there are limits.

On the bargaining, I don't want to say a lot about it. The hon. member will understand because the parties are at the bargaining table right now. But what I can say and we have discussed and committed to our education partners is that — because the current bargaining structure was established some 20 years ago when perhaps the issues were somewhat different — that when the current round of bargaining is complete, that we will sit down with our education partners and we will seriously take a look at the structure. We haven't made commitments to change it but we will certainly review it with them, and we have made that commitment to them.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. The school trustees feel that because they provide better than 50 per cent of the funding for the K to 12 system, that within that system they should at least have an equal voice at the bargaining committee, and that another member, the ninth member of that bargaining structure, should be chosen at large by both groups. And I think that's only a reasonable request.

One of their other concerns deals with, in the foundation grant, the inabilities of that grant to reflect changes to local economic conditions. As we have seen in the last good number of years, the drop in grain prices, the drop in oil revenues, and this has had a dramatic effect on a good number of different school divisions, but that's not reflected in any manner in the foundation grants.

The school boards, because they still have that tax base on which the foundation grants reflects that volume, is not taken into account, that they're perhaps not gathering those taxes that that tax base should represent. Has any considerations been given to making some accommodations for local economic conditions within the foundation grant?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned earlier that's one of the things that we are doing, is we have a committee working with finance people in the department, with the STF, the SSTA, LEADS and SASBO, in terms of looking at the distribution of the funding pool and making some fairly fundamental changes in it.

Because as the member points out, and property tax has the very same shortcoming in that it's not responsive either to economic conditions. I mean once the assessment is there, it doesn't matter whether you're old or you're sick or you're unemployed, the tax on your property is not affected by those circumstances.

So it does make for an inflexible system when you take those two together, the inflexibility of the property tax and the inflexibility of the foundation grant. So those are the issues that we will be looking at with the education partners. And hopefully we can come up with a system that's more refined and take some of those factors into account.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, under the capital construction projects last year, the member from Thunder Creek discussed a school in one of his divisions, the Mortlach school, because of its potential fire hazards that the Fire Marshall was leaning towards condemning the school because of its inadequacies. Has any consideration been given to that school when it comes to the capital construction projects?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the school at Mortlach is the subject of the list of projects that were given approval in principle. I just have the press release here that's dated March 24, where it talks about the total amount of capital and provides a list of the projects that had approval in principle, of which the Mortlach school in Thunder Creek School Division No. 78 is one.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister, I'm sure my colleague will be very pleased to hear that.

I have a news release dated May 10, today, which deals with the Education Council. It lists a number of people that have been appointed to this council. Madam Minister, are these people receiving any per diems, any expenses, anything along that line, or is this being done free and gratis?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the people who were appointed to the Education Council will receive the standard per diem for the status of the committee. I'm sorry I don't have the numbers with me. It's not a lot of money but the chairman receives a slightly larger per diem and there will be travel expenses where that's applicable. We don't expect it to be a very costly exercise but the persons that are giving of their time in this very important work will certainly be compensated.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, would you commit to providing us with that information, what they will receive for per diems, what they will receive for expense allowances?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we'll be glad to undertake to provide that information.

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of questions with respect to how things are going at the universities. Could the minister let me know what the tuition increases have been in the last two years?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, in terms of percentages, I just can't remember off the top of my head. I know the news story in . . . and I don't have the details of the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) budget yet because they just held their budget meeting on last Thursday and Friday, so I haven't had an opportunity to review it in detail.

All I know is the press reports that I saw where they said 10 per cent, and I'm not even sure whether that's across the board or whether it's a total generation of increase in their . . . 10 per cent in their whole revenue pool. Because what they did last year, as the member from Estevan may recall, is they graduated the tuition fees quite a bit last year in terms of raising the professional colleges a larger percentage.

So I'm sorry I haven't got the details on the U of S one. But last year they increased — and I'll lump them together globally — they had different ranges of increase but altogether it was 13 per cent. That was last year, the both together. This year the U of R (University of Regina) raised theirs globally approximately 9 per cent.

But I would like to point out — I think we did say earlier — that last year we reduced the size of the pool that we . . . a portion to the universities by 1.78 million, that's to both of them, the reduction. And they responded by raising an additional \$5 million through their tuition fee. So they actually had 3.2 million more than the year before by the time it was all added together.

And this year they've done the same thing. The U of R had a reduction in their funding this year of \$900,000, and they responded by raising their tuition fee an amount which will yield 1.7 million. So in response to what they consider a shortfall in the provincial contribution, they have raised their tuition fee to cover that off and then some by a considerable amount.

Mr. Devine: — Well that sounded pretty fancy. If I have this right, you have said that the university has raised the tuition last year, 9 per cent in Regina, perhaps 10 per cent in Saskatoon. Tuition went up another 10 per cent this year according to the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, and approximately that here. So in the last 16 months you've contributed to the students paying approximately 19 to 20 per cent increase in tuition, if that's correct.

And you have also cut back on . . . or as a result of your cut-backs and pressure on the universities they've had to cancel either programs or departments and Ivany, president Ivany says that as many as a hundred faculty positions could be eliminated under these cuts.

So are you satisfied that the students are going to get

the proper accessibility to education, with a 20 per cent increase in tuition, and that the faculties and the departments and the university staff will be able to have sufficient funds to provide first-class or at least competitive education in the province as a result of your last two budgets that have resulted in approximately a 20 per cent increase in tuition for students?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I know that the member opposite knows that the tuition fees that are charged by Saskatchewan universities are still very competitive as compared with other universities and extremely so when compared with American universities and some of the other destinations that students choose for their education.

Actually in relative terms, tuition has not really gone up. In the last couple of years there have been some percentage increases, I did say 13 per cent last year totally, and then 9 at the U of R, and 10 at the U of S this year.

(2100)

But I know that when I went to university that the cost, the tuition and the cost of books and the other cash outlay that you had to make at the beginning of the year, was actually much larger relative to what your salary would be when you got out into the workforce in the first year, for example, than it is now. And also at that time there was nothing like student loan programs and assistance for access.

So I think that I have confidence in the university board of governors and the administration to make sure that within the fiscal realities that we all face, that they continue to provide good accessibility and high quality programing. And we will certainly do our best through the student loan fund to make sure that in spite of the increases in tuition, that no student is denied access to a college that they have the ability and qualifications to enter because they don't have the means.

Mr. Devine: — Well, Madam Minister, the facts being put forward by the students and by the university and now by women that are attending universities, don't jibe with what you've just said.

This *Star-Phoenix* article recently — and I'm sure you've seen it — said university funding cuts hurt women. It goes on to say that recent funding cuts in Canadian universities, including the University of Saskatchewan, are going to hurt all students including women. It says: the president of the Canadian Federation of University Women, quote: were concerned that in many cases university positions are being cut. There are students who would like to go to universities, but there are fewer and fewer positions available, or students don't have the chance to get the courses they want, said Peggy Matheson. This will make it even more difficult to get a core of educated women who are prepared to take a leadership role in the future, she said; currently about half of the university students are women. But with increased

tuition, cut-backs in grants and scholarships, and increased difficulty getting a student loan, getting a university degree is going to be tougher for all students, she said.

Then she went on to point out why it's particularly difficult in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now you've raised the tuition rates . . . or caused the tuition rates to go up approximately 20 per cent; you've cut departments; you've added a great deal of difficulty in the face of students here who now have to pay something in the neighbourhood of . . . it took about 77 per cent of disposable income to pay for room and board, tuition, and books, at the University of Saskatchewan for a student. And that's increasing very, very rapidly — 77 per cent of disposable income.

And then if you look across the page, Madam Minister, the reason it's difficult is when they go out into the economy to find work, you find that . . . you get headlines — and I'll talk to the Minister of Economic Development about this tonight — "Saskatchewan economy is regressing," says StatsCanada. We're the only province to suffer in terms of a decline in actual economic activity. B.C. (British Columbia) and the Yukon are best performers.

And I don't know if you can see the graph, Madam Minister, but only Saskatchewan has negative growth — only Saskatchewan.

So we have experienced a combination of policies that have caused the economy to stagnate. Only the province of Saskatchewan is experiencing this negative growth. And the young people, particularly students who want to go to university, are faced with the double whammy — where you have cut funding to the university, then you've turned around and you've caused them to raise the tuition fees at the university so that students are facing rapid increases. And this is way beyond inflation. Inflation in Saskatchewan is virtually nil. I think it's 1.1 per cent because the population is going down and because of the stagnated economy.

So does the minister have any words of encouragement at all to university women, students at the university, who are facing in the neighbourhood of tenfold the rate of inflation tuition increases year after year. Increases in taxes, increases in utilities, increases in the tax on clothes, increases in gasoline tax, facing an economy that is the bottom of the barrel. The credit rating in the province has dropped to a BBB under the new plan, Madam Minister, that you're involved with.

Do you have any words of encouragement for students who are now complaining to the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, who are saying that we just can't make it; it's now going to cost us 77 per cent of our disposable income to go to the U of S, and you're raising the rates again and raising tuition? Do you have any words of encouragement, or could you better explain why this is the only thing that you can

do to the young people in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we fully recognize that spending on education is an investment in our young people and in the social and economic renewal of this province.

What we're dealing with in terms of the numbers you're talking about in the economy is . . . and the graphs that you show are the fallout from the debt that your administration racked up. And I wish that you had had so much concern for the future of the youth of this province while you were ringing that up.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — I do have words of encouragement for the young people in this province — is that now this administration is in the hands of open and accountable people who will be fiscally responsible, who have a plan to balance the budget and reduce the deficit.

And speaking of double whammies, perhaps the university could save some money in terms of not paying professors who are also collecting salary as an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Well, Madam Minister, the flippant responses are not going to sit well with students.

The real facts of life are that the university students are suffering, quitting university, not finding access to the university they would like to have, can't afford the tuition rate increases, can't afford the tax increases, and you're saying, well there's nothing we can do; the province is in a lot of difficulty. And it looks like the only province in the country that is suffering like this under the new NDP plan.

Now, Madam Minister, you promised students full funding of university. You promised students and your ministers promised students that you would not raise tuition fees anywhere above inflation. You say that's all we have to do.

And you are quoted in the paper and ministers are quoted in the paper, you would protect university students; you'd protect the university; you'd protect health care; you would not raise taxes; you would balance the budget, and you'd stimulate the economy.

Well the students are looking at you now and saying, Madam Minister, you are cutting into the very essence and the core of the universities. You're raising tuition rates 10 times the rate of inflation. And you are now dealing blows to the economy where the business community, whether it's the housing and construction industry, the chamber of commerce, or others, are coming back and saying: we don't see any plan. It's discouraging. It's dismal.

Well I think, Madam Minister, I mean you can be as flippant as you like but the chart that I showed you here, where Saskatchewan under your administration, is not only suffering in education, but if you look at this, in all of these provinces across Canada, everybody is experiencing growth, except the NDP (New Democratic Party) in Saskatchewan.

Now the students are saying: you'd better come forward with a plan. Pretty soon they're going to call for an education summit. The university presidents are going to say: why don't you let us in on some of your ideas. Maybe we can work something out together. Because the students can't stand 10 per cent increases a year, year after year, on top of rate increases, utility increases, gas tax increases and utility increases.

So, Madam Minister, you can be flippant and say it's particularly easy for you to sit in here with your staff, when you've been caught, and ministers have been caught paying for their staff in Crown corporations — which you promised you'd never do — and all of the other broken promises you have.

I would just like to know if you have anything positive and encouraging to say to students, having put them through this and leaving them with an economic picture like this, where you've added to the deficit by one and a half billion dollars, you've increased taxes, you increased tuition fees and now people are leaving the province to get work. Do you have anything encouraging to say to young people in the province of Saskatchewan that they could use at the university or take to their parents or take to their friends, some positive encouragement about what you're going . . . at the university and for education here in the province?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, we have every kind of encouragement to give the young people of our province. And we have great faith in their ability to deal with the current circumstances that have been left to them by people who should have been wiser as they were older, and weren't.

I think if you refer in one of those articles, the *Star-Phoenix* article that I think I recognized there when you were holding it up, the comments of the president of the student's union at the U of S, who said — I can't quote because I haven't got it in front of me — but in effect said, we're not happy about increases in tuition, but we realize the fiscal situation of the province and we know there are trade-offs to be made.

So those students are intelligent people who understand that we have to play with the hand that we've been dealt. And we haven't left them with anything; we're with them and they're with us, and they still will be when they graduate and when they're looking for work in the province that has the highest construction starts in the country and the lowest unemployment rate in any province in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Madam Minister, the students are quoted as saying that when they go out to look for a job, they can't find one in the province of Saskatchewan, and you're bragging about the unemployment rate. The population is going down; people are leaving the province; and statistic after statistics are saying Saskatchewan's economy is regressing. Now the students are voting with their feet. They're saying, I can't afford your tuition; I can't get a job in the province of Saskatchewan.

The NDP is raising taxes and violating every promise that they made. They campaigned on the \$14.5 billion deficit, saying, it's okay; we won't raise taxes but we'll protect you. When they get in power, they say, oh well, surprise, surprise; we have to do all these mean things. There's no plan at all.

The plan is, you got elected and you're going to try to survive by taking it out on the backs of the poor. Food banks are up 450 per cent. Farmers' income is down by 50 per cent. You're closing 52 rural hospitals. You're taking it out on the hides of people, real people, because you campaigned on falsehoods to get elected. And now you're saying, well I guess we'll have to raise tuition fees another 10 per cent, and we raised them 10 per cent last year.

I'm just asking, could you better justify what's going on? Does everything have to get worse under the NDP administration? Isn't there some positive encouragement for work, for jobs, for students, for tax relief, for credit ratings, for something?

I mean the only thing that we've heard of is the Premier in New York talking about Crown Life coming here; the fertilizer plants are here, the paper mills are here, Cargill and Weyerhaeuser. In New York, he says that's really positive. Well it isn't exactly what he said when he was campaigning but I mean that's about it.

Housing starts are up in Regina because Crown Life is here and FCC (Farm Credit Corporation) is here. What's the other reason? What new, exciting ventures are going on in Saskatoon and Regina that are increasing housing starts?

Well the members make fun of the students and of the people who are losing their hospitals, and of the people who are facing increased taxes and tuition. You can laugh about it but the people aren't laughing. The editorials and just the general result is that people are increasingly upset with you because you didn't know what you were talking about when you said you'd make it all better. Not at all.

So I'm just asking you one more time, Madam Minister, have you got any positive, good news that students can take home to their parents, or take to the university, take to their colleagues, or take to the professors; and say yes, the Minister of Education and the NDP administration of Saskatchewan really is doing the right thing for education, and there's a bright future for people — young people — in Saskatchewan despite these dismal statistics and the rapidly rising

tuition.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite knows that we don't set tuition fees; that the universities are self-governing bodies and they are responsible for arranging their affairs in a way that they feel is appropriate. And we didn't make undertakings that we wouldn't adjust tuition fees because we don't adjust tuition fees.

The good news that we have, as I said before, is that we have the lowest unemployment rate of any province in Canada, about 5 points lower than the national rate. And we have the highest construction starts in many years. And there are a great many promising signs in the economy.

There are a great many signs that the people in Saskatchewan — whether it's through personal contacts or through news releases and editorials — that people are supportive of the actions that we're taking, that we're open and accountable. We were before the election and we are now. And it's giving people confidence and hope for the future — that there is somebody in charge for a change.

(2115)

Mr. Devine: — One more point, Madam Minister. You can't, with a straight face, say that you don't have a direct impact on tuition rates. What alternative does the university have, if you've cut their funding, but to further cut their departments or raise tuitions for students?

That's their only source of income — the students or the Government of Saskatchewan. And you standing there and saying, well it's not our fault that they raised tuition — Madam Minister, it's a direct result of what you're doing. Any student or professor watching you say that tonight is just going to shake their head and say well, well, well, as if the provincial government hasn't got anything to do with the way the university operates.

Of course they're autonomous. If you don't have the kind of support for them, then they have to either cut or raise fees to students, which has a negative impact on students — very negative impact. And now you've hit them 20 per cent increase in the last 16 months. And you expect to say, well it's not our fault, it must have been the darn university. Is that what you're saying?

Well it doesn't wash and I . . . I don't think that you should say that to bright young people who are scraping money together; trying to get a summer job; trying to survive at university, and telling them that you have no impact on tuition rates.

Secondly, Madam Minister, let me just read you this. All the territories and provinces except Saskatchewan recorded increased economic growth over the year before. The Saskatchewan economy contracted — that is went down — by 3.5 per cent because of the huge decline in farm income. That graph says

Saskatchewan is regressing. Farm income, not as the Premier says in New York, is not going up; farm income is going down. And StatsCanada and students and professors and other people know that the whole economy is going down the tube with it as taxes go up and tuition go up.

And next you're going to say, but that's nothing to do with the government; that's the international commodity prices or something else. Well if you don't take responsibility for something . . . you've got to take responsibility now for the added deficit, for the increased taxes, for the increased tuition, for 450 per cent increase in food bank numbers.

Why don't you talk about the food bank in Saskatoon? How many students go to the food bank since you came to power? Four hundred and fifty per cent increase in the number of people going to the food banks in Regina and Saskatoon in the last few months, and you're talking about or trying to say, well I have nothing to do with tuition, and it's not my fault.

You are government. You have raised the taxes. You made all the promises. You have now cut the rural hospitals. You have increased the taxes on individuals, and now you're picking on students. You pick on the poor. You pick on the sick. And now . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And a member stands from the back and says, well they pick on politicians like me. Is that it? Is that your claim to fame? Is that all you've got to say in this Legislative Assembly?

The students and the people expect more. Madam Minister, one more time, can't you tell them something else other than it's not your responsibility to have a financial impact on the universities or that you don't have any impact on tuition fees or whether they're going to cut costs. Did you give them . . . Could you just enlighten the students how it's not your fault, one more time.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I find it passing strange if not astonishing that the member opposite can be so sanctimonious about the economic conditions in our province while his administration spent a billion dollars more than it took in for 10 years running. All these bright young students that are in universities can budget much more effectively than that, I am sure. I have confidence in that. And I know that we had last year, in addition to the debt that we inherited, a disaster in the agricultural industry. It's been a long time since we had a general frost in the middle of August. And I think there are a number of factors that are beyond anyone's control, but the \$15 billion debt was within your control. And I wish that you had displayed the same kind of concern for the future of our bright young students, in the days when you were racking up the deficit, as you pretend to have now.

Mr. Devine: — Madam Minister, I have to just raise it one more time. I'm going to bring in here for, if not these estimates, another time, every time we increased funding to the university, increased funding to health care, increased funding to agriculture, the

NDP, you and your colleagues, stood in the legislature and complained because it wasn't enough. Every single, solitary time — every time.

So we would go and say we'd help farmers because of drought, there's 22 per cent interest rates, we'd help people because they're suffering, help create economic activity, and every time we did, you'd say, not enough, not enough for students, not enough for health care. If you raise these prescription drug fees they'll have to substitute food for drugs, and on and on. Every year, year after year, from 1982 to '91, you and your seat mates complained because it wasn't enough.

Now you're in power, and what do you say? What do you say? You say, the Premier today says, oh my gosh, I may have to bring in balanced budget legislation because after all his complaining for years and years and years it wasn't enough, now he figures it out, well maybe it was or maybe he has to change his tune.

Madam Minister, don't forget, every single time we increased spending to the university and to health care you and your colleagues complained because it wasn't enough. So don't let the students believe — or don't let anybody else, and I'm sure that they won't — that in this situation, when you are raising their tuition, cutting their funds, raising their taxes, making it more miserable on the economy, that you are doing it just because you've got some fancy plan.

The result, Madam Minister, is you had no idea what you were going to do when you got elected and now the people have really figured it out. And the people are suffering, particularly young people, students, women, seniors, and those that are ill. And you can go through all of society, find them at the food bank. Now I'm just pointing out, Madam Minister, that it takes more than a couple of flippant answers from you to set the record straight with respect to what you're doing to families in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I guess I would just like to observe that I certainly hope that the member from Estevan watched the W5 program on the economy of Saskatchewan, and that perhaps if there had been a few less programs during his administration to panel rumpus rooms and put saunas and oak kitchens in the houses of rich people, we wouldn't have so many poor people lined up at food banks.

I want to say that, I guess people realize that we have to pay for the follies of their administration, that everyone has to pay, that \$847 million in our budget that goes to service the debt is only \$24 million short of the whole education budget — \$871 million for education; 847 million for interest on the debt that you racked up — only \$24 million difference. Without having to pay the interest on the debt, we could have another whole parallel education system. We could have a lot of benefits for students, but now we have to pay for the follies of the years that you spent the money and were responsible for the budget.

So I know that the students in this province have got confidence now that there are people in charge that will use good fiscal management and that they will have a future that they otherwise could have never looked forward to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I had a different series of questions that I wanted to ask but I don't think I can let a tirade like that go unchallenged, Mr. Chairman.

And talking about that W5 program, which is the most twisted, unfair, unscrupulous piece of journalism that I've ever had the misfortune of hearing about . . . I only watched a few minutes of it and after using the washroom, I could not bring myself to repeat watching that. But of course that's a trademark of the program. And I noticed that as I'm speaking, Mr. Chairman, members opposite cannot contain their irritation and their upsetting kind of an attitude towards what I'm saying.

Mr. Chairman, when the Madam Minister picks up the blame thrower and lights the blame thrower like her colleague, the Minister of Health, we find out that there are very, very many similarities, that both ministers are singing out of the same songbook here, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, we have an unprecedented amount of downloading or offloading, cutting of funding, in other words, and telling the people in the health field to look after themselves. Now you're telling the universities to look after themselves, Madam Minister. Let's not forget what you have done, and I just came across, while the member from Estevan was asking you some questions, I came across in the annual report from the University of Saskatchewan, and I'll show you what you're doing, just one, and then there's lots of examples like this but one example. Under the utilities, we find out that in utilities have gone up from '91 to '92, from 8,399,000 to \$8,869,000 and that is mostly because of SaskPower's rate increases, Madam Minister. So in other words we have, in my calculations, the university paying \$470,000 more for their power bill to SaskPower which is one of the biggest money makers that the Crown corporations have. And the university is footing that extra bill.

And not only are you decreasing the funding to university but you're causing them to pay half a million dollars more in power alone. So you're offloading, increasing their costs and what other alternative does the university have but to turn to the students and increase the fees. And now you are saying that you are concerned.

Twice you have said that finally Saskatchewan has got somebody that's in control, Madam Minister; that type of control is not required by or wanted by anyone whatsoever. Madam Minister, I think what your display here . . . has just been atrocious and it's not a kind of a display from a minister of any government,

that the people of this province, first of all want and secondly, certainly cannot afford. So, Madam Minister, I think that's just a good example of how your control is wreaking devastation and havoc not only in the field of health, but now we're finding out that the same thing is happening in education.

Madam Minister, now to get on with what I really wanted to get up and ask about. I find out, Madam Minister, and what I want to talk about for a few moments because I'm getting a fair number of phone calls on this issue, and that is on home schooling as far as education is concerned. I know that in 1980 . . . 1989 the then minister of Education, which I believe was Lorne Hepworth at the time, set up an advisory board to study the independent school situation. And I think a year later in October '92 that report was finished and presented.

And subsequent to that he set up another advisory committee to look at the home schooling situation to help develop some types of provincial regulation so on, on the home schooling. Now I know home schooling has been with the province for many, many years. Historically it was with us and I can recall back in my days when I took my grade 9 and 10. I did not take my grade 9 and 10 in any kind of a formal institution; that was rather through home schooling. In other words, at the time, which was basically correspondence. And the correspondence schools were more, I think, distance education than they were anything else.

But today when we talk about home schooling, the whole situation has changed and we find the people are now taking home schooling not because of distance education as much as for philosophical and perhaps even religious reasons.

So what I would like to do now, Madam Minister, is just ask you a few questions on the report that was just presented from the Advisory Committee on Home-Based Education. Could you give me an update? When did you first of all get that report, and what have you done with it, and where does it stand as far as your department is concerned right now?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I could have leave to introduce guests?

The Chair: — The member has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, in the Speaker's gallery, my daughter Sacha and her friend Dania Garchinski who are with us tonight listening to this very interesting debate on education.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Education, Training and Employment Vote 5

Item 1

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, in response to the member's question on the home schooling. At the risk of compromising — from some of the comments from my colleagues here — the value of my own education, I also was a correspondence school student back in the days when we didn't even have power, and it wasn't done by computer. It was done in brown envelopes that went on the . . . it was sorted out in the mail car of the train. But those were interesting times and I don't think we really suffered for it. We certainly learned some good study habits.

But with respect to the home schooling, I haven't got the dates exactly at hand, but the hon. member may not have been in the legislature the day last week, I think, that we gave second reading to the legislation outlining the changes in The Education Act which will accommodate all of the recommendations of the committee that reported on home schooling — I think it was either late last fall or very early this year that I was actually in receipt of the report. I think it was an excellently done report.

(2130)

I'm given to understand that the recommendations were all unanimously agreed to by the members of the committee, even though it was a fairly large and broad-based committee. To my knowledge the people that have opted for home schooling, some of them for moral and religious reasons, but some for other reasons, all very valid, are very dedicated people.

It's a difficult undertaking to do a good job of, and I certainly have a high degree of admiration for those people who are able to be successful and who are very dedicated in doing this. And we intend to support them through the legislation and in support of their recommendations in the report in so far as we can.

Mr. Neudorf: — I hope that Madam Minister doesn't consider this a low blow, but when I took my correspondence school we did have power.

Madam Minister, the report that I have in my hands states that there have been some guiding principles. The first guiding principle is that every child has a right to an education and that education is the very foundation of good citizenship. And I think certainly that we would all agree with that.

The second point, and here I want to ask you a question on. It continues on and says, parents have the responsibility to provide for the education of their children and the right to direct their children's education at and from their home in accordance with their conscientious beliefs, subject only to such

reasonable limits prescribed by law that can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

And the question that I would like to ask you, which is basically response to questions that I have been asked: what are those limits? What do you have in mind in terms of the reasonable limits prescribed by law that can be demonstrably justified? There is some concern out there. I suppose in a nutshell what it is doing is the people are asking what type of limitations, what are the parameters under which we will be able to continue the home-based education program before the government will step in and say, hey, you're not meeting the minimum set of standards that have been set up.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, in response to the member's question about the parents having the responsibility and the other principles that he raised, is simply a reflection of the background material in the report which leads to the recommendation where there would be certain standards set. For instance, if children, students, are home-based at the elementary level, they may be intending to gain admission to a post-secondary institution so there would be some mechanism for evaluating what the entry level would be following their home-based education.

And there would be provision for school boards to provide resources in terms of textbooks and support materials which are equal and standard to what children . . . the student population that's in a school has. It's basically standardization and supervision to a level that is acceptable in order to ensure those kind of outcomes.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Madam Minister. The Government of Saskatchewan will not repeal the compulsory attendance sections of The Education Act that says: Children of compulsory school age who are not attending a public or an independent school will be required to be under a program of instruction at home or elsewhere.

This program of instruction, could you elaborate upon that? Does it mean that you have to be following a specific program, like ACE (accelerated Christian education program) as an example? I know some of the parents that are using that. Can they develop their own program? Does it have to be agreed to by the director of education, or can it simply be a program that the parents themselves have devised and a program that they are following themselves? What are your thoughts on that?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, what that describes is simply this: that there is a great deal of flexibility in terms of what program the parents can use. They're just required to submit their plan to the directors of education in their appropriate areas so that it's known what they're doing. And it's a way of making sure . . . As you're aware now, in the Act there are provisions . . .

Mr. Neudorf: — That can be their own plan, Carol?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Yes, there are provisions that unless a child is enrolled in a school or a registered program that's recognized, that they're truant. You know, they're not at school. So they can't just stay away and say, well we're being home-schooled. They have to submit an education plan which can be their own plan and in many cases is and that would be permitted to continue.

Mr. Neudorf: — Just a couple of questions, and I'll roll them all into one here. In a previous answer you make a comment that the school division might be able to supply textbooks and so forth for these children. I know when the independent school started there was no resources available for them at all at one stage, and then gradually resources are there, busing is there — all of these kinds of things have developed over a period of time. And some view it as being duplication because the existing schools could handle those same number of students.

But now in your previous answer, you said that there would be access to textbooks which would be paid for them by the taxpayer through their boards of education. Is that correct, and how far are the resources of the boards of education going to be available to the home-based students? That's my first question.

My other question, I don't know if you will have the answers for it at this point, but I'll take your commitment to answer them. And that is, how many home-based students are being taught now? How many were taught last year, now, and in anticipated following year? In other words, what I'm trying to get at is a kind of a trend as to what's been happening as far as home based is concerned.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — In terms of the resources of the school division, as the member opposite knows that some school divisions have much better relationships with their home-based schoolers than others at the present time. Some are cooperating very well, and the member from Rosthern and I are both . . . I might as well mention the name of the school division, the Saskatchewan Valley School Division that does a very good job of liaison with people who wish to home-school their students.

And they . . . some school divisions now make books from the library and other resources, as they're available from the school, available to those students. Others do not cooperate so well. So with the changes in the legislation, we're trying to encourage that kind of cooperation. And we're moving towards providing funding to school divisions in recognition of the numbers of students that we have.

And to the last part of the question where you said the numbers. To my knowledge it's approximately 500. And we don't have a really long history to track a progression. I would assume that it would increase slightly. There has been some growth since the legal rights of parents who wish to avail themselves of this kind of education have been clearly established by the

courts — there has been some growth. But as I said before, it is very difficult. It's not easy for parents to home-school and only those who are really dedicated can be successful at it. So I certainly don't expect that the change in the legislation will be a great encouragement. We'll probably see some growth in the numbers but we don't expect it to be dramatic.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Speaker, just a couple questions regarding the financing of home schooling, and also . . . or Madam Minister through the Chairman, you had mentioned that in the legislation you were going to be allowing for some funding or allocation of funding to students in private or home schools, is that right?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the recommendation of the committee was that there be a per pupil grant paid to the school division — I make it clear, there is no recommendation that it be paid to the parents; it will be paid to the school division — the full per pupil grant for the first five students in each school division, and after the first five that it be paid on a graduated scale. We haven't made a commitment to that funding yet.

We are changing the legislation. The regulations pursuant to the legislation have yet to be drafted and completed. We're hoping that they'll all be in place by this fall. And we certainly do intend, in the long run, to support in the same, in the manner that was recommended, home school or with funding to the school division. At the most I think right now we can promise or commit to a phasing in. We don't have allowance in the budget for this coming fiscal year, the estimates we're considering here, for the full level of funding that is recommended but we want to move in that direction.

Mr. Toth: — What about the taxation, the educational taxation that each property owner in the province puts towards education. That goes into the global funding for the local board to administer. Has there been any thought given to allowing the parent to put that taxation, tax dollar toward the educational facility that they would like to educate their child in or even to allow them to use that tax dollar to purchase the necessary books and information they need to home-school their child?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, no we haven't given any consideration to that option. The report of the committee doesn't even recommend that option and as the member is aware, this is a long-established principle in Saskatchewan that there is that local provision to raise taxes locally even from people who have no children, who have never had any children in school, and our treatment of home school, I think, as an option is consistent with that principle.

Mr. Toth: — Madam Minister, one other question. When you're looking at the subsidies, is it true that when a student leaves a school system and is schooled at home, that subsidy then doesn't go to that school board? The school boards, that local board, is funded based on the number of students within the school.

Let's say five students are taken out of a school system put into a home school or sent to a private school, those five students then, are not on . . . the funding isn't allocated to that school board for those five students because they're not counted as the numbers, is that true?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Yes, Mr. Chairman. What the member describes is . . . it describes the case right now.

If there are . . . just say there is 10 students in a school division that are being home schooled, those students are not counted in the enrolment of the division for the purposes of the grant. So what's recommended in the report and what we want to move towards — we're not committed for this year — but we want to move towards, is that the first five students who are being home schooled who are not in this system, will be counted. And that the local . . . the school board would get the per-pupil grant for those five, and a portion thereafter for the incremental numbers.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 7 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 5 agreed to.

(2145)

**General Revenue Fund
Loans, Advances and Investments
Education, Training and Employment
Vote 141**

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 141 agreed to.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, just as the officials depart, I would like to express my thanks to the deputy minister and the director of finance, Arleen Hynd and Robin Johnson, for their able assistance.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to thank the minister's officials and the minister herself for her cooperation and answers.

**General Revenue Fund
New Careers Corporation
Vote 59**

Item 1

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, was the New Careers one of those corporations whose board was eliminated?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the answer to the disposition of the board, if you like, or the status, is that the board wasn't eliminated. It was simply replaced by one person who, being the associate deputy minister in the Department of Education, and it was deemed to be a reasonable thing to do in that we were looking at the role of the corporation and how it

fits within the Department of Education.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. The purpose of New Careers, I believe, is to train people to better fit within the economic structures of society, to train them — they may have been doing one type of work — to retrain them. I believe most of them are probably receiving social assistance. Is this the case, Madam Minister?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, that has been the case. That has been the recent tradition of this program. What we're hoping to do in moving it into the . . . in close collaboration with the Department of Education in which the provincial apprenticeship board is housed, is to turn New Careers into a more positive education experience and have any of the work that is done that is apprenticeable, be supervised so that it will count towards a certification in a trade so that it will become less of a revolving door where people come in, go on UIC (Unemployment Insurance Commission), back on social services. We want it to become a ladder process for people to access permanent employment and meaningful skills training.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, do people voluntarily come forward to enter this program or are they referred to the New Careers Corporation?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, it's voluntary in terms of participation. But I guess as a sign that people would rather have meaningful work than be on welfare, there are many people who approach our counselling service at the counselling centres and volunteer, and there are others who are voluntarily referred by a Social Services worker to the counselling program.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, I wonder if you could define voluntarily referred by Social Services?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, in terms of their . . . people's participation in New Careers, it is certainly voluntary and doesn't affect the status of the individual. However, when it comes to a work placement following an experience with New Careers, if an able-bodied person declines to take that kind of a job, then they do lose their social assistance benefits.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I believe that the New Careers concept is a very worthwhile project because people who find themselves trapped on welfare need some assistance to get off; they need some additional training that is pertinent to society today, and New Careers does provide that.

One of the things that we've had lacking in our education system has indeed been an apprenticeship program. It seems to be . . . it's very prominent in Europe, but in the North American continent it does not seem to be the manner in which people wanted to move. And yet there are a lot of opportunities

available for people who, with the training skills that they could receive through an apprenticeship program . . . And I believe that the use of the apprenticeship program within this corporation may very well become a very significant part of it. And I would encourage you to continue along that way.

It's also very important, Madam Minister, that those within the social service system that can perform the functions necessary to participate in this program do so, that they be encouraged strongly to participate and to upgrade themselves as the programs become available. I'd like to encourage you, Madam Minister, to pursue this matter. Thank you.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, all I can say, to the member opposite, to that is amen; we certainly concur with that approach. And we feel that the marriage between the apprenticeship branch and the Department of Education previously was not as good as it could have been and we hope that by adding those components from the Department of Labour and the New Careers program that we can build them all into something positive.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to apologize. I failed to introduce when we had a change of officials, Stuart Kramer, who is the acting CEO (chief executive officer), and Tony Antonini who is the manager of finance and administration for New Careers.

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 59 agreed to.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the officials, and I'd like to thank all of the members opposite for both their questions on both sides of estimates tonight for Education, Training and Employment and New Careers and thank them for their cooperation.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We would like to thank the minister's officials for coming in and for aiding her tonight and we'd like to thank the minister for her cooperation.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:55 p.m.