

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have petitions here this afternoon that I would like to present to the Assembly. And I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangements.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions come from the Hudson Bay area, as well as the North Battleford, Wilkie, Delmas areas of the province.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I as well would like to present petitions to the Assembly. And I will read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangements.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, the petitions are signed by individuals from Parry, Milestone, Lang, Mossbank, and Moose Jaw. I so present them to the Assembly.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have several petitions I would like to lay on the Table today. And I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate finance and financing arrangements.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These, Mr. Speaker, predominantly from the Saskatoon area although they do go into Warman, Osler, and I notice a few from Spruce Lake, Saskatoon, a lot of Saskatoon, Martensville and all through that area, Mr. Speaker. I'd be pleased to lay these on the Table.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to present today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that

your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangements.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the North Battleford and Cut Knife area of the province. I present these today.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I as well have many petitioners wanting to be heard by the Assembly. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangement.

These come from the Regina city area as well as from La Ronge and from Stanley Mission, and it almost looks like every person at Stanley Mission must have signed them. I now present them.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to lay on the Table today. I'll just read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangement.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these signatures are from . . . this page is all Swift Current, a couple look like Regina addresses on there, and the rest is from Bjorkdale, Saskatchewan and Crooked River.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I lay these on the Table.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have some petitions I would like to present to the Assembly. And I will read the prayer, Mr. Speaker, into the record:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangements.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitioners come from a variety of areas: from Martensville, Saskatoon, Hanley, Kindersley, Clavet, and many more from Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to present these petitions at this time.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitioners that have petitioned this Assembly, and the prayer reads this way:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangements.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

We have them here from Regina, Mr. Speaker, Indian Head, Saskatoon, Clavet, Vanscoy, and Warman. And I want to lay these on the Table for these petitioners today.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have Saskatchewan citizens who wish to petition the legislature today. I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangements.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I have several dozen petitioners here, Mr. Speaker, all from the city of Regina, who would like their names tabled in the legislature today.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order, the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 11(7), they are hereby read and received:

Of citizens of the province praying that the Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine NewGrade Energy corporate governance and financing arrangements.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce two people, two special guests from the United Kingdom, Tony and Margaret Flux. These are people I have not met before. Margaret Flux's brother lives across the back alley from us, our children have played together in the South Saskatchewan Youth Orchestra. They're on their first visit to Canada. They're from Clevedon, England.

Clevedon has some famous literary associations. Arthur Hallam is buried in the Norman church there. He was a close friend of the poet Tennyson. Tennyson wrote the poem "In Memoriam" for Hallam and

named his son Hallam Tennyson. Also the poet Coleridge lived at Clevedon.

Margaret Flux has other literary skills. She is an expert lacemaker and has done some work for Her Majesty the Queen. Margaret Flux and her brother, Harry Sweetman, were born at a place called Leicester. It's of importance to people in this Assembly. SaskTel International is building a cable and telephone system in Leicester, a city of about 600,000.

So we have some business relationships and some close friendships. I would ask all members to join me in welcoming these two very special guests to Saskatchewan and to this legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Draper: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, a group of students from Lafleche Mathieu Elementary School, grade 5, 16 of them all together along with their teachers, Ray Morissette and Linda Lovo. They're in the Speaker's gallery up there on the left side of the clock from here, and we'll be visiting with them later. We're having drinks and photograph downstairs, and we'd like you to join with me in welcoming them to the Assembly today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly two groups of visitors. In your gallery, Mr. Speaker, are 17 young adults, grade 9 students from the Bjorkdale School.

They're accompanied by Jeff Kyliuk, and I had the privilege of already meeting with the group and they had a lot of tough questions, Mr. Speaker, especially Mr. Kyliuk, the teacher. We had a really good meeting.

The other group, Mr. Speaker, are seated in the east gallery, and on behalf of my colleague the hon. member from Nipawin, who would like to welcome the group from Ridgedale, 78 people — 64 students and 14 teachers and parents — grades 5 to 12.

The teachers are Allan Brown, principal; Garry Mutch, vice-principal; Randy Bergman, Betty Mutch, Robert Bratvold; and of course with that size of group, Mr. Speaker, they needed 12 cars so they had a lot of friends drive them, and Margie McCullough, Dianne Barber, Debbie Valteau, Dean Sturby, Allan Breadner, Pat Carlson, Mildred Kennedy, Marlene Miazga, and Linda Peterson are also with the group.

I would ask that everyone join with me in wishing them a very enjoyable visit to Regina and a safe trip home.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the

Assembly seven grade 7 and 8 students from Sweetgrass School in my constituency. They have travelled a great distance to be here with us today and I hope that they enjoy their tours and all the information that they get. I'd be willing to meet with you after question period.

This visit is impromptu, but I'm really glad that they were able to make it. And when question period is over, I will meet with you. Please, everyone in the Assembly say hello to these people and welcome them here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today to introduce to you and through you, Mr. Ernie Jelinski, from the city of Regina here. Ernie has worked tirelessly over the years in an attempt to help injured workers to receive fair compensation and that sort of thing. And we're happy that Ernie was able to be here today and we hope that the rest of the Assembly will join with me in welcoming him today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to you and to other members of the House some visitors from Cumberland House. Mr. Speaker, up in your gallery we have Chief Pierre Settee from the Cumberland First Nations, as well as Mayor Harold Carriere from the town of Cumberland. And also with them is Bob McAuley and George Ward, also from the Cumberland House Development Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, I will be giving them a warm Cumberland House welcome.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

Mr. Speaker, I would like you to give them a warm welcome, and other members of this House as well.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you for your patience, Mr. Speaker. I inadvertently forgot to mention that the teacher with the Sweetgrass students is Gwen Ashley, and please welcome her too.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to, Mr. Speaker, through you to all members of the Assembly, welcome the very many trade unionists who are sitting in all three galleries today. These people are watching the proceedings of the legislature, as they've been doing for the last while. I'm sure they'll find it interesting. And I'd ask all members of the Assembly to welcome this group of people here, and I'd specifically like to welcome a constituent of mind, Carter Chafe, who is one of the locked-out Westfair workers.

So I'd ask all members of the Assembly to welcome these people here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Co-op Upgrader Legislation

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon my question will be to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, we have seen many instances where the Premier and his government seem to take delight in using the heavy hand of the majority when people in this province oppose them. We've seen the Minister of Economic Development and the Premier say that the business groups in the province who oppose Bills 55 and 56 don't speak to the business community.

We've had cabinet ministers speaking out against their home communities because they take issue, Mr. Speaker, with the government's direction. And we see co-op members around the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, trying to defend the system that they and their forebears built to have a strong co-op movement in the province of Saskatchewan.

My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, will you not admit today, given some information that I'm sure your government is aware of, that you can put the very jeopardy of the co-op movement in this province at risk if you carry forward with the information, if you carry forward with this Bill in this legislature. Would you answer that, Mr. Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the member opposite has a tendency to use gross exaggeration when he makes his statements in his introductory remarks, and is fairly typical of the Leader of the Opposition.

The co-op movement is in no jeopardy if a bad deal is fixed. In fact the opposite may be true, Mr. Speaker, that the co-op movement may be in jeopardy if a bad deal isn't fixed. And what we're saying in our legislation and in our efforts to negotiate a new deal, Mr. Speaker, is that we will make sure that the NewGrade project is viable and that the people of Saskatchewan are protected from having a huge liability of \$360 million.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, your government doesn't listen to farmers. You don't listen to seniors. Your ministers don't listen to communities when they tell you that your economic strategy doesn't work.

Perhaps you will listen to a source that you, sir, have put a lot of personal stock in. The firm of Deloitte & Touche recently completed an in-depth analysis of the consequences of your Draconian legislation

vis-a-vis the Co-op upgrader and the NewGrade project and the province of Saskatchewan. And I will quote. This is Deloitte Touche, the firm of Mr. Don Gass speaking:

We are concerned that if Federated Co-op Ltd. accepts the current proposal of the province of Saskatchewan, it could jeopardize the long-term validity of the organization.

Mr. Premier, you can ridicule a lot of people. Will you now stand in the legislature and ridicule Deloitte & Touche, the firm of Don Gass, who say that your legislation, sir, your lack of a will to negotiate, puts the very existence of the co-op movement in this province at risk? Will you do that, sir?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the answer to the Acting Leader of the Opposition is a straightforward and simple answer. We seek a negotiated settlement based on the principles of the Estey report. We think the Estey report sets out the way out of this, and the Estey report came after five or six months of an examination of all the financial aspects of this deal and possible consequences both to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan and to the members of FCL (Federated Co-operatives Ltd.). From our point of view, that still remains the basis, the best help for coming up with a negotiated settlement.

But I repeat again, that in the absence of a negotiated settlement, the alternative approach in policy would be to do nothing. And as I've said to the House before, I repeat again, that would be an irresponsible approach. To do nothing in effect is courting with babysitting a project which is a megaproject on the very edge — living on the very edge, endangering the situation everywhere.

This is a bad deal. Even the co-op movement, FCL people, recognize that it's got to be renegotiated. The question is, on what? And we think that Estey is the way to do it. And we still want to negotiate rather than legislate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, the problem is that you always ignore the third choice. It's always do nothing or do it my way. What is wrong with negotiation, Mr. Premier? Why doesn't that word seem to exist in your vocabulary? It is my way or do nothing.

Mr. Premier, I want to quote again from the firm of Don Gass. The report goes on so far as to say that under your proposal, and I quote:

To limit your financial exposure and not risk the earnings generated from other areas of their operations, Federated would seriously have to look at the alternative of abandoning the refinery assets.

In a nutshell, Mr. Premier, what you are giving the Co-op is the choice of either do it my way or abandon the refinery built by co-op members in this province over the last 60 years, because you refuse to use the word negotiate.

Mr. Premier, before you would take that action, the action that Mr. Don Gass's firm is advising Federated Co-op that they may have to abandon their refinery, would you not now commit to some process of negotiation that doesn't have your friend, Mr. Ching, and your political friends driving the agenda? Would you do that, Mr. Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to see that the hon. member has finally gotten around to at least quoting something with approval that Mr. Gass has written. And since he's in the mood of quoting what Mr. Gass has written, I would remind him what Mr. Gass wrote in spring of 1992 about the NewGrade upgrader. He said:

... the Province has an investment that is not performing up to its original expectations and which could hold future financial risk.

He went on to say:

The Province's ability to monitor the performance of this project and to work with its joint-venture partner ... to reduce its financial exposure is severely restricted under the agreement.

And various other references.

Of course at that time, when we cited that aspect of the Gass report, the Leader of the Opposition had denied the existence of it — and for that matter, I think, he even denied the existence of Mr. Gass. Well we don't deny the existence of Mr. Gass then and we don't deny his existence now.

You asked me is "negotiate" not a part of my vocabulary? The answer is, it is a part of my vocabulary. I want to negotiate. I repeat: I want to negotiate; I look to negotiations; I've offered to negotiate.

I've said I will meet with the FCL people any time, anywhere. They have not taken this up. I have said that all we want is an agreement on the principles of Estey as the basis for negotiation. Subject to that, the negotiations can proceed.

Why the principles of Estey? Because it is the only identifiable, reasonable way out of a very, very, very bad deal that you, sir, were a part of when, in your reckless abandon, you threw away the concerns of the taxpayers. We're not going to throw away the concerns of the taxpayers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before I recognize the Leader of the Opposition, I want to ask the member from Wilkie that the constant interruptions, when either his own person is asking a question or when the Premier is answering a question, is simply unacceptable, and I ask him to please quit interrupting.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, you refused to answer the question. Mr. Gass's firm is saying that the entire refinery process may have to be abandoned if you proceed with your agenda. If you don't want to listen to Mr. Gass, Mr. Premier, perhaps you would listen to the Battleford's & District Co-operative who issued a news release today, and I quote:

The Saskatchewan government's use of legislation to unilaterally change the NewGrade upgrader agreement could have a dramatic effect on the Battlefords Co-op in our community.

They are saying that their operation, built in North Battleford and Battleford over the last 60 years, has been a good community citizen, a consistent returner of dividends to the community. They, Mr. Premier, believe that you are putting their movement, their refinery, their members at risk because you refuse to negotiate, that you are so narrow in your approach to this thing, so political that they now have to issue a news release and come out against your government.

What do you say to the people in the North Battlefords Co-op, Mr. Premier, who have the same fears as Mr. Don Gass? How do you do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, what do you say to the people of North Battlefords because you have put them and the taxpayers of Saskatchewan in this precarious hole? What do you tell the taxpayers when you meet them about the fact that you wracked up a \$16 billion deficit, the fact that you have \$600 million of taxpayers' money on the hook on this project — \$600 million that isn't available elsewhere on a project which everybody admits has got to be renegotiated?

What do you tell the people of the North Battlefords area? Because I tell you, what I tell them is precisely that. I tell them that Estey's investigated it. He said this was a deal which has run financially aground. He says that it's got to be renegotiated. And I say to the Battlefords people, they should speak to the FCL management and tell the FCL management to accept the principles of Estey; we'll meet right now this afternoon to negotiate a deal based on Estey. That's what I say to them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Premier, I agree with what the North Battleford people are saying, and I quote:

With this legislation the government is

unilaterally imposing conditions. It is an unfair and undemocratic abuse of power.

That's what they say to you, Mr. Premier, and I agree with them wholeheartedly. That's what the people in North Battleford in the co-op movement are saying to you and your government. It's undemocratic; it's an abuse of power.

Now, Mr. Premier, you and your Minister of Economic Development should get your story straight. In his estimates last night he said it was only 9.6 billion; you say it's 15. It's like when we go to New York and we talk about Cargill and Weyerhaeuser and all these great corporate citizens we have, and then when you get back here you throw mud at them, Mr. Premier, just as you have done to co-op members all over the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Premier, they feel their refinery is at risk, they feel that you are being undemocratic with your legislation in here, and they are simply asking you to pull the Bill, take your political friends and your political agenda out of the equation, and do some honest negotiation. That's all they're asking, Mr. Premier. Surely you've got that much cooperation from a New Democratic Party government for the co-op members of this province. Don't you agree?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I agree. I want to negotiate a deal. I want to get out from under this horrendous mess that you stuck the taxpayers of Saskatchewan with, this \$600 million FCL deal — a horrendous mess.

I want to get the taxpayers out of the statements made by Mr. Philip Gordon — the hon. member opposite claims he doesn't know who he was — appointed by the hon. member opposite when he was in the front benches, an expert in the oil industry area who at that time sat as a monitor and still sits as a monitor in the project, and wrote a letter to the premier of the day virtually begging him not to sign that deal. And you still went ahead. You still went ahead.

I want to negotiate. I want to negotiate a deal which is fair to the co-op people and to FCL. But I will tell you one thing . . . and the taxpayers. What I will not do is I will not allow the taxpayers to continue to suffer under a deal which is so bad and so negligently negotiated by you when you were sitting on the treasury benches that them and their children and their grandchildren are going to have this around their necks for years to come. We are going to fix the roof now. And we ask your support and FCL to do it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Premier, if you are so ready to negotiate, perhaps the report done by Deloitte & Touche should go to your ministers, whichever one you think can put aside his politics long enough to do a decent job instead of botching it. Perhaps they'll read the report of Deloitte & Touche

and the other correspondence that have come across from Federated Co-op and others, and then you will do an honest job of it.

Will you give the commitment, Mr. Premier, that at least, whichever one of your ministers you designate will take the time to read the Deloitte & Touche report prepared by Don Gass's firm? Would you make that commitment at least?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect for the Leader of the Opposition, I can hardly believe that that's a serious question, but I'll treat it as such. If the answer he wants is yes, I will give him the answer yes.

I don't even know what report he's talking about. I'm presuming that it's a Deloitte & Touche accountant's report of either FCL's holdings or some internal report carried out for FCL. It certainly . . . it does not seem to be a report carried out for the government or for NewGrade. So whatever he's got to offer to forward to us, we'll take a look at. I'll make that commitment.

But I want him to make a commitment to me. I want him to make a commitment to me and the taxpayers. And what I would like you to do, sir, is to leave question period and go outside there, and tell the press and the public and the co-op movement that you and your party understand that the deal has to be renegotiated and you support the basic principles of the settlement as set out by Estey.

I'll do this with Deloitte & Touche. Will you do that on behalf of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, yes or no? Will you do it, yes or no? Or will you run — or will you run?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Drought Assistance

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, many areas in the north-east, north-west, and the south-west parts of the province are suffering from serious moisture shortfalls. If they aren't fortunate enough to get some rain in the next two weeks, this year's crop in a lot of areas may be a total write-off.

In fact, Mr. Minister, some of the mustard and canola is not even coming up. Mr. Minister, what contingency plans do you have in place to deal with the possibility of a crop failure this year, and no water in community pastures and no grass? What will you do for these farmers in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, there is indeed some drought areas in the province. I think it's a little premature to call for a crop failure at this time of the year yet. Certainly there are some concerns, and immediate concerns are more to do with livestock and water and pasture, which is a much more immediate concern than crops, which we don't know until fall.

But we do have a drought committee which has been struck, which is looking at possible solutions.

The obvious solution would be to make it rain. I haven't quite mastered that power yet, but certainly we are observing these areas and we'll do what we can with our resources to protect farmers in the drought areas.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture. I know that you and your bureaucrats like to travel around the province promoting your agriculture discussion paper. The problem is, Mr. Minister, while you talk and have these discussions, fields get drier, pastures get drier, water holes dry up. And farm incomes, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, are also drying up.

You just talk, talk, talk. Yesterday you admitted sending mixed messages to the livestock producers by raising pasture fees, breeder fees, registration fees, brand fees and, by the way, taking away livestock cash advance. Mr. Minister, you admitted yourself that your words don't match your actions.

When are you going to start taking actions that do actually have a positive impact on livestock production in this province, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, I think that we don't necessarily stop long-term planning because we have a drought. We will continue to talk with our strategy people. We will continue to talk to livestock producers. We do have a commitment to livestock production in this province and with very limited resources. Again Agriculture has the same budgetary problems that Health and Education and everybody else has, occasioned by the \$16 billion deficit and the interest that's going out of this province.

Also grain farmers are certainly very hard hit after a long time with low prices, but we are moving towards a strategy that we hope will increase livestock production in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, here's a list of things you've done to help the livestock industry: you raised pasture fees 31 per cent, brand fees 25 per cent, dealer registration for livestock 100 per cent, breeder fees 31 per cent; you eliminate the purchase of replacement bulls and community pastures; you eliminate livestock cash advance and add interest to the cost of doing business; you add telephone, power, SaskEnergy, SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister. That's how you've helped the industry.

When are you going to start taking some action that will make our livestock producers more competitive with those in other jurisdictions so that they can

compete on the same basis that others are? When will you do that, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, there is no question that we have made tough decisions in the agriculture area as we have elsewhere. I think if you look at the livestock sector, they are faring somewhat better than the grain sector at this time.

And I think I might ask the members opposite what they've done for the farm community, refusing to debate important issues to farmers like protecting the Canadian Wheat Board, like Crow rate, like interest-free cash advances and so on, have even refused to even debate or help us prevent the offloading that Ottawa is doing on our Saskatchewan farmers.

And I think we are doing what we can. I might ask what it is that the opposition is doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, at the same time that you are increasing all these costs to cattle and livestock producers, they too are suffering from the dry conditions in many parts of the province. At the same time you are increasing pasture fees, many of these pastures are running out of grass, Mr. Minister, and they're going to have to move their cattle out either early or some time during the summer.

At the same time you're increasing the breeding fees, many cattle producers are having increased cost in feeding them. Why do you place all these added financial pressures on producers during a time when they can least afford it? Why do you do that, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is quite simple. Because of a \$16 billion debt and an \$800 million interest payment that's going out of this province, that's the reason for it. And I hardly think that livestock producers are unfamiliar with droughts in this province. They've had them . . . At all years we have droughts in some areas in the province, and these policies were decided in budget and not decided on the basis of whether or not there's good grass this year.

Certainly we'll do what we can to help where the drought is. If we can help with movement of livestock or feed or whatever is within our resources to do, we certainly will monitor the drought areas and help where we can. But I don't think that's the . . . other than making it rain, there aren't a lot of easy solutions to those problems.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Last question to the member from

Morse.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, you said in Moose Jaw yesterday, I guess we keep telling the livestock industry that we love you and we want you to expand and then we increase the grazing fees and who knows what else. And I just gave you a list of who knows what else is, Mr. Minister.

I can see you saying, we'd sure hate it if you didn't love us. Mr. Minister, will you tell us what you're going to continue to do for the people in the province of Saskatchewan to increase the productivity; to increase the value of the value added products in grazing and in the grain industry.

Would you show us where you can provide to the people of the province of Saskatchewan some hope in the type of conditions that exist in the north-east, north-west, and in the south-west, on the dry conditions that exist there?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, what I was trying to explain to the Stock Growers' Association is the difficult position we have with a \$16 billion deficit, and obviously not hundreds of millions of dollars to pour into the livestock industry, nor do I think the livestock industry is asking for that.

They're asking for what we can do to help them help themselves a bit, and they're not asking for hundreds of millions of dollars in hand-outs and they're not asking for us to make it rain. They're much more realistic than the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SGI Contracts on Glass Repair

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to respond to a series of questions that were raised by the member from Souris-Cannington on Friday.

The first question, Mr. Speaker, is:

. . . can you confirm, (Mr. Minister), that the criminal matters branch of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada has determined that the arrangement you made with the glass dealers association to be illegal price-fixing and can you confirm that the SGI adjusters who enforce this agreement may be subject to criminal prosecution?

First of all, Mr. Speaker, we have contacted the criminal matters branch of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, but we are told that the letter from which the hon. member quotes is a letter that was sent to SGI adjusters from a Mr. U. Danielson. If the member opposite would have checked the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, he would have found out that in no way does Mr. Danielson work for the department. I would like to read into the record a letter SGI received from the chief of the criminal

matters branch of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I quote:

I wish to advise you that Mr. Danielson has no authority to represent in any capacity the bureau of competition policy, Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada. Mr. Danielson is neither an employee of the department nor a . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. I would ask the member from Souris-Cannington to please be seated while another member has the floor. I've recognized another member.

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — So who is Mr. Danielson and who does he represent? Maybe the member opposite can answer the question.

The Speaker: — Order. I'll ask the minister to make his answers brief and to the point, please.

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — With respect to the question of illegal price fixing, Consumer and Corporate Affairs has not determined or at least notified SGI that it is price-fixing, but it is our legal opinion that auto glass dealers agreement does not constitute price fixing in any way, shape, or form. The accusation of price fixing comes from Mr. Danielson, not from Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

On the second question, Mr. Speaker, the opposite member, the member opposite accuses SGI of forcing glass dealers to sign this agreement. Mr. Speaker . . . signed the agreement and that SGI adjusters are directing customers to only do business with glass shops that have signed the agreement.

Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth, and the member opposite knows it; 111 of the 115 glass dealers in the province have voluntarily signed the agreement. This means 97 per cent of the auto dealers in the province agree with the arrangement.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, SGI does not direct business to and from any . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. I would not allow a minister that length to answer a question in oral question period, and I certainly won't allow him when he has the prepared text. I recognize for a supplementary question the member from Souris-Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I in no way ever suggested that Mr. Danielson worked for SGI. On the contrary, he was working for some glass dealers. Mr. Minister, you suggest that a certain number of dealers have signed on voluntarily into your program. Mr. Minister . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member has a supplementary question — no preamble — supplementary question.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Minister, what would be the result of not signing that agreement with SGI?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, the reason for the glass dealers signing with SGI is simply to make sure that we get the same . . . that the SGI customer gets the same price for glass repairs that are charged to anyone else. And that's the basic reason why this agreement has been signed.

The real question is: why should the SGI customers pay more for repairs because they have an insurance policy? I'm sure the member opposite knows that answer. And this is the basic reason why this has been done. Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Question period has ended for the day.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I beg to ask leave. I would like to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — And while the members are granting leave to the Hon. House Leader, will the members also grant leave to the Speaker to introduce guests?

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce a group of businessmen to you and to the members of the Assembly. Seated in the Speaker's gallery, I would like to introduce Giovanni Tomasello, the president of Tomasello Ltd. from Palermo, Italy. If you just stand up and be recognized.

Accompanying Mr. Tomasello is Giammarco Tomasello, head of merchandising; Vincenzo Piraino, head of production; Elio Brancaccio, financial consultant; and along with them, businessman from Toronto, Giorgio Piscitelli. I want to welcome you here to the Assembly. I know you're looking at business opportunities in Saskatchewan in the area of pasta. We welcome you here today and look forward to meeting you later.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1445)

Hon. Mr. Rolfes: — I want to take this opportunity to introduce to the Assembly a group of 22 grade 8 students from John Lake School in my constituency. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are accompanied by their teacher, Grant Dougall; and chaperons, Amelia Moffatt and Darlene Vermette.

I believe that this is the first school that I have had here during this session; I hope it's not the last. And my understanding is that I will be able to meet with you later on. I would be pleased to do that and share any experiences that you may have had in the Assembly with you later on this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

An Act to amend The Trade Union Act

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to move first reading of a Bill to amend The Trade Union Act.

Motion negatived.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order in the galleries. I think the member knows full well that there is to be order in the galleries, and please respect it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, by leave I move to government orders, Committee of Finance and Provincial Secretary estimates.

The Speaker: — If I have another outburst like that from the galleries I'll ask my security people to remove the people from the west gallery. Could I have the Government House Leader please repeat.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, by leave I move we move to government orders, Committee of Finance, Provincial Secretary estimates.

Leave granted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Provincial Secretary Vote 30

The Chair: — At this time I would ask the minister to please introduce the officials who have joined us here today.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the opportunity to introduce the officials who are here to help us today. I have the deputy provincial secretary, Mr. Howard Leeson, who is seated to my right; director of administration and finance, Mr. Bill Hoover, sitting behind me; and Catherine Dermody, executive assistant to the deputy provincial secretary. And that is the officials who are here to provide us with the information that may be required.

Item 1

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Mr. Minister, and welcome to your officials today.

Let's begin with item 1, administration, subvote PR01. Can you tell me, Mr. Minister, what is your department's mission and mandate, and who is your client group?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, the question asked by the member opposite is a good way to start. And I want to respond by saying that the mandate of the Department of the Provincial Secretary is to coordinate and manage intergovernmental relations which is a very important and growing function in the government these days, particularly because of the significant actions being taken by the federal government in offloading, in what they're doing to major issues of importance to Saskatchewan such as the Crow rate, such as the removal of barley from under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board, such as the negotiations on the free trade agreement, the negotiations on NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), to name just some of the more significant ones.

It is important if any province, and particularly Saskatchewan, is to effectively defend and protect the interests of the citizens of this province, that we are able to coordinate the various activities of different departments of government and different agencies who are doing the work on this so that we are better positioned to present our case on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan with the federal government.

But there are other responsibilities in the mandate of the Provincial Secretary as well, Mr. Chairman. This is the department that has the protocol services for the government; it has the communications, policy and French language services; and the department is responsible for the office of the Lieutenant Governor, the Legislative Building, and the Wascana Centre Authority.

Many of these, particularly the major function of intergovernmental affairs, was transferred to the department when I was appointed as minister. So some of these responsibilities that are listed here are responsibilities that have been added to the department since the time when that change was made.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, are you indicating then that your client group happens to be the citizens of the province of Saskatchewan? I didn't quite understand from your response who your client group is. I do understand from your comments what you have been primarily mandated to do. Do you have a mission statement?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, obviously the client group of this department, as is of any department, is the citizens of Saskatchewan. It may be that some departments have a specific identity with a particular field of service that that department maybe provided, or an area in which its policy may impact on. But regardless of that, the client group of any department of government which is obviously funded by the taxpayers of this province are the people of Saskatchewan.

I outlined the functions of the department and its responsibilities. The department, Mr. Chairman, is a relatively new department from the point of view of its expanded mandate so it does not have yet at this time

what one would . . . as the member refers to, a mission statement. But it has certainly some very direct and significant responsibilities from the point of view of coordinating activities in the government and certain policy evaluations in the government that have to be done, particularly during these times of the kind of financial circumstances in which we find ourselves. But it should be done even in good financial times.

But if the member is saying, is there a mission statement that is written and published, at this point, it has not been because the department is so relatively new.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your department has earned a nickname, and that nickname is: NDP (New Democratic Party) federal campaign central. Can you confirm for me that no one in your department is performing partisan political functions during office hours while being paid by the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I can unequivocally confirm that. That is not the role or the function of any department of government. The people who are employed in the Department of Provincial Secretary are there because they have a specific role to play for whatever purpose their particular jobs are existing for. But there is certainly no work that is being done in the Department of Provincial Secretary that's got anything to do with any kind of an election campaign.

I know that that is the so-called nickname that the member opposite speaks of. But in the world of politics I guess people who are in opposition have to pick something in which they want to say things, and that is their right. But in this particular place, there is no validity to what is being said.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Let's move on to accommodation and central services, subvote 2. There's a 50 per cent increase in this subvote between 1992-93 and '93-94. And I'm wondering if you would explain that for me, please.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — That is — sorry to have had to check with my officials; that's a pretty technical question — but that is the amount that is there for the rental accommodation for the accommodation charges in this coming fiscal year which reflect a new pricing model used by the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

I don't know that the member, because she was not here prior to 1991, will be familiar with this, but prior to 1993-94 departments were given what was called a participation credit on their accommodation billings. Now if the member were to ask me to explain all of that, I would find myself having some difficulty to do that because the former government couldn't quite explain all that when we used to ask them those questions.

But nevertheless it gave an inaccurate reflection of the true cost of accommodation. What this does is

provide the true cost of the accommodation for the Department of Provincial Secretary, and they are reflected . . . what they do is reflect the fair market value.

Ms. Haverstock: — Can you tell me, Mr. Minister, what capital expenditures are planned for the Legislative Building this year?

(1500)

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — There are no specific plans that we know of at this particular time.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, how much of this particular subvote is used to upgrade ministerial offices or suites?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm informed that there's a very small portion of the budget that is allocated if it is needed. And the amount is about \$80,000 . . . it is \$80,000. But it is not designated for any particular project at this particular time; it is there in the event that it is needed. If a request is made for some changes, it will have to be justified. And if there are no such expenditures, then that money will . . . if there are no such requirements that are requested, then that money will not be expended.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, would you itemize the expenditures that have been made under this subvote and detail the similar expenditures that you have planned for this year? Perhaps what you could do is provide that in written response for both myself and the official opposition.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — It's no problem. And I appreciate the member's being prepared to wait for us to provide it because that's so much detailed information we wouldn't have that, but it's public information. And in order to assist the members of the House and particularly the member who asked the question, my staff will prepare it and we will get it to you fairly quickly.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, what is the cost of moving ministers around the building following a cabinet shuffle? For instance, when you resigned as minister of Finance, I'm interested in knowing what the cost was of setting you up in a new ministerial office. And similarly — I will continue and ask a series of questions on this — were those offices already in existence or did there have to be some constructive changes made? And I'm wondering what the costs incurred were at the same time, for instance, of moving the former minister of Social Services into the Minister of Finance office.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — That's not an item that would be in the budget of the Department of Provincial Secretary. That would be in the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation and one would have to get the answers for those questions from the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

I'm sure that if the member did not ask the question when SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) was in the House in committee, if she would contact the minister, that information once again is available.

Ms. Haverstock: — Let's move on to item 3 then, communications policy and planning, which is subvote 3. Your department performs all of the central polling to the government in power and I'm interested what your department's policy is regarding polling. I'm particularly interested in what types of questions you ask, with the regularity . . . with what regularity are your polls conducted?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Maybe we'll get some more details on the question as I give you the general answer.

Mr. Chairman, there is no regularity for the vast proportion of the polling that may be done from time to time. Because the way the system works, one, it is, all the polling of the government, is now coordinated through the Department of Provincial Secretary.

There's good reason for that. One, we have very scrupulously attempted as a government to save expenditures and money everywhere we can. And by coordinating this polling, we're able to keep closer track of the polling requirements that Crown corporations, the various departments may have from time to time.

Most of them do not poll regularly. They will make a request because they have a need for some market research or polling and then that request comes to this unit in the Department of Provincial Secretary and then the process will be done.

The firm that now does the polling won that particular contract through an open competition. There's a tendering process. So we have saved considerable money in that area as well. So the taxpayer benefits and also we get better results.

There is one system of polling that's called the omnibus polling which is intended to be done on a monthly basis, although I don't think that's always been the case. There's some months in which the polling has not been done. I don't have the questions with me that are asked, but once again, because we release all of the polling that is done and all of the analyses and all of the questions every three months and they're published, you can see . . . the questions are there. They're available because they've been made public.

And in July, first week of July, early in July we will table once again all of the polling that was done by various departments, agencies of government, or on behalf of them, and those questions and the answers and all of the analyses will be available to the public.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I have a question regarding the contract that you do have with CanWest. I'm wondering if you would be able to

provide us, the official opposition and myself, with a copy of that contract and indicate how CanWest Opinion research is paid. And what I'm trying to determine is if your department contracts for omnibus polling and then portions off the bills to various departments to pay. Is this practice used for paying for polls? I'm curious about that.

And I do have an associated question which perhaps you can respond to at the same time. Why are departments not responsible for reporting their own expenditures on polling?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — First of all, let me answer the member's first question. The contract that the member asked, we will be able to provide that. We don't have it here. Once again, that's a public document. As we do with all contracts unless there is some commercial reasons or other reasons which, as is a provision under the freedom of information, that we cannot or should not release, I'm informed there's no problem with this and we'll make that available.

I understand, and I may be corrected here, but I understand that indeed polling costs by SaskTel, for example, are disclosed and the polling costs of various departments and the expenditures that the departments make, because the departments pay for the polls. Provincial Secretary doesn't; it just coordinates that. That information is also disclosed, so maybe I misunderstand the question that the member from Greystone has asked.

Ms. Haverstock: — I'm not talking about . . . there are differences between the Crown corporations and the departments that I'm talking about. I'm wondering about other departments of government and if in fact the polling is paid for by those particular departments, not the Crowns.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm told that the departments pay for it on a per-question basis. If they have a certain number of questions, they will pay for those questions on a per-question basis. Then there's some technical term that . . . I am told they do journal vouchering which then accommodates that.

But they certainly have to do the paying for it and they will have to disclose it. It's got to be part of their budget, and it also has to be part of what they show in *Public Accounts* or provide information under freedom of information, if it's requested, at whenever time that may be so.

Ms. Haverstock: — I take it, Mr. Minister, from your comments earlier that the people of this legislature are then able to have access to all of the questions asked by anyone who has conducted polls under your department's instructions. I understood that.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes. I'd just make sure that we're clear. The answer to the question is yes, all polling — and this is a new procedure that has never been followed before, certainly not in the 1980s. But we have made it very clear that we're going to live up to the requirements of the freedom of information.

But even if it were not for freedom of information, it is an expenditure that we make on behalf of the taxpaying public of Saskatchewan. It is an obligation of the government, therefore, to disclose what we spent the money on, how much we paid for that expenditure, and what we got for it. And so we will do that.

Now I want to qualify that because I don't want anyone to be misled. The government may from time to time do certain polling on behalf of . . . or in preparation of the budget. I don't want a member to take it from me that I am saying here that prior to the budget, information of that polling will be made available. Because I think there is good reason why, in some cases, it should not be; reasons which have to do with people taking advantage of what may or may not be coming in the budget. And I think as a responsible government, as responsible legislators, we have to protect against that. So that's the only qualification I put on there.

Now this to the best of my understanding has not happened. But from time to time there may be some specific polling done on behalf of the Executive Council at which time, under the present freedom of information, that would not have to be released.

But I do not believe that that has taken place and I don't know of any plans to do that, but that's always a possibility.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you. Your polling is supposedly done by the government and it's not partisan in nature. Can you confirm for me that your pollsters have recently been asking, and I quote, "who would you vote for?" Questions in polls that are paid for by the taxpayers of the province?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — No, I can't confirm that because the pollsters have contracts with a lot of people. And pollsters, as the member well knows, will sometimes, at their expense, do polling for themselves which then they market and sell to other clients. But the government certainly does not pay for any voter preference questions.

Certainly it does not pay for it since I became responsible as the minister responsible, and does not have any intention of paying that because, once again, that is not polling done on behalf of the taxpayer; that's polling done on behalf of a political party or a politician. That being the case, that political party or that politician or that organization should foot the bill for that kind of an expenditure.

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Minister, this is really an opinion question here. Why does your government consider polling a necessity at all? If you're trying to find out what the people of the province want of their government, why don't you simply rely on your 55 government MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) who are sent here to represent the interests of their constituents and to act as the eyes and the ears of their constituents?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Let me assure the members of the House, Mr. Chairman, that we indeed do rely on the information that the members of our caucus bring to us. In fact, they're our best source of information. That's why in . . . that's why we have regular caucus meetings, so that there can be an exchange of information, so that there can be a considerable amount of input by those members who are elected in their constituencies.

But I think in today's modern age that one has to use a variety of information gathering because things change so rapidly. And so it's important for the government to provide several avenues for public input. Certainly elected MLAs are one of those avenues. Public meetings and consultations as we do, for example, prior to the budget is another very important means. Regular meetings with various organizations, whether it's the School Trustees Association or the chamber of commerce or the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour or the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation are another important means; having public meetings are other ways, and yes, market research and polling is important in that mix as well.

When you have those sources of information, your chances of making a more intelligent decision . . . The members and others may sometimes disagree on whether it was an intelligent decision, but in order to make those kinds of decision in today's rapidly changing economy and changing world, one should use all of the available means to be able to get the information.

(1515)

Now there are other kinds of very specific polling that are necessary. There's polling that is done by Crown corporations on testing and finding out what their clients, that who they service, the customer, feels about the service that they're providing. That's important too. Some agencies may need market research because of the kind of work that they do.

One that comes to mind again is SaskTel. SaskTel today is in competition with other telecommunication industries and it has to be one step ahead of the competition, otherwise it's going to lose business. So there are various reasons why you have to have polling.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. We are talking about \$476,000 in a 15-month period, so that is a substantial amount of monies especially when it's likely that Crown corporations and some departments do do their own polling.

Let's move on to item 4 which is the protocol office, or subvote 4. There is a zero per cent increase in salaries in the protocol office and a 10 per cent decrease in operating expenses. Can you explain why one has stayed the same and the other has decreased?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The decrease is basically

what is a good example of how we have, as a government, saved in everywhere we can, but it's a reduction in the advertising for the Order of Merit program. There is some advertising that is done for the Order of Merit program. The member will know what that's all about because I think she's actually recommended people for this. We have reduced the amount of advertising that used to be done in that and that's where the bulk of the savings is.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you. With item 5, the constitutional and intergovernmental affairs, subvote 5. This subvote was in the Department of Executive Council last year, and you show the 1992-93 estimates as salaries being 651,000; operating expenses being 324,000, for a total of \$975,000. In the '92-93 *Estimates*, Executive Council shows the following figures for this subvote: salaries, 680,000; other expenses, 184,000; for a total of \$864,000. Can you explain to me why there's an increase of \$111,000 between the reporting of these estimates from Executive Council that then went over to your department?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — If I don't answer the member because I may have missed some of her question, I'm sure she will ask the supplementary. But there are two components here, and some of which maybe is not clear. But one . . . there was funding transferred from Executive Council because of the responsibility that's been transferred, but also there was some portion transferred from the Department of Justice because the constitutional component which used to be in the Department of Justice has now become part of intergovernmental affairs.

And you see what we're trying to do here. We're trying to combine responsibilities which are somewhat similar in nature so that we can better coordinate them and be more efficient in the delivery of those services that that particular agency — in this case, the intergovernment affairs branch — provides.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Am I to understand then that the additional \$111,000 is really related to the costs that would have been incurred for constitutional affairs being in the Department of Justice?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Basically yes, I'm told.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you. Executive Council showed 12 person-years associated with this subvote last year, and I'm just wondering if that number has changed and how many people are paid under this subvote in your department?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — In response to the member, in the constitutional and intergovernmental affairs branch, there are 10 full-time equivalent positions for '93-94; three of them are for the re-establishment of the telecommunication and broadcasting services branch which was formerly in the Department of Telephones.

The member will, I'm sure, appreciate the fact that

there are many things happening in telecommunications including the recent legislation in the House of Commons to which I'm quite happy to say we were able to have an amendment introduced so that SaskTel is not being affected for at least another five years. And that's very important for Saskatchewan and for SaskTel.

But the whole area of telecommunications, in our view, is growing in importance and we need to be geared up in order to be able to address the policy issues that come with that. So that's why we have the three full-time equivalents in that area which is part of this branch.

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Minister, just for some clarification then. What you're saying is that the number has changed, but indeed it's not . . . I was asking of 12 person-years. I'm just wondering how that's converted. Are you talking about the fact that you have 10 positions, 3 of which are associated with communications?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I guess I wasn't clear. It's 10 positions.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you. So the individuals actually paid under this subvote in your department would equal 10?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes.

Ms. Haverstock: — Okay. I note with item 6, and I just wish it for the record, that the expenses of the Lieutenant Governor have not changed. So since the expenditures are the same, I shan't ask any questions about that.

Item 7 is the office of French-language coordination, subvote 7. Salaries increased by 16 per cent and operating expenses decreased by 32 per cent, and I'm wondering again if you will explain please the opposite movement of these two categories of expenditure.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The answer to the question of why there is reduction is because once again one of the cost-saving measures, because of more efficiency.

In the past translation services were provided under a contract, which we had to live up to the obligations of. What's happened now is that we provide translation services on a personal services basis. So we are able to reduce the expenditures through that kind of a new arrangement.

Ms. Haverstock: — I understand then that the operating expenses could be decreased in that way, but could you provide a comment regarding the increase in salary by 16 per cent? Have you increased the number of individuals, or is this directly related to salaries for the people who were there before?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm informed that what's happened here is that the translator on contract was paid under operating expenses in the past. What we

have done is appropriately moved this individual . . . identification of the expenditures under the area of salaries because that's where it should be. It was simply a transfer of where the expenditure vote is recorded.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Having required translating services when my executive assistant is unavailable, I know how much money it costs. So I quite understand that there would be a 16 per cent increase.

What portion of these expenses are paid by the federal government? And I have an accompanying question which I will pose as well: has that cost sharing been affected by the recent federal budget, and if so, how?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — This is paid entirely by the federal government. It's a transfer of money specifically for this particular thing, for this particular enterprise, and I am told that there has been in fact a 10 per cent cut in the amount that's budgeted here.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm sure that you are anticipating, as most of us, that that will likely decrease again after the next federal budget.

Let's move on to item 8, the Wascana Centre Authority maintenance subvote 8. Could you please detail for me what types of expenditures are under this subvote.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — It's simply a grant funding to the Wascana Authority for the maintenance and grounds upkeep. And then the Wascana Authority will determine where those and how those expenditures are allocated. But it's a block grant that we make to the Wascana Centre Authority, and then the board of the Wascana Centre Authority makes those determinations on the advice of their staff.

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Minister, is the weekly provision of fresh flowers and plants to ministers' offices provided for under this subvote? And I am wondering, while you're considering this, how much does this particular service cost?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm not sure if we have that. But we can find that out from the Wascana Authority. The answer to the question: yes it is a service that is provided, has been for some time. But that is under review at the present time.

The member will know that I am now on the board of the Wascana Authority which doesn't mean much other than I'm just another member of that board because it's a partnership between the city, the University of Regina, and the Government of Saskatchewan, on an equal basis. But that kind of an expenditure . . . because there has been a reduction in the amount of funding to the Wascana Authority. But that's certainly an area in which the Wascana Authority will be looking and is reviewing as to whether it is something that should continue.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I am

under the understanding that when this subvote was under another department, that in fact the expenditure was somewhere around \$250,000. So I am interested in receiving the number from you. And when you're answering that question I'd asked previously in writing, perhaps you could provide that for me as well.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I can assure the member of that, that that's . . . Once again I don't think there's anything confidential there. I will request of, through my staff, of the Wascana Authority to provide that information, and I will make it available to the member from Greystone.

(1530)

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I do have a comment. I am glad that this is under review. And as much as I enjoy as much as anyone how beautiful many of the arrangements are in people's offices, a lot of people I do think would question priorities when we consider how many budgets have been cut to so many important things like prescription drugs or the health care and other ways. So I'm very pleased that you're going to be reviewing this.

I will end with item 9, the Canadian intergovernmental conference secretariat, subvote 9. Can you tell me what conferences of premiers, ministers, or senior officials are planned in Saskatchewan this year?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, once again there just recently was a major conference, ministers of Environment, which took place in Regina, and I am not familiar with other such events that are scheduled for Saskatchewan. We know of none. My staff tells me we know of none, but we will check again in the event that some department knows some of this information. We'll do the scan in order that we can gather it all together and we'll make that available.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. What I'm really curious about are the efforts that are being made by the province to ensure that interprovincial meetings take place in our province. I know that there should be some view as to whether or not there's some rotation of conferences held across the country, and it would be interesting to note if that's done on an equitable basis.

I actually believe that there's a disproportionate number of conferences that are held in locations like Victoria, even Whitehorse, to the exclusion of other provinces like Saskatchewan, so I would appreciate you looking into this and seeing if there's a way that we can have this come to our province.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Once again, the member is correct; most of these interprovincial meetings are done on a rotational basis. For example, the western first ministers, or the western premiers' meeting was to be held in Canmore, Alberta last month, but was delayed because of the election that's taking place in Alberta.

We hope that that meeting will be again put into place before this year, because we think those are very important occasions to get together and talk about western Canadian concerns so that once again we in western Canada . . . where we can develop common positions when we go to meet at a first ministers' meeting or ministers' meetings on a national basis.

I can assure the member that it is in our interest to make sure that when it is Saskatchewan's turn that those events take place in Saskatchewan. And we will certainly be not walking away from the opportunities when they present themselves. As a matter of fact we will be promoting Saskatchewan as we are doing through the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and other ministries in every way that we can. This area that the member raises is not going to be less important than any other.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. You raise something, of course, that's been near and dear to my heart and I've on several occasions made arrangements for Mr. Axworthy to meet with both the Premier as well as the Minister of Economic Development to talk about the things that can be done to coordinate and to integrate various things on the Prairies so that we do come from a Prairie perspective and we should be doing that in agriculture; we should be doing it in economic development.

In fact we can be even looking at some areas like telecommunications that you mentioned earlier. With the federal government's change as far as their own policy is concerned, we in fact are going to be placed in a very difficult position in five years time. It would be quite different if we had an Alberta-Saskatchewan-Manitoba telecommunications system that could be an economy of scale and compete with anywhere in the entire world. So I do hope that you will explore that much more intimately than has been done in the past.

At this time I just wish to thank you very much, Mr. Minister, for your answers and to thank your officials for their assistance.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you. I want to just briefly respond to the member opposite and repeat, I guess, in a different way what I said earlier, that we believe that it is important where we can, to work towards coordination of services that can be coordinated. There are some arrangements that exist now between Saskatchewan and other provinces where we buy training spaces for some particular training areas at the University of Manitoba and they do the same thing in the University of Saskatchewan, and I think we should continue to pursue that. So coordination is important.

If the member is talking about some form of political union — I don't think she is, but there are those who talk about some form of political union — that's a different question altogether. In the interests of the Saskatchewan taxpaying public, both from the point of view of how we spend the money and also from the point of view how we can deliver needed service to

them most effectively and most efficiently, yes, we are interested in exploring and working with other provinces on coordination.

In fact, one of the first things that I did when I was able to take on my responsibilities as minister of Intergovernmental Affairs is to begin to meet with Intergovernmental Affairs ministers. And I've been to Alberta and I've been to British Columbia, and I have met, prior to that, with the Minister of Finance from Manitoba to talk about these things. And we will continue to work on this, and it no doubt will be one of the major items on the agenda of the western premiers' meetings, whenever that meeting takes place.

I thank the member for her appreciation for the assistants we've got here, and I appreciate the constructive questions that she has asked of the different expenditure areas of the Department of Provincial Secretary.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just one word before I start. First I'd like to welcome the officials of the minister, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to say this, Mr. Chairman, that we're the official opposition and I'm the critic for the Provincial Secretary, and I was standing on my feet and I thought you would recognize me before the member. And I understand that maybe you can't see, but I . . .

The Chair: — Order. The member has been around a long time and should know better than to question the Chair when the Chair makes a ruling.

Mr. Muirhead: — I'm not questioning the Chair, Mr. Chairman. All I was saying, I know it's difficult for you to see me when I'm standing here for the . . . that's all I was saying, Mr. Chairman. I don't see anything wrong with that.

Mr. Minister, first question I'd like to ask you is: would you provide the names of your ministerial staff, provide the names, job descriptions, qualifications, and salaries of your staff.

The Chair: — Why is the member for Yorkton on his feet?

Mr. Serby: — Mr. Chairman, I'm begging leave of the Assembly to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Serby: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish this afternoon to introduce to you and members of the Assembly, seated in the Speaker's gallery, a group of seniors from the constituency of Yorkton.

And I think very appropriate, Mr. Chairman, that to echo the words of the Minister of Social Services yesterday, being that it's Seniors' Week, who indicated that the appropriate recognition needs to be provided to acknowledge the wisdom and the

contribution that seniors have made to the betterment of our province.

And certainly when I look into the gallery this afternoon, Mr. Chairman, I see a number of people who I know personally and appreciate very much the work and the contribution that they have made for the betterment of my community and the district of Yorkton.

So I want to ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming the seniors from the constituency of Yorkton and area. I'll be meeting with them in the next little while. I expect that they've brought some refreshments for me, Mr. Chairman, and we might enjoy some of that. So I ask the Assembly to join with me in welcoming seniors from Yorkton.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Provincial Secretary Vote 30

Item 1

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, may I extend my welcome to the people in the gallery as well.

In response to the member's question, yes, I can provide that information. I want to point out that although under the policy where we have now a consistent policy in the government where each minister can only have a certain number of staff and there's categories of what their salary categories should be, and each minister's office is allocated a staff of six, three of whom can be secretarial responsibility people and three of whom can be what one would call, as I used to be accustomed to in the 1970s, as executive assistants. But they're now all called ministerial assistants.

So in my office there are only four, rather than the six. And they are the following: there is Donna Fincati, who is paid \$2,893 a month; Lisa MacMurchy, who is my senior secretary, minister's secretary, who gets paid at \$3,092 a month; Joanne Strand, who is a junior secretary, at \$2,141 a month; and my chief of staff, Lois Thacyk, who is paid \$4,221 a month. And I have on a temporary basis as a summer student, Mr. Carlo Binda, who gets paid \$1,806 a month.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, that's your entire staff that runs the Provincial Secretary, plus your other new additions? Could you clarify that, Mr. Minister, please.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Sorry. Because there is, as the member is correctly pointing out, there was a recent change in responsibilities, now I have also the responsibility for the Department of Education. The minister's staff who were in the Department of

Education with the former minister are still in that office and serve me until at least this legislative session is completed, because there's an expertise and a knowledge there which is important to me. I'm busy running to catch up on all I need to know in the Department of Education because I have not been there for some time. So that staff is still there, but they're staff who are under the Department of Education and not part of the Provincial Secretary.

The Chair: — Order. I'd like the group of government members in the back to find their own seats and to break up the meeting. The purpose for which we are here is to consider the estimates for the Provincial Secretary. I cannot tolerate any other proceedings in this room to implicate those proceedings.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I understand that, Mr. Minister. I just wanted to clarify that; I figured you should have more staff than just that amount. And that's quite understandable that you've taken over the new position of Department of Education, and there would have to be more staff, and I accept that.

Mr. Minister, when you took over Provincial Secretary, when you retired from being minister of Finance and you . . . I don't know whether you moved to a new office or not. I presume you did, but it doesn't make any difference. Did you inherit any staff from the previous minister?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The answer is no, not in the minister's . . . not ministerial staff, no.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, so you're saying that the staff that you outlined for me a few minutes ago, that was all new staff that was hired by you when you took over your new position?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — No, the staff who is with me now have by and large been with me for some time, and they were the same staff who were with me when I was the minister of Finance. When I moved to a different office with my new responsibilities, my staff came with me. So there was no new staff that were employed because of the change that took place, other than the addition of Mr. Binda, who is there as a summer student, assisting us for a short period of time.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Minister, are all your staff working in the legislature? Do you have any staff located anywhere else, outside the legislature?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — They're all located in the legislature in my office in room 204 and not anywhere else.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Have any of your staff received salary increases since initially hired?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes, there have been two changes. Ms. Fincati was hired originally as the lowest-level ministerial assistant. She has . . . when I lost my intermediate assistant, she was then

transferred to that position with the responsibilities that come with that and therefore is being paid at the salary level of an intermediate assistant. So because she moved to a different position, she gets paid a different amount of money which is more than she did when she was paid as a junior.

Also, Ms. Lois Thacyk, who has been in an acting position as my chief of staff for some time but being paid at her previous level which was an intermediate position, has now been appointed as my chief of staff officially and therefore gets paid at the salary level of a chief of staff or the senior ministerial assistant.

(1545)

Mr. Muirhead: — So, Mr. Minister, it looks the same as other departments that I've had involvement with in estimates — if you want an increase in wages, the best is to move around a little bit.

We had this happen here last week, as you'll know, Mr. Minister, where . . . I'm not saying that it wasn't an okay raise in salary that you had here because I don't understand the circumstances, but we had some cases where a worker from Environment goes over to Municipal or Rural Development and then the other one goes back and then they get into a new wage level.

I think when we're talking about cut-backs, Mr. Minister, and we're talking about . . . you're trying to tell the world out there you're cutting back, and then doing these things, I don't understand why anybody's getting increases.

Just one question. This Lisa MacMurchy that works for you, is that any relation to Gordon MacMurchy?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — No. Before I answer that, let me correct an error that I made in my previous answer. The change was not for Ms. Donna Fincati; it was Lisa MacMurchy, who the member opposite was speaking about, who did have an increase because she moved to the senior position, and not Ms. Fincati as I said earlier. And I apologize for that error.

But let me point out to the member opposite — because the question of cost-saving is very important and I'm sure that he agrees with me on that and I'm sure most people in Saskatchewan do — we have made significant savings in the cost of ministerial assistants in ministers' offices.

Now for the interest and the information of the member, I'll point out how. I'll compare April to April, 1991 to 1993. In 1991 there were 115 ministerial assistants; in the present administration there are 93. The total annual salary dollars spent for ministerial assistants in April of 1991 was 4 million; the amount of dollars that is spent on ministerial assistants April '93 is 3.4 million. So in total terms there has been a saving.

And I don't say that in any kind of a critical or argumentative way. I just want to make sure because

people read *Hansard*, that the facts are on record here. So we have made those savings.

What has happened, Mr. Chairman, is that prior to us repairing the system, there was no regularized system under which ministerial assistants were appointed.

Under the former administration there was an ad hoc system. And the minister might hire somebody in his office and pay one kind of salary. Another minister may hire somebody else and pay another kind of salary. Several ministers hired people who were not paid through their departments or worked in their offices but were paid by Crown corporations.

What we said, partly because it's more open, but partly because it's important to regularize, we have now classifications. And a minister may hire an assistant in any one of those classifications. And he can hire one person in that particular classification so that it is clear what the salary should be.

Although it is not required, we also make those agreements public and we publish them. And that's no doubt why the member leads to the question, because that information is public and so it should be. So that the public can know what the salaries are; who the people are that are being paid. And if there is a movement from one particular job to another, that should also be disclosed, as it is.

Just because I think this is important, Lisa MacMurchy is not in any way a relative of Mr. Gordon MacMurchy. I think the member probably knows that. I think the little story that came out in the press one time because of some comments made were really quite unfortunate, and people should check their information before they say that. Because it did cause some concern to Ms. MacMurchy who's a hard-working individual, who's making a living by doing important work in my office. She could be doing it somewhere else. There's no relationship whatsoever, I want the member to know.

Mr. Muirhead: — That's fine, Mr. Minister. And that's what I was doing, was checking to make sure.

Well anyway while we're talking about her, when did she first begin working for government? When did she first work for government? When was her first-time employed by government?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — She was appointed when I was yet the minister of Finance in July of 1992.

Mr. Muirhead: — Well that's fine. Nothing wrong with that. It's just that whether she's Gordon MacMurchy's daughter or not, she's still a political appointment anyway.

Anybody that was appointed to your government that wasn't working for government prior, don't tell us they aren't a political appointment because they all are. If they didn't have an NDP card, you know they couldn't get into your office, and let's face that. So don't let's say they're not political appointment.

I would have been quite happy if she had of been related to Gord MacMurchy because I had great respect for Gordon MacMurchy. I just wanted to know and make sure that you're doing what you said you wouldn't do — there'd be no political appointments.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, we'll move off those now. We want to move along here.

Do any of your assistants travel in conducting their work, from your department? Do they travel outside of Regina, like?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — When required, yes, my assistants will travel. I don't think that there has been a lot of travel by any of my assistants. But if it was required for an assistant to accompany me to a health meeting, some of which I attended on behalf of the government, I would have taken an assistant with me because it is important to have somebody who will keep notes and make sure that if there is the need to get back with information, that we can get back to it, because I think that that's an obligation that we all should live up to. So yes, there will be some travelling.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, just for the sake of time, what I would do here, Mr. Minister, I have several requests along this line of questioning. I'm not expecting you to answer the questions I'm going to ask today. It would take too long. So I'm just going to read them out and your staff can look in *Hansard* tomorrow or whatever, if you can't keep up with me, and I will be satisfied just to get the answer at a later time.

Please provide me with the total your department has spent on ministerial assistant travel expenses. I would like full details of this travel, including the assistant's name, total cost per trip, the purpose of the travel, mode of travel, who they accompanied, departmental officials, and destination. I'd be quite satisfied just to get those. Mr. Minister, will you agree to that, just to give me that at a later date?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes, I will provide all the information that is relevant with respect to travel and we will accompany it with a nice letter from me to the member from Arm River.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And the next one is ministerial travel. And I'd be satisfied with the same thing here too because I realize that there's a lot of work to this and we'd be here a long time if we have to have your official look all these up. Please provide total spent on ministerial travel. Provide full details of travel including purpose, who accompanied you, mode of travel, destination, what was accomplished by the trip, how many trips did you make to Ottawa or otherwise.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes, that will be made available.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Now the next one, why did the operating expenses increase for

accommodation and central services, increased over \$500,000?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted the staff to give me the exact response here so that I don't mislead the member in any way. I responded to this when the member from Greystone addressed this in part. But the accommodation charges in 1993-1994 reflect a new pricing model used by the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. The pricing system prior to 1993-94 was such that departments were given what was called a participation credit on their accommodation billings, and in 1992-93 the credit given to the Provincial Secretary was approximately 47 per cent.

What we do now is that the new charges now reflect fair market value which is an accurate way of displaying what the real costs are. And therefore that's why there is this change in that particular subvote.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, how many staff are employed in this area? How many total staff?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well there are no staff in the Provincial Secretary; the staff here would be employed by the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

But since I'm on my feet, let me also conclude something else in response to the member's previous question. And I think it's important to point out that even though there is a change in the amounts that are displayed because of the new fair market value process that is being applied here, it should be important — and I want to put on the record — that there is no overall increase in expenditures within the government because of the change to the new pricing model, because in previous years the participation credit was simply absorbed by the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

Rather than simply being absorbed it is now displayed up front in each of the departments so that the public can know what the cost really is.

Mr. Muirhead: — Can you get me that answer? If you did give it to me, I didn't pick it up, Mr. Minister. How many staff are employed in that area?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, no staff are employed in the Provincial Secretary. All of the services that are provided there would be staff employed in the Property Management Corporation. So there is no staff involved here on our part.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, then in the Department of Provincial Secretary, do you or do you not have a deputy minister?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes, indeed I have. I introduced Mr. Leeson at the beginning. He's seated at my right, Dr. Howard Leeson, who is here as the deputy minister of Provincial Secretary on leave from the University of Regina.

Mr. Muirhead: — I'm sorry, there was talk in the background when you introduced him and I didn't pick up what their positions were. And I'm sorry about that. It just dawned on me, did you have a deputy minister here with you today or do you have one.

Mr. Minister, I'll go back here and ask some questions. In the entire department, in all government departments you're talking about increases . . . or decreases in the percentage — 3 to 8 per cent reductions in their budgets pretty well through the whole budget book. It's actually fairly consistent. Most departments decreased, all except this Provincial Secretary department. Why was there such a large, massive increase in funding?

And I know that the member from Greystone did ask some questions on that but I didn't pick it up. I was gone part of the time. So perhaps you could give me an overrun on why the massive increase in the Provincial Secretary department.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, let me respond to the member's question. And here we face a problem of the way expenditures are displayed. And unless you look at all of the information that's available, sometimes it could lead you to come to a wrong conclusion.

I have here the estimates for the Department of Provincial Secretary which, if you look at only the estimates of the Provincial Secretary for 1993-1994, you could come to the conclusion that there is a major increase in expenditures of some \$800,000 which is alleged by some people.

But that is insufficient information. Because you also have to consider the supplementary estimates for 1992-1993 where there was provided to the Department of the Provincial Secretary a number of expenditures totalling, under administration, \$513,900 which one has to take into consideration. And that was done before the new responsibilities of the department were established when I became the minister and we reorganized the government so that intergovernmental affairs and other responsibilities became part of the Provincial Secretary.

So in fact the increase in the funding, when you look at all of the previous expenditures, is only \$300,000 . . . \$345,000, sorry; I just wanted to be correct here. And those increases for 1993-94 is because they include such areas as the expenditure for a minister's office, the deputy's office, the policy evaluation and coordinating unit, and systems support and operating expenses for the entire department. Those are generally the areas in which those increased expenditures are going, but they're not really \$800 as one could quite correctly, although in error, reach by looking only at the *Estimates*. If you look at the *Supplementary Estimates*, you will see that that increase is only \$300,000 because of the new functions that the department is responsible for.

(1600)

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, I'm not just sure that I understand what you're saying there. Could you point out to me . . . I've got the *Supplementary Estimates* in my . . . and I didn't look at that, and I apologize. I didn't look at it. Because naturally when I look at it, Mr. Minister, when anybody looks at the Provincial Secretary, you see estimated 1993-94, 1.145 million compared to 311,000; it does give you the approximate . . . And the end vote, the subvote for the Provincial Secretary, it's just about a million dollars more.

You go to the last page, on page 104, it's talking about six eight to five eight. It's a million dollars more. So naturally it would . . . So I think there's a million dollars that we have to account for here some place. So can you show me in this here, in the Provincial Secretary supplementary estimates, where a million dollars comes in here. There has to be a million show up here, not 800,000 — \$1 million. If you could just explain it, I'll follow you through there, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I want to make sure that we're talking about the same thing. I thought that the member's previous question dealt with the administration subvote. And the answer that I gave to the member on the administration subvote is correct.

Now I think the member from Arm River is asking about the overall increase in the department expenditures, which is based on 1992-93 as opposed to 1993-94, an expenditure of close to more than . . . an increase of more than a million dollars. But you've got to remember that is not necessarily an increase in the overall increased expenditure of the government because what's happened here is that we've taken responsibilities that used to exist in other departments and moved them to the Department of the Provincial Secretary, and therefore the expenditure in the Provincial Secretary will increase but there will be a similar decrease in expenditures in places where those responsibilities used to exist.

And I'll give the House some examples: constitutional and intergovernmental affairs transferred from Executive Council to Provincial Secretary and protocol office transferred from Executive Council to Provincial Secretary; the addition of telecommunications and broadcasting.

Now there is some new responsibilities; policy evaluation and coordination is new. That will involve three person-years.

And then of course there is something which we addressed earlier, and that is the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation pricing change, where we put a more accurate price on accommodation, which will also increase the expenditure here. And that basically, I think, explains why there is that kind of a difference between 1992 and 1993.

Mr. Muirhead: — All right, Mr. Minister. You can say you've transferred some other parts of government to the . . . some came from the Executive Council. And

you said how many . . . What transferred from the Executive Council to Provincial Secretary? Could you repeat that again? What was the Executive Council and what was the dollars and cents there?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The transfers from Executive Council were: the Canadian intergovernmental affairs conference secretariat transfers from Executive Council to the Provincial Secretary; intergovernmental affairs transferred from Executive Council to Provincial Secretary; protocol office, the same kind of transfer, and the communications, policy, and planning transferred from Executive Council to the Provincial Secretary.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, it's so easy for you to stand here. We're talking a million dollars and you're asking for a million dollars more in funds for the Provincial Secretary's department. You stand up and you read off some different departments that is transferred here, and then some of their estimates, I suppose, are even gone. But we have the Executive Council estimates coming up.

Now if we ask in Executive Council estimates, will they be able to tell us the dollars and cents saving that's been saved by transferring this? And I wanted to know what . . . We'll just worry about right now Executive Council. How many dollars is Executive Council? What's been transferred from there to your department? How many dollars and cents is that?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, the answer to the question is that I cannot say precisely to the member opposite that a particular responsibility was in Executive Council and transferred to Provincial Secretary and the full component of that expenditure was transferred over, because in some cases it actually reduced the expenditures from what used to be there before.

For example, in intergovernmental affairs we used to have an Ottawa office with two personnel who we found . . . that particular operation was not very functional or very helpful to us. That's been eliminated so there's actually been some cost savings.

But if the member wants us to break that down and as best we can show what we have saved in each particular area, I'll undertake to provide that to him. It's not very complicated, but we will have to do some work on that.

But where there has been a responsibility taken from Executive Council and moved to Provincial Secretary, that will be a saving in Executive Council, but not necessarily the full amount because some of the support services that are there may still be there. But the Executive Council should be able to provide you that when their estimates are here.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, it's so easy for you to stand up. You have said, you've said to the member from Greystone, you've said to me, oh we've had a cut-back and we're trimming government, and you're trying to tell us you've trimmed the Provincial

Secretary department. Still you're asking for a million dollars more, then you can't tell us exactly what it costs by transferring these other departments . . . or rather, parts of departments to the Provincial Secretary's department.

Now there should . . . If you're saying that you've got to cut back and you're saving the taxpayers' money, for goodness' sake, you should know exactly. You knew that this was around Saskatchewan about the \$800,000 that was put into your budget for campaigning right across Canada probably. You're probably . . . We think until you can tell us otherwise that probably some of this \$800,000 or a million dollars is using for funds some place for the federal campaign for all we know. Until you can give us some figures that are absolutely concise here, Mr. Minister, what else are we going to believe?

You say you're cut back, you show us that you've trimmed, and you said other departments have trimmed, and still you're going to move A to B and B back to A. And when we get to Executive Council, I want them to be able to say exactly the same figure that they've saved by transferring some departments to your department. And I want you to give the same figure now that'll work out when we go to Executive Council.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I draw the member's attention to the *Estimates* on page 102. And let's take these one at a time.

In the communications policy and planning, the member will see that in 1992-1993 the expenditure was \$532,000 and we're budgeting this year for \$542,000. Last year this responsibility was in Executive Council. It is now transferred to the Provincial Secretary, so those numbers are pretty clear and straightforward.

I now draw the member's attention to the protocol office where last year the expenditure was \$392,000; it is this year budgeted for \$372,000. That's one other transfer that's been made from Executive Council to Provincial Secretary.

Then to item number 5, constitutional and intergovernmental affairs. Last year there was an expenditure of \$975,000; this year it's \$819,000. Now this one may not be totally accurate because some of this might have been out of Justice, so we'd have to break that down.

But intergovernmental affairs was a transfer from Executive Council to Provincial Secretary. The constitutional part was a transfer from the Department of Justice to Provincial Secretary, but in global dollars, it's pretty straightforward.

So the information is already in the book that the member asks for and I don't know what more I could say to be of assistance in providing an answer to his questions.

I think there is one other one, on page 104. Canadian

intergovernmental conference secretariat was in Executive Council; and it was \$63,000 in last year's fiscal year and it's \$64,000 in this fiscal year.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, I understand what you're doing here, and you're leading me back and forth. And maybe you're explaining it right, but maybe not. Maybe you're fooling the public; I don't know that. And I don't know how we're going to get to the bottom of it in your department. All I can say is maybe we should have a commitment from you that . . . I need to know the exact . . . of all the different parts of departments that have moved into your department.

That's why it's kind of hard for us to follow through here, for us not to know, Mr. Minister, which other . . . I didn't know it till today that Executive Council moved some part into here, and that's explaining some of the things we needed to know. And I appreciate what you've told us here, Mr. Minister.

But for us to know exactly where this million dollar increase is, whether it's increase in salaries or less salaries or whatever, I want the commitment from you so that we have it when we go to the Executive Council. Because I don't want to have to leave it and then we got no one else to go to because we can't come back to you.

That every department or parts of department that has moved into the Provincial Secretary's department, if I could have it sent to my office, that's all I ask, of the complete breakdown of what the additions that you are . . . is costing this department, and what it should be saving some other department.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Be more than happy to do that. We'll provide what has been transferred from any other part of government to the Department of Provincial Secretary. We will indicate to the member any increase in the budget that may have been there, but we will also indicate where there has been a decrease. So that we make it very clear for not only the member, but for the House. And we will make sure we do that so that the information is there, and we make sure that the Executive Council is ready to provide that information when their estimates are here as well.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. If I have your word on that, that's good enough, and then we can have something to go to Executive Council with, or some other departments with.

Mr. Minister, these aren't just . . . maybe this isn't applicable to asking you here. But I will ask you this: previous to being moved to your responsibility as Provincial Secretary, what minister was responsible for accommodation and central service?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — It was previously in the department of what used to be the department of Community Services, now Municipal Government, and I believe the transfer was made in October of 1992.

Mr. Muirhead: — Also, Mr. Minister,

communications policy and planning. Just so we can speed it up, I have several so I'll maybe give you about three and then your staff can help you put it together: communications policy and planning, protocol office, constitutional and intergovernmental affairs. I have several, but I'll give you three and then you can answer three at once. It will speed things up . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . what minister was responsible for those prior to you coming to this office?

(1615)

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, communications policy and planning was in Executive Council so it was under the responsibility of the Premier. Protocol office, the same answer. Intergovernmental affairs was the same. Constitutional was under Justice, Minister of Justice.

Mr. Muirhead: — I have four more, Mr. Minister, asking the same question: Lieutenant Governor, office of French language coordination, Wascana Centre Authority maintenance, and the Canadian intergovernmental conference secretariat.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The last one on the conference centre was in Executive Council, therefore it was under the responsibility of the Premier. The Lieutenant Governor, the French languages unit, and the Wascana authority was in the department of Community Services.

Mr. Muirhead: — All right, thank you, Mr. Minister. Okay, now those are the . . . that takes us back now to that request I gave you a few minutes ago, that we get all these transfers, we should be able . . . what's going to be additional million dollars or whatever approximately to your department, but we've got to be able to find that savings some place else in government. That's the question I'm getting at. And so some of these estimates may be over; if not, but we can still get all those answers out of Executive Council.

So if you will send that information I asked prior to my office, we can move on.

Mr. Minister, I understand your department is still involved in several different advertising and what not. Does your department have anything to do with advertising or for any work at all, do you have anything to do with Service Printers any more?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The answer is no, not that certainly we're aware of. But I want to . . . in fact I don't even know of a Service Printers, but the answer to the question is no.

I want to also, while I'm on my feet, correct an earlier answer which I gave. I said that the office of the Lieutenant Governor was under Community Services; I was in error. It was in the Department of Justice and the Minister of Justice would have been responsible.

And I want to correct, just add and elaborate on my

earlier answers on the increase in the budget of the Provincial Secretary. Yes, a large part of that is because of transfers of responsibilities from other departments to the Provincial Secretary, so we can better coordinate some of these similar responsibilities. But also some of that increase that you see there is because you have to take into consideration supplementary estimates for 1992-1993 which makes it less than a million dollars. But also part of the reason is because of the new pricing system under the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. I didn't want to let this go without clarifying that.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, you mean to tell me you forgot who Service Printers was, the big printing company that was the shareholder for all the NDP Party of Saskatchewan, and we used to talk about it back here in the '70s? You mean your memory is not as good as mine, Mr. Minister? And you're saying that . . . can anybody in your department know whether even Service Printers is still a printing company today or not? Maybe it's not involved in this department now, but maybe somebody knows something about it.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — My department doesn't know about it and it's not my responsibility to answer on behalf of the New Democratic Party, nor should I. But I think in the spirit of cooperation I can say to the member opposite, because I'm rather reasonably close to my political party, that Service Printers is no longer owned by the New Democratic Party. The New Democratic Party does not own a printing company of any kind.

Mr. Muirhead: — That's all right. It's been a long time since we talked about Service Printers, and I thought maybe we could just jog our memories a little bit. The old Service Printers was the department that was owned by the NDP, and the government used to give a few hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of printing to every year. But you're saying that that day has come and gone. I'll take your word for it, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, I haven't got many more questions to ask. I've got this one question. I understand and I'd like to have you clarify: is there polling from your department, polling from your government paid for out of your department? Are you involved in polling? There's nothing wrong if there is; I just want to clarify it, if your department pays for all of this.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — That one needs a little explanation, Mr. Chairman. The polling that the government does, and the market research the government does, is now coordinated through one agency, and it happens to be in the Department of Provincial Secretary.

Where there is polling done on behalf of the overall government, then that funding will be in the Provincial Secretary, and it will be paid through the Provincial Secretary.

But where the polling is done, for example, on behalf of Saskatchewan Power Corporation, or on behalf of

the Department of Health, or any other department, they will pay for the polling that is done on their behalf based on question-by-question pricing.

Mr. Muirhead: — Could you give me an outline of what polling is paid for out of your department, and how much it costs?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm told that there is \$91,000 budgeted for the omnibus polling in the Department of Provincial Secretary.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, what type of polling? Polling for what?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I think, Mr. Chairman, if I were to sort of reply to all of the questions that are asked, it would take a considerable amount of time. But I want to remind the member that all of the polling that was done was published two and a half months ago, and all the polling that's going to be done for — let me go backwards — June, May, and April will be released again in July, and all of that information is public information. So the member can access that, or if he wishes we can provide it to him.

Mr. Muirhead: — Now, Mr. Minister, I understand that, but if I just want you to put it on the record what type of polling, polling for what? You're just saying that your polling was published. I want you to put on the record what the polling was for.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I want to give the answer as I gave to the previous member who had asked the question, but the polling looks at a number of things. It looks at what people view certain services that the government provides.

For example, there have been questions on health care to determine whether people are reasonably satisfied or satisfied with the health services that are provided. And the last poll that I remember, there was a question there on whether people were satisfied with health care in Regina and Saskatoon and generally province-wide. And 74 per cent of the respondents said that they were.

So there's an attempt made to find out public attitudes about various issues, and I only use that as an example so that the government, along with other information that we have, information that's provided by the department people, information that's provided by our caucus members, information that's provided by the opposition from time to time, information that we gather in public meetings and consultation processes, we want to know that what the government is doing is meeting the expectations of the population who pays the taxes.

This is one way to do it. There's a whole range of questions that they're asked in order to be able to determine that, but if the member wishes I can provide the entire package. We don't have it here obviously. It's available, but I can make sure that the member gets that.

Mr. Muirhead: — Well when you're asking questions on these pollings about how people view what you're doing in health care and what you're doing with the farm sector out there, we can go into . . . and perhaps the upgrader. Perhaps we can go into anything. How much of this is political polling, for your own political party?

An Hon. Member: — None.

Mr. Muirhead: — Well I expect you to say none from your seat, but I'd like you to stand up and put that on the record. And as minister I want you to say absolutely . . . well I want you to tell me how much political effects and helps you get from this polling to help the NDP Party of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, the way one pays for polling is you ask a pollster to do certain questions. They will professionally develop the questions for you to make sure that you get a balanced answer. We pay on a question-by-question basis.

The member will see when we release the polling that's been done for the last three months, in July, there are no questions that one would call questions of a political nature.

For example, there will be no questions that ask about how people's voting . . . may be leaning in their intentions to vote. That is not something that we will be paying from the provincial treasury out of taxpayers' dollars. That's something that if the Liberal Party or the Conservative Party or the New Democratic Party, if they want that kind of information they're going to have to buy it from whoever they use as a pollster. But the taxpayer will not be the payee of that expense.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, I'd like your commitment that you would give me this entire package even though you say some of it's made public, or all or whatever. I'd like that entire package sent to me.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I can assure the member that I can give him that commitment, and my staff will prepare it for you. I am certain you will find it very good reading. In most cases it will be good reading to put you to sleep because it's really quite that boring. But yes, it's volumes, and we will get it for you.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, you're not trying to kid me, are you? You wouldn't kid me that you'd have a poll come off about the Department of Health and it would say, you're doing this right and you're doing that wrong, that that doesn't end up in your caucus. So don't try to kid me that it isn't going to be for political reasons because it's for sure that it's just automatic that if something came off, if the government did something in polling and the people are saying something is . . . we don't agree with what you're doing; we don't agree with closing hospitals; and we do agree with closing hospitals; we do agree that you're letting nurses go; we do agree with the wellness program; or we don't agree with the wellness

program. Or the polling may ask about the upgrader and what you're doing legislating instead of negotiating. You'd be asking . . . maybe you could be asking questions. And I don't know that, but whatever kind of questions you're asking.

You might be asking questions in your polling about the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program from '91 to '92. You can't tell me that that doesn't end up in the political process, because it would have to, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm glad the member raised that, because I don't want to mislead anybody. The caucus on the government side will have the same access to the polling as the member from Arm River, the same access as the media or the public of Saskatchewan because we are now publishing those polls. No longer are polls, as used to be the case in the past, taken by the government never to be seen by anyone.

We have undertaken as a matter of policy in response to the requirements of the freedom of information that when the government does polling, the polling will be made public. So the member from Arm River will have the same access to it as everybody else, and I think that's the right approach and the right policy decision. That makes it, I guess, from time to time any government uncomfortable. Because when this kind of information is released, it's subject to debate.

But I can speak for myself and my colleagues that we're not afraid of the debate, because sometimes that debate can be very helpful in helping the government decide what is the right decision on any one particular issue which is subject to a decision at any particular time.

(1630)

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Minister, thank you for saying that and putting it that way because that's great if it's that way. I just want to ask you this one question. Will you commit to me that this government — and I'm not talking about the NDP Party because naturally they got their right to do as the Progressive Conservatives have or the Liberal Party. We can do all the polling we want and that's not the public's business. But the Government of Saskatchewan, with taxpayers' money, will be publicizing every dollar spent in polling to the public of Saskatchewan. Will you make that commitment, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Any dollar spent for polling purposes will be disclosed as it is being disclosed. And I can assure the member of that.

Now I want to qualify for the member from Arm River in the same way as I qualified for the member from Greystone, that there will be from time to time polling done for things like budget purposes. I want to make it clear to the House and to the member opposite that when and if that is done, those kinds of polls will not be disclosed until after the budget is presented. It's a very narrow area in which I'm talking about.

And I'm sure the member will agree that there is good reason for this. It's the responsibility of any government, it's the responsibility of the Minister of Finance — and I was once there and being accused by the Acting Leader of the Opposition for leading information out so that people could take advantage of it. That's not the kind of thing that should happen.

And polling geared for budgetary purposes may provide information to people who may take advantage of what may or may not be in the budget. But although it may not be provided before the budget, that information will be made available after.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I appreciate that comment, and that's all the questions I have to ask at this time.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 9 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 30 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1992-93
Consolidated Fund
Budgetary Expenditure
Provincial Secretary
Vote 30**

Vote 30 agreed to.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to thank the minister and his officials for their answers and their quick response. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want to express my appreciation to the member from Arm River for the questions that he asked and the comments that he has made, but I also want to express an appreciation to my staff who were here. No minister can answer many of these questions unless he has staff or she has staff which are capable and do an awful lot of hard work to prepare, as this book here will indicate. And I'm sure that all members would like to express their appreciation to our public servants for the diligence with which they perform their duties.

**Supplementary Estimates 1992-93
Consolidated Fund
Budgetary Expenditure
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation
Vote 46**

The Chair: — I will ask the Minister of Agriculture to introduce his officials to the members of the committee.

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right I have Dale Sigurdson, who is a deputy minister of Agriculture — assistant deputy minister of Agriculture, pardon me. I have Henry Schappert from Crop Insurance on my left and behind me Terry

Tangjerd and Doug Matthies from Crop Insurance.

Item 1

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess there's a couple of questions I'd like to ask about. To start with, Mr. Minister, do you have any of your staff paid for by Crop Insurance in the minister's office?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — There is no staff paid for in the minister's office from Crop Insurance at present.

Mr. Martens: — Do you have an individual from your office who looks after the Crop Insurance responsibilities in your office?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — We certainly have individuals; it's not always the same person. Andy Prebushewski is the assistant who does most of it. But also Tom Halpenny and other people in my office work with Crop Insurance, with case work and with Crop Insurance issues.

Mr. Martens: — Would you explain to us in the Assembly how the transfer from the board of directors of the old Crop Insurance format, where it was a part of a separate unit and now it is going to be through the department . . . who becomes the board of directors, who are the management? Would you explain that to the Assembly and to us?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — The corporate structure of the Crown corporation still remains. The structure, as it is now the deputy and assistant deputy serve as board. But the management remains basically with the people in Crop Insurance, the management out there.

Mr. Martens: — Are you on the board as well, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — No I'm not.

Mr. Martens: — So the two people act as a board of directors in relation to the administration function of Crop Insurance?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Yes, that is correct. I would like to correct my earlier statement. We have a board of six because that was what was required on the quorum. The Act which we passed here in the House recently allows us to go to two and we will be moving very shortly to a deputy and assistant deputy. Presently we now have six people who are employees of the government one way or another on the board.

Mr. Martens: — Would you give me a list of those names of those individuals who are?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — I can read you the list of the six that are currently serving: Hartley Furtan, Dale Sigurdson, Harvey Murchison from Agriculture, Louise Greenberg from Executive Council, Wil Olive who is the loan representative — he's a lawyer who is not a government employee — and Terry Tangjerd who is the CEO (chief executive officer) of Crop

Insurance. That will be changed very shortly to be Mr. Furtan and Mr. Sigurdson.

Mr. Martens: — Do you anticipate a change in the structure of the administration as it relates to Crop Insurance when I noticed the president is part of that? Will he remain the president of Crop Insurance, and will you then be having these individuals as the board of directors? How do you plan on working that out?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — The president will remain. He will now be called the chief executive officer of Crop Insurance, but the structure will be much as it was except it will answer more through the Department of Agriculture. And there will not be an outside board at all.

Mr. Martens: — Would you give the rationale for changing it from a group of producers who are a board of directors to a non-group of directors, board of directors who are non-farming people or not outside of government? Would you give us the rationale why you did that?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Well I think the rationale involved two things. One was the cost-cutting measure. As you probably know, in this budget we eliminated some 40 boards and commissions, I believe. And we did that with many of the Treasury Board Crowns. It's a cost saving; it's not a huge cost savings. But it is, as the member knows when you have regional representation from across the province, a fairly expensive procedure to bring people to one point.

The other rationale I think was to coordinate it more closely with the activities of the Department of Agriculture. Although Crop Insurance is a Crown corporation, it's governed by a federal-provincial agreement and is governed much by provincial money. It has no free-standing decision ability, I guess was our concern.

Certainly the board performed a useful function and certainly some of that will be lost, particularly in an advisory capacity. But as many of the policy decisions that the board might have been involved in making were pre-empted by the fact that it's a federal-provincial agreement and is governed by that, and also governed very much by the province's ability to finance, so if anything involved monetary expenditure it had to go through the normal channels of minister and Treasury Board, caucus and cabinet, and so on.

So we felt we could get better coordination through the Department of Agriculture, and it's also a bit of a cost saving with the board and also possibly with some duplication of services that we may be able to over time work with the Department of Agriculture. We may be able to eliminate some duplication of services between those departments and gain some more efficiencies that way.

Mr. Martens: — The auditor had something to say about how you paid your board of directors. He stated

that you lacked a proper authority for \$89,862 that you paid the board of directors. Would you tell us what the total volume . . . that's probably accurate. What I need to know is what went to pay for per diems for the board, what went to pay for travel costs, and all of the other things related to that, dealing with the auditor's comment that it lacked the proper authority.

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — I believe the auditor's report referred to '91-92 year. Basically what happened with the lack of authority is it was an error in the OC (order in council) which didn't put in . . . we neglected to put in dollar amounts. And therefore the auditor brought it to our attention, and we later then passed an OC that corrected it.

I have board expenses here broken down. This would be for the year ending March 31, '93 which is not the year under review, but if this is of interest to you, we can pass this over.

Mr. Martens: — That is of interest. Would you also have the information that dealt with the '92 year?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — As the member may know, we also dealt with Crop Insurance in Crown Corporations, and I believe we passed that over to your member at Crown Corporations. But we don't have a copy here, but if you want another copy, we can get it. But I believe that we passed that over during Crown Corporation review.

Mr. Martens: — Well I wouldn't mind having it, if you don't mind.

Can you tell me what the total volume of dollar value that all of the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance is covering as an insurance policy, the whole value of it including the grains and oil-seeds and the livestock?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — The total liability of Crop Insurance is about 2.5 billion.

Mr. Martens: — Would you be able to give me a breakdown of the volume in the grains and the livestock, and would you be able to provide that to me?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — We don't have that here; we can get it for you. There's about 50 million that's related to livestock; the rest would be grains. But we don't have the breakdown by grain here, but we can get you that information.

Mr. Martens: — Okay, I wouldn't mind having that. Also those that are involved in the crop insurance and those that are . . . the breakdown on the crop insurance side and those on the revenue insurance side. Would you be able to do that for me?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — We have the number of contract holders in each. In livestock feed there are 5,176 contract holders; crop insurance, there are 46,839; and in revenue insurance there are 41,661

contract holders.

Mr. Martens: — You wouldn't have a breakdown on the dollar . . . on the volume of dollars for the crop insurance and the volume of dollars on the revenue insurance. Would you have that?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Are you talking in terms of liability, or premiums and liability? Again we don't have those numbers but we can get them for you.

Mr. Martens: — What's the volume of decline last year over this year, because it seems to me that as I've been talking to producers, that there's been a decline in the crop insurance portion. Is there a significant decline in that area?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — The decline in the number of contract holders is 2,105 or about 4 per cent.

Mr. Martens: — Is that in the crop insurance or revenue insurance?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — That's the crop insurance. In revenue insurance there's 1,955 or again about 4 per cent.

Mr. Martens: — How much . . . or how many of those individuals who were of that thousand had to pay back to the corporation for overpayments that they had gotten because they maybe wanted to get out of the program?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — There were approximately 1,000 overpayments. Whether or not they got out of the program had nothing to do with the overpayments. The overpayments resulted mostly with durum producers because of us, the Crop Insurance, underestimating the value of durum, created overpayments. And whether or not you got out of the program was not relevant to whether or not you had overpayments to repay.

Mr. Martens: — Has the Crop Insurance Corporation received all of that money back from those thousands? Because I have a significant durum-growing area in my part of the world, and I know some very significant paybacks that were required. Did you give them a planned pay-out period, or was it just lump sum payment back? How did you do that?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — The majority of it has come back, although as you pointed out, there were quite a number that had very significant overpayments, and some of those are negotiating or have negotiated terms of from one to five years in order to repay it.

Mr. Martens: — And how many of those thousand? And can you give me the dollar value of those people that are taking the time to pay it back?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — There is approximately \$4 million which is still outstanding.

Mr. Martens: — Divided by how many people?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Approximately a thousand people.

Mr. Martens: — No, that isn't quite right. You had a thousand people who received overpayments, then you said that quite a few of them had paid back. Now you had 4 million outstanding in payments that were given . . . or the individual was given time to pay that out. Would you provide that, that how many individuals there were under that thousand that you came to terms with?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — I may have misinformed you on the answer to the question. The thousand is what's still outstanding. There were originally something like 2,500 and it's a thousand with 4 million which is still outstanding. The original amount was something over 6 million that was outstanding.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you. I've had some people call my office regarding the wildlife, changes to the wildlife fund and how it's being paid out. When did that decision take place and would the minister be able to rationalize that out.

For example, what traditionally I believe happened is that an individual had a claim under wildlife or waterfowl depredation, that was in addition to his crop insurance claim. And now it seems as if — and individuals have called me — and what you've done is you have included that in the volume of dollars that this individual gets. For example, if he had a \$10,000 claim through crop insurance, and he had a \$1,500 claim through wildlife, it would be included in the \$10,000 now whereas before and up till this year it was \$10,000 payment plus \$1,500 claim through wildlife depredation.

Would you explain to me when that happened and what your rationale for doing that was.

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — That was done, not with the waterfowl damage. This year there was still the traditional way of actually double coverage in a way on the waterfowl. On the wildlife we did do that. I guess it eliminates double coverage is the reasoning for it. I think it comes to something like \$270,000 that . . . less that paid out because of the way we changed it and the change took place this year, as I said.

Mr. Martens: — Give me the rationale why, why you did that. I don't know whether I understand, nor do the farmers understand, who have on occasion received compensation from this wildlife . . . well wildlife, geese and antelope and deer being on their land and they've received compensation in other years and this year they're not. I'm not sure that the explanation you've given them is satisfactory, nor do I think they know what the answer is.

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — To begin with, there are two separate programs, one for waterfowl which is cost-shared with the federal government, and one for wildlife which a provincial program.

I guess the logic is, as you pointed out, if somebody

had a crop that was below their coverage, they would be receiving crop insurance up to that coverage. And if you add on top of that wildlife damage, it actually amounts to double coverage. And with the very limited dollars we had, that was a decision that was made that we would deduct from the coverage the amount that the wildlife claim came to, only in cases where people obviously were in crop insurance claims in that crop on their total farm.

Mr. Martens: — What the problem is, Mr. Minister, it isn't fair. The person who has in excess of his crop insurance yield can make a claim for damage and get a compensation for it. And the individual who has his crop insurance losses, he has to pay for that out of the losses that he incurs right from within the framework because he's under his average. And so because he's under his average, he gets a specific cost against his; whereas the guy that had a 40-bushel crop and has a loss of \$1,500, he gets paid.

And there's no fairness there, Mr. Minister. That's what the problem is.

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Well I guess that's open to interpretation. If two people have a 15-bushel to the acre yield and one guy has wildlife damage, he would collect more than the guy who had a 15-bushel yield and didn't have wildlife damage. I guess when you buy crop insurance it's a guarantee up to the 30 bushels or 25 or whatever his coverage is. And I guess that's the reasoning.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.