

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT,
AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

Standing Committee on Estimates

Acting Deputy Clerk: -- Mr. Kowalsky, chair of the Standing Committee on Estimates, presents the third report of the said committee, which is tabled.

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Estimates is given the job of scrutinizing the budget for those areas that no minister is responsible for, and that in this case is the estimates for the Legislative Assembly and all the monies that are paid through the Legislative Assembly Office and through the auditor's office. The members have considered them all and are herewith submitting the report.

And I move, seconded by the member from Regina Albert North:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on Estimates be now concurred in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Murray: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to introduce on behalf of my friend and colleague, the member from Rosetown-Elrose, seated in your gallery, to you and through you to my colleagues in the House, the Rosetown Central High School grade 8 class. They are accompanied by their teachers, Kathy Johnston and Norm Cline. And I understand that we'll be meeting later on for a photo and a visit.

So I'm really looking forward to meeting these good people and I ask you to join me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cline: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden in welcoming the students from Rosetown, but especially because my cousin, Norman Cline, is one of their teachers. And I'd like to welcome Norman here and his students. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislature, 18 Grade 10 students from the Wynyard High School seated in the Speaker's

gallery. They're accompanied by their teacher, Nick Jordan, and chaperons Roger Moskaluke, and Marlene McGillivray.

I want to say to the students I hope you have an enjoyable stay here in the city of Regina and, in particular, in the legislature. I'll be meeting with you at 2:30. I ask members to join with me and extend a warm welcome to the students.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Renaud: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure today to introduce through you to the Assembly, four guests from the autonomous region of Inner Mongolia of the People's Republic of China -- Madam Zhao, Mr. Cui, Madam Cuo, and Madam Yu are accompanied by Mr. Peter Lavalley, an instructor from the Wascana Institute.

Our visitors are participating in a project, Mr. Speaker, sponsored by international service division of SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) and the Canadian International Development Agency.

Inner Mongolia, you may know, Mr. Speaker, has a climate similar to South Dakota, in fact, somewhat similar to Saskatchewan. The people there grow wheat and other grains, and raise cattle. Inner Mongolia has large coal reserves and they also have a similar highways situation as to the province of Saskatchewan. Madam Qingmei will be working at the placement at SaskPower to look at our system of coal-fired generation. Mr. Chongxue and Madam Xia will work with the Department of Highways. Madam Qiuju will be studying our education system.

I look forward to meeting with our guests after question period today. And I ask all members of the House to join with me in welcoming them here today and wish them all a very, very pleasant visit to the province of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly, I'd like to introduce my nephew who's visiting with us -- Daniel Toth. His dad happens to work as a realtor in Saskatoon and he's taking the time while his dad is at a meeting to come and join us. He's sitting in your Speaker's gallery.

And as well, a former schoolmate, I guess, Marlene McGillivray. Actually I had the pleasure of attending school with her sister, Diane, and it's a pleasure to say hi and see her again. Welcome to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: -- Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, Gerry Kristianson, the president of the Western Brewers Association, seated in your gallery.

Maybe, Gerry, you'd just stand up and be recognized.

100th Anniversary of Saltcoats

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Kristianson is here for what has become an annual event, where the brewer's association holds a reception, and I'm sure all members are planning to attend tonight. And I know they're all welcome; this is an all-party event.

Mr. Knezacek: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like the House to join with me in recognizing the 100th anniversary of the town of Saltcoats. In this historical year of 1994, I feel a great amount of pride and happiness for the residents of this community which happens to be within my constituency.

I just want to, on behalf of the members of the Assembly, welcome Mr. Kristianson here to the Assembly again. I look forward to talking and seeing you later.

In the history book, **History of Saskatchewan**, volume 14, it is stated:

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The first community to take the necessary steps to establish a village in the Northwest Territories was Saltcoats.

Hon. Mr. Rolfes: -- It is my pleasure today to welcome some guests from my constituency. I think I have 70 Grade 6, 7, and 8 students from Queen Elizabeth School. I believe they are seated in the west gallery. They are accompanied by their teachers, Ms. Boyle, Mr. Toles, and Mr. Cherkewich.

This began as a collective effort in late 1893 by the people of the area who felt municipal status was necessary. By April of 1894, the process was completed and Saltcoats was officially the first village in the Northwest Territories to receive municipal status. A great celebration followed this announcement and a general holiday was proclaimed.

I will be meeting with them shortly after question period when the Deputy Speaker will take over my duties here this afternoon. I look forward to meeting with you, and I ask all members to give them a hearty welcome.

Saltcoats has been the home for many influential and important people in Saskatchewan's history. I will give a few examples from this list, including James Anderson, premier of Saskatchewan from 1929 to 1934; Thomas M. MacNutt, first Speaker of the Saskatchewan legislature; William Eakin, Speaker of the Northwest Territories legislature, 1899 to 1902; and James Snedker, Speaker of the Saskatchewan legislature, 1965 to 1971.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

North Battleford Comprehensive High School -- First Place in Drama Competition

Hon. Mr. Anguish: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to offer congratulations to the North Battleford Comprehensive High School drama club for winning first place in the provincial high school drama competitions.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the rest of the year, Saltcoats will be celebrating its anniversary with all kinds of events. Some highlights will include the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) musical ride on July 10, and the Saltcoats Agricultural Society's 106th annual fair day on August 10.

The 13 female students and their teacher, Mr. Roy Challis, are to be commended for the unique and inspiring performance of **The Matriarchs**. Although the production borrows selective pieces from many famous playwrights, including William Shakespeare, Mr. Challis is to be congratulated and credited for the excellent play.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the Assembly to join with me in congratulating and recognizing the town of Saltcoats with its rich history and outstanding citizens on its 100th anniversary. Thank you.

I now wish to inform the Assembly that the students have been invited to perform at the International Theatre Festival to be held in Liverpool, Nova Scotia, later this week. It is important to note that this is the only high school in Canada who has been invited to attend this prestigious event. In fact, a high school from Japan is the only other high school in the world invited to attend.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

I ask members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in congratulating the drama club from the North Battleford Comprehensive High School and wish them well during their performance at the International Theatre Festival.

Claybank Brick Plant Historic Site

Ms. Bradley: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to report on the efforts of some dedicated people in my constituency and area who are working to preserve the memory of a vital part of Saskatchewan's economic and social history.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The town site of Claybank is just west of Avonlea, and from the 1880s right up to 1989 some of the finest bricks in North America were made from the rich deposits of clay found close by. Homesteader Tom McWilliams first discovered the deposits, selling his product to Moose Jaw until a manufacturing plant was built in 1914. Production kicked into high gear in 1916 as the Dominion Firebrick and Pottery Company. At peak production 10 large kilns were in

operation producing bricks for heavy-duty industrial purposes, and for such famous edifices as the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City and the Capitol Theatre in Regina. And as well, the factory supported a thriving community.

Now the Claybank Brick Plant Historical Society, a partnership of local citizens and businesses working with the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation, is endeavouring to have the plant declared a national historic site. This historic facility is the most complete such plant in Canada, possibly in North America.

The board of directors of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board will tour the site in June in order to make a decision. This site has great potential for a tourism destination and many options, from self-guided tours to a restored plant and town site with interpretive centres.

I congratulate the historical society for its dedication and wish it well in its attempt to preserve this significant part of our history, as well as creating an exciting partnership of economic development, tourism and heritage in southern Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Tribute to Swift Current Hockey Coach

Mr. Martens: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to acknowledge the work of a hockey coach in the Swift Current area for the last eight seasons. His name is Graham James. Graham James provided to the people of Swift Current some very exciting and dynamic hockey, and I want to say to the people in the province that we were pleased to have him there as a part of a well-functioning organization.

He went to the Memorial Cup, and I believe in 1989 he made some significant contributions. He had set a record for the . . . or the hockey team set a record for the most goals scored in the least amount of time -- three goals in 16 seconds. And, Mr. Speaker, I was at that game and they almost did it the second time in the same period. They had the outstanding hockey team of the year. They went 17 games in winning the Memorial Cup, only losing one game in all of that series.

They set a record, Mr. Speaker, for the amount of penalty goals, short-handed goals that they had. They set a record for the amount of power play goals. And they are to be commended for their season that year.

But they have also contributed through the years for their dynamic contribution to the community. And I want to say to Mr. James, thank you very much, and I'm pleased to have been part of that community development.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Maidstone School Band Visits North Dakota

Ms. Stanger: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am

proud to tell the House about the efforts this past weekend of the Maidstone School Band in my home town, Maidstone. The band was a participant, along with hundreds of other musicians, in the 64th annual Parade Day Festival in Williston, North Dakota.

This was the first big trip the band has ever had together. They have competed in the Moose Jaw band competition and the Lloydminster music festival. But this trip to North Dakota was the largest yet. Over 39 bands performed last weekend, including bands from all over western Canada and the United States.

The point of the trip was to have fun as well as to create awareness for the band members. The Maidstone School Band consists of 70 members from grade 6 to grade 12 level. The band instructor, Jim Best, a former senior director of music with the British Army, felt the trip would allow the students a chance to perform in a large and exciting festival as well as provide an opportunity for the parents to hear and see what their children have accomplished in the band program.

It's only a few years ago that cut-backs and declining numbers jeopardized the existence of the Maidstone School Band. However actions by concerned citizens and teachers who felt music education was important, changed that bleak outlook.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again congratulate the Maidstone School Band on a great effort at the Parade Day Festival in Williston, North Dakota.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Promotion for City of Saskatoon

Ms. Lorje: -- Thank you. I would like to inform the House of the initial results of a unique partnership between economic development authorities and tourism agencies in Saskatoon.

You know, Mr. Speaker, part of the government's **Partnership for Renewal** strategy to increase job opportunities in Saskatchewan is to focus on six strategic sectors. One of these sectors is tourism. Therefore I am very pleased that Tourism Saskatoon and the Economic Development Authority of Saskatoon have worked together with the Marketing Den to design a word mark featuring the word "Saskatoon" with a sun over the O's.

This exciting word mark will be used in advertising materials and promotions to help sell Saskatoon to potential investors and tourists. It represents our sunny climate, our agricultural-based economy, and the upbeat attitude of our people. It will be shown off soon to over 400,000 people in a tourism tabloid that will be sent to potential visitors from western Canada.

I would like at this time to congratulate Tourism Saskatoon and the Economic Development Authority of Saskatoon on the development of this innovative word mark. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Labour Legislation

Mr. Goohsen: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Labour. Mr. Minister, your government employed the services of Price Waterhouse to determine the costs of your Labour Standards Act to the Saskatchewan businesses. Now without any in-depth study or survey they determined that the cost will be around \$9 million, a number that you have used extensively in this Assembly and throughout the proceedings of the House.

Mr. Minister, do you still stand by this number?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: -- Well the number is not ours. The number was done by Price Waterhouse. I can only assume, given their competence and reputation, that the work was well done. Yes, I'm prepared to use the figure. It is theirs and I trust them.

Mr. Goohsen: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, we recently received an in-depth and detailed analysis of your Labour Standards Act from the Hotel Association of Saskatchewan. Now the hotel association represents 84 per cent of the 476 hotels in the province and employs approximately 13,000 people; over half -- 7,000 people -- are part-time.

Mr. Minister, the cost analysis conducted by the association shows that your changes to The Labour Standards Act will cost their industry \$27,172,450 annually; let me say that again so you get it exactly: \$27,172,450 -- not 9 million -- for every business in Saskatchewan, over \$27 million for the hotel industry alone, Minister.

Now based on this information, Mr. Minister, will you now admit that the study that you conducted was flawed and completely unrealistic for the province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: -- That's scarcely possible without knowing a little more about the study. It is not that I don't trust the opposition implicitly with figures, and it is not that we haven't learned that you people are to be trusted to the nth degree; it's just that, I guess when I see the member from Maple Creek brandishing about figures -- I'm from Missouri -- I'd like to see them for myself.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I remind you that the Price Waterhouse study was done using the same draft legislation that the hotel association used; and I remind you that your final Bill was much worse. Mr. Minister, this analysis clearly shows what kind of damage your Bill will have on just one industry in our province. The report has an ominous conclusion, and it states, and I quote:

If serious changes are not made, some existing hotels may be forced to close and hotel industry development in the province may be virtually halted. Careful consideration must not only be given to the hotel business but also to the potential effects of the legislation on the hotel industry's labour force and the negative repercussions these amendments may have on the overall economic growth of the tourism industry in the province.

Now, Mr. Minister, you said once businesses understood your Bill that everything would come up roses. Well here's one industry that understands your Bill from the start to the finish and they are predicting business closures and job losses.

Mr. Minister, will you now admit that you have made a mistake, that in fact your Bills are anti-labour, anti-business, anti-jobs, and only pro-union?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: -- The people at Price Waterhouse, whom I would remind the hon. member are one of Canada's more reputable chartered accounting firms who put their name at the bottom of the study, they had the advantage of working closely with the government and the officials from the department and so they knew what was going to be in the legislation. I have no knowledge of this at all, but one might speculate that they didn't have quite the same advantage and that to some extent, this represents their worst fears.

This also is reminiscent of last year's scare story, which we had at this time, that the changes in the WCB (Workers' Compensation Board) was going to increase the premiums by 300 per cent. We said 10 per cent and 10 per cent it was.

And this is reminiscent of the same thing. One might suppose that what this is is their worst fears. Well I've said to businesses from one end of the province to the other, your worst fears are not going to be realized in this.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, your red herrings are not accurate. I have a copy of the analysis here in my hand.

Mr. Minister, you have been shown time and time again what your labour laws will do to job creation and business investment in Saskatchewan. You have received hundreds of letters, hundreds of phone calls. There are full-page ads appearing in the papers. The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce has called for your resignation, a precedent in itself. The Woolco store in Moose Jaw has closed shop; it's finished. There are now rallies being planned by the business community in this province. That's a hint that there's trouble in your paradise, Mr. Minister. Someone wants to rain on your parade.

Several months ago, you and your Premier refused to meet with the business community in an emergency summit on the economy. In light of your labour Bills, they are now knocking on your door again.

Mr. Minister, will you and your Premier meet with the business community before you force these Bills through the legislature and listen to their concerns, instead of scorning them?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, I'd like to answer the question on behalf of the government by reminding the hon. member from Maple Creek and all the members in the Assembly that the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Economic Development, in fact numerous of the ministers and ministries, have met extensively with both business groups, businesses, and trade union people with respect to the drafting of The Labour Standards Act and The Trade Union Act.

I think, Mr. Speaker, one should understand that voices such as Mr. Botting's on behalf of the Federation of Independent Business, Ms. Byers on behalf of the Federation of Labour, their job is to seek more. Their job is to always seek more from their point of view.

Our job is to try to define the proper balance in the public interest, and we think we've done that through a deficit reduction program, through a **Partnership for Renewal** program, for tax reductions for small business over the last couple of budgets, and we've done it through the various changes to the amendments to The Labour Standards Act and The Trade Union Act.

So what we're seeing here is the middle ground, the sensible ground for working men and women, and for the proper business and investment climate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

No-fault Insurance

Mr. D'Autremont: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). Mr. Minister, our office has received a letter from Mr. Doug Kalesnikoff, who is a chartered accountant and also a certified fraud examiner. Mr. Kalesnikoff has been examining the fraud your government is perpetrating on the people of Saskatchewan through your no-fault insurance advertising and he says that you have produced no figures to substantiate your claim of a potential 24 per cent hike in SGI rates. He says, and I quote:

I have had the opportunity to review the 1992 financial statements of the SGI auto fund. The losses were not as a result of an increase in claim payments, but rather as a result of an increase in the reserve set aside for unpaid

claims. I have requested information from SGI that would assist in determining whether the SGI estimate is bearing out to be true.

My request has not been answered.

End of quote.

Mr. Minister, what is this 24 per cent estimate based on, and why won't you provide Mr. Kalesnikoff with the information he needs to make an independent evaluation of this estimate?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Speaker, in response to the question on the figures by SGI, I'll remind the member, on the loss, you know, a couple of years ago. We have about a \$7 million loss and last year, it was over 34 million and 19 this past year. So we're looking at about approximately a \$60 million loss over the past three-year period.

We estimated that if we continued the way we were on the system, the people of the province would have to pay 24 per cent increase in premiums in the next three years. Now I see the member keeps talking about this and I feel that he is supporting a 24 per cent increase for the youth in this province, 24 per cent for the seniors in this province, a 24 per cent increase for everybody in this province in regard to insurance. On this side of the House, we don't want to see a 24 per cent increase. And I think that the facts that you should have, is look at the annual reports and look at the Sobeco study, and then you will get the facts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting that the loss in the SGI auto fund reserve from October, 1991 to November, 1991 was an increase of \$17 million.

Mr. Minister, I guess asking you to justify your figures is a little like asking Charlie Farquharson to do **Hamlet**, but I'll try again. Mr. Kalesnikoff says that according to the figures he has been able to gather, there is absolutely no justification for your prediction of a 24 per cent increase. He says that a four and a half per cent increase last year cut the auto fund's 1992 loss by more than half. And since this year's loss is lower than last year's, how is it that a 24 per cent increase is required to correct the problem?

Once again, your government is creating a problem that isn't really there, and then using misleading information to suit your own political agenda.

Mr. Minister, will you admit that this threat of a 24 per cent increase is simply a number you pulled out of the air to try and justify your no-fault insurance scheme?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Speaker, the members from across, including the Liberals, will want the people of Saskatchewan to have a 24 per cent increase. They've fought us all along when we dealt with the judges'

increase of 24 per cent.

Why do they have one rule in regards to people such as the judges with a lot of money, and another rule for the other people of the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: -- On this side, we look at the vast majority of the people and what we have done in regards to benefits and what we have done in dealing with the fiscal situation, we simply say that that 24 per cent increase is too much.

I think that we need to clearly examine the motive behind what questions the member is asking. I think he simply does not know his facts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: -- Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, it's interesting that you suggest we don't know the facts when it's you who is unwilling to debate in public this issue.

Mr. Minister, you're the one who's threatening the 24 per cent increase; no one on this side of the House.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Kalesnikoff says, and I quote:

In accounting circles there is a saying that a set of numbers must pass the smell test, i.e., they must be reasonable when looked at on an overall objective basis. According to the smell test it is my feeling that the numbers being proposed by SGI have a very distinctive aroma.

Mr. Minister, your entire handling of this issue has a very distinctive odour. We asked you about specific examples involving young people and home-makers and you have no answers. We asked you to hold public consultations and you refuse. And now we ask you to justify some of the figures you're using in your \$150,000 campaign, and you either won't or can't answer.

Mr. Minister, why don't you pull this Bill until you have time to hold full public consultations as are being called for by Saskatchewan consumers' association and until you and the public have an opportunity to understand all of the implications?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Speaker, if the smell test is going to be applied, it should be applied to the members opposite. For nine years, Mr. Speaker, they put this government \$16 billion in debt. For nine years, Mr. Speaker, the members from across used experts to back up exactly what they would do at every step of the way. I think that the smell test should be applied to the members from across.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the minister in charge of Gaming. Mr. Minister, you've talked about your partners in the casino business -- aboriginal people and exhibition boards. And this morning you were quoted on the radio as saying: a charitable component will be built in. Interestingly, when I in fact asked you to do this on March 24 of this year you said, and I quote:

. . . this is the highest form of duplicity that has ever been displayed in the legislature . . .

And that I should be ashamed of myself.

Now the Swift Current Exhibition Association wrote to you on January 21, 1994, about how your gaming policy was killing their casino. And this is what they wrote to you:

Your new policy announcement effectively puts us out of the gaming business. With the introduction of two major casinos in the province, combined with the VLT program that is already in place, we can no longer compete.

Now that you have done an about-face on charitable compensation, Mr. Minister, will you assure all charities in Saskatchewan, including the Swift Current Exhibition board, that they will have an opportunity to share equitably from gambling profits in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for yet another question. And let me say in response to her question, I'm having a bit of difficulty. She's now asking for a charity component in gaming revenue, an initiative which some days she opposes but some days she supports.

Now I want to say to the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, we have been monitoring very closely the impact on the introduction of the video lottery terminals on other forms of gaming, since we put them into place in this province. And we realize that there is some impact, limited impact, on the revenue that was and is generated in break-opens that goes to the hospital foundation.

We've also noted, Mr. Speaker, an increase in the revenue to the amount that's played through bingos by some 17, \$18 million in the last fiscal year. So there are some forms of gaming that are up, and there are some that are down.

But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that we are cognizant of the reliance on charities with respect to bingo and to break-open and other gaming dollars, and we will ensure, Mr. Speaker, in our negotiations with respect to the revenue sharing on the casinos, that that will be taken into account.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, there's only been one place and one person

and one side of the House that's been inconsistent on whether or not there'd be a charitable component built in, and that is on the government side and yourself, sir.

Many charities run lotteries, as you know, and Sask Lotteries sells many varieties of lottery tickets, some of which give away free tickets as prizes. The Saskatchewan Elks clubs, in partnership with the RCMP, have sold tickets to snowmobile rallies to raise money for drug youth awareness programs and they promote alcohol-free grads and other drug abstinence programs.

In the past few years -- and you will know this, sir, because they wrote to you -- their lottery has made more than \$100,000. Now they've been informed by your department because they encouraged ticket sales by giving away a free ticket per book to ticket sellers, they will no longer be licensed to operate their fund-raiser.

Now, Mr. Minister, the government pays its lottery sellers a commission and gives away free tickets, Mr. Minister. Why the double standard?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, let me thank the member again for yet another question. And let me say that I am really confused. Yesterday she's opposing gambling, today of course she's lobbying for more gambling revenue on behalf of the charities who have been part of the revenue from gambling in this province for many, many years.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the Liquor and Gaming Authority is a regulatory and a licensing body. And I want to say that we regulate the promotion and we regulate the licensing, and we will continue to do that.

Now if the member opposite would want to see gratuities and perhaps more given to those as an incentive to sell lottery tickets, then she should say so.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we're not quite clear because one day she supports gaming initiatives, and on the other day she opposes them. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, the inconsistency is more than glaring.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you keep getting one opportunity after another to show that you have some level of competence to run the ministry of Gaming and you've displayed none.

Charities all over Saskatchewan are seeing the results of your government competition, your government competition on charitable revenues. And I have a copy of a fax from the Gaming Commission advising the Shaunavon Knights of Columbus and other chapters all across Saskatchewan that their 5/18 raffles will no longer be licensed by you because it resembles the Lotto 6/49 too closely.

Mr. Minister, lotteries are lotteries as you know and they've been around for many years in Saskatchewan. They all follow exactly the same concept. You're already draining hundreds of thousands of dollars because of VLTs (video lottery terminal) going into your government coffers.

The Knights of Columbus, the Elks, the Swift Current exhibition boards, the hospital foundations are all getting the same message from you that their good work that they are doing in their local communities with youth, with seniors, in health care you don't care about and they are not important to your government. And you, sir, are tossing them the crumbs when the government gorges itself on the whole gaming pie.

Now, Mr. Minister, when will you admit that your government is the place where there is true addiction to gambling revenue, and when will you get some help before you rob local community charities blind?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, let me say on the outset that there's no reason for the member opposite to get personal with her attack. If in fact she's concerned about the policy, or if she's concerned about the direction of the government, we'll accept that. But I want to say that this new form of Liberal politics with personal attacks is less than becoming the member from Greystone, who is purported to be over and above that by many of the members of the press gallery.

Let me say this, Mr. Speaker: what she has done one more time, is she has shown that in her mind there is good gambling and there is bad gambling. What I say to the member from Greystone, that gambling is gambling; we will regulate, we will control, we will license, and we will develop policy that's in the best interests of the province of Saskatchewan as long as we sit on the government side of the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Arts Board Grant

Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Arts Board. Madam Minister, your hand-picked Arts Board awarded a grant of \$9,500 to a Christopher Leffler. As you know, Mr. Leffler was recently expelled from the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) because his artwork defamed a Saskatchewan resident.

I find it strange that your government would want to give taxpayers' money, Madam Minister, to an individual whose so-called artwork defames people and clearly invades their right to privacy.

Madam Minister, do you support this \$9,500 grant to Mr. Leffler, and do you think Saskatchewan taxpayers should be paying for the type of defamatory artwork that he is doing? If not, will you rescind the funding and find some better use for the money?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Carson: -- Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for that question. I think it's important to put on the record the status of the Saskatchewan Arts Board. The Arts Board is an arm's-length agency that works independently of any political interference of the government. Their policy has been for many years established, that they provide grants through a juried, peer-selection committee. That means that they select peers of artists who review the applications, decide the merit of those applications, and award grants on the merit and on the size of that application.

So the government does not interfere, it has never interfered, in the application of the funds for the Arts Board grants; we don't intend to do it now. In regard to the, I suppose you would call it the appropriateness of this grant, I think we all have our personal opinions about whether this was appropriate or not; I'm not going to respond to that.

I'm going to tell you that the process that has been in place for the last 50 years by the Arts Board is being followed and we do not intend to interfere in that process.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll go to the Premier with the next question, because the minister doesn't seem to get it.

Mr. Premier, we recently brought up the case of Vicki Lissel in this House. She's got hepatitis C. It takes about \$7,500 a year for that individual to continue living. Your government as yet, Mr. Premier, hasn't come up with \$7,500 for Vicki. But you do have \$9,500 to support artwork that defames and infringes on the privacy of Saskatchewan people.

Your minister, your friend, the Minister of Justice, tells us about priorities. And he says, there is law and then there's justice. Well, Mr. Premier, I ask you: will you see that justice is done and that this grant to that individual be removed so that people in our society, like Vicki Lissel, who need funding from your government, will get the priorities they need, and not this kind of individual who's getting money from your government? Would you do that, Mr. Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Carson: -- Mr. Speaker, I explained the process that the Arts Board goes through in the awarding of their grants to applications.

I will though say to the member opposite that we also are concerned. I will ask the Arts Board to give a full and complete report to me about this application, and we will review the process to make sure that all people who receive grants from the Arts Board are given the best due process that we have as far as juried peer selection. But also that we do make sure that the taxpayers' money is being spent appropriately.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Resolution No. 91 -- Independent Commission on MLA Remuneration

Ms. Haverstock: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with a sense of irony that I rise today on the 70th sitting day of this legislative session, to move a motion urging the government to put in place the structure for an independent commission on MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) remuneration.

As members of this Assembly know, the 70th day is the day on which their daily per diems or showing-up-for-work bonus expires. That is the per diems expire for all members of this House but one, Mr. Speaker, the seconder of my motion today, who is the member for Regina North West, who has refused to collect the per diems since her first day in this legislature.

Until such a time as an independent commission on MLA remuneration has been struck and a more sensible and equitable reimbursement system is established, this per diem payment structure is only one quirk in the system through which we disburse taxpayers' money to ourselves. It is only one reason that I and my caucus believe that an independent commission . . . it is only one reason -- pardon me -- that I and my caucus believe that we require an independent commission on MLA pay and allowances, and that this must be charged with the task of reviewing all of these expenditures and determining what is fair and what is equitable to all of the people concerned.

I made my position known on the first meeting of the Board of Internal Economy that was held on January 6 of this year. At that meeting the concept of an independent commission into MLA remuneration was discussed and the following motion was proposed, and I quote directly, Mr. Speaker:

That the Minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Leader of the (Third) . . . Party, report to the next meeting of the Board with, but not limited to: (the following) terms of reference, membership, and budget for an independent commission on MLA compensation and payments.

Mr. Speaker, the board unanimously passed that motion. And I left the meeting feeling a sense of urgency to prepare for the upcoming meeting with the minister and with the Leader of the Opposition. I endeavoured to prepare some background information on what other jurisdictions had done regarding similar commissions.

From Alberta I obtained a copy of Bill 322, Members of the Legislative Assembly Salaries, Allowances, and Expenses Review Act, that was debated during the fourth session of the twenty-second Alberta legislature. From Manitoba I obtained a copy of Bill 55, the Legislative Assembly Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act, which was assented to on January 27 of 1993 . . . pardon me, it was July 27 of 1993, by the Manitoba legislature.

And I researched The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act for Saskatchewan to see what already existed to empower the type of committee that the Board of Internal Economy members had in mind. What I found is that there exists in The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act a provision for the government to empower a committee to examine MLA pay. The provision, which is found in section 67.1(1) reads as follows, and I will quote directly, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

Subject to subsection (2), the Lieutenant Governor in Council may appoint a committee consisting of not more than five individuals, each of whom is not a member, for the purposes of reviewing and of making reports respecting the amount of allowances, disbursements and other payments described in sections 41, 42, 43 and 60 to 63 of this Act and subsections 8(1) and (2) and 11(1) of The Government Organization Act.

Before I go on further, the sections of the Act mentioned cover the following aspects of payments that would be subject to review by this special committee . . .

The Deputy Speaker: -- Order, order. Order.

Ms. Haverstock: -- Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The sections of the Act mentioned cover the following aspects of payments that would be subject to the review of this special committee . . .

The Deputy Speaker: -- Order.

Ms. Haverstock: -- I do know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is not a topic close to the heart and soul of all the people on per diems in the legislature, but we will try again.

The following aspects of the payments that would be subject to review by the special committee, as outlined in the provision of 67.1: section 41 of The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act specifies the annual indemnity of each member and for each northern member; sections 42 and 43 contain the amount to be paid for the sessional allowance; section 60 specifies the allowance to the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker; section 61 specifies allowance to whips; 62 specifies allowances to the leaders, or leaders of the opposition; and section 63 specifies the allowance and grant to the Leader of the Third Party.

Sections 8(1) and (2) of The Government

Organization Act specify the salary of each minister and the Premier, and section 11(1) specifies the salary to be paid to the legislative secretaries.

Now these are the powers that can be granted, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to a committee under subsection (1) of section 67.1 of this Act, provided, according to subsection (2), that the Lieutenant Governor in Council shall not appoint a person to the committee without prior approval of the Leader of the Opposition.

The powers of this committee are further defined, and they're further defined in subsection (3), which reads, and I quote:

On or before July 1, 1988, and thereafter as required by resolution of the Assembly, the committee shall submit a report to the Speaker as chairman of the Board of Internal Economy recommending the following:

- (a) the amount of;
- (b) the manner of payment of;
- (c) the manner of adjusting from time to time; and
- (d) any other matter or thing that the committee considers relevant respecting;

allowances, disbursements and other payments.

And finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in section 67.1(4):

The Board of Internal Economy shall review every report submitted pursuant to subsection (3) and may issue directives:

Directives that include:

- (a) approving the report;
- (b) rejecting the report; or
- (c) varying the report so as to reduce the recommended level of allowances, disbursements or other payments.

This then, sir, is the existing framework within which we have to work when considering the formation of a commission to review MLA pay. The statutory framework, I believe, does not go far enough -- far enough -- so what I've done is to draw up an additional list of areas that need examination if we are to demonstrate a real commitment to reforming the underlying principles of MLA pay and benefits.

The mandate of the commission must include an examination of all allowances under section 50 of The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. It is in section 50 that we find the authority, the authority for all payments, for per diems, for travel, for telephone expenses, constituency office and

secretarial expenses, communication expenses, and committee expenses.

Another important aspect of this section, section 50, that I want the independent commission to review deals with caucus allowances -- caucus allowances for office staff, for general expenses, secretarial expenses, and research expenses. I believe that not only must the amount of these allowances be reviewed but the guidelines for their use must come under more specific scrutiny.

Now a recent example of this, which raised my concern even further, was brought to my attention, and it underlines my concern about the rationale for certain expenses by caucus offices, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That example is a document on Saskatchewan New Democratic caucus letterhead, addressed to: Dear Constituency of Greystone Resident, dated April of 1994. The document is concerning the amendments to The Labour Standards Act that are currently before this House in the form of Bill 32.

Attached to the letter from the NDP (New Democratic Party) caucus is a publication titled, and I quote: "Important News for Saskatchewan Workers and Employers."

This publication, interestingly enough, is produced by the Department of Labour and contains a mail-in coupon which one can complete and send to the Department of Labour in order to receive more information on this legislation.

The constituents who brought this letter and its attachments to my attention, wanted to know why the NDP caucus was taking responsibility for circulating government material. Has the Department of Labour had its communications budget cut -- cut back so much that they must now rely upon the NDP caucus to do their promotion?

My constituents also asked whether the Department of Labour would have been asked to subsidize the cost of this mail-out by the NDP caucus, and were all residents in Saskatchewan sent this material by the NDP caucus.

I think that those are fair questions that I've been unable to answer for my constituents who have brought this to my attention.

If my constituency is being targeted for this kind of mail-out of government propaganda, and I think it very clear that NDP caucus funds are being used for partisan political purposes, but what can we in this Assembly do about it? Well if the recent debacle over partisan communication allowance expenditures by certain members of this Assembly are any indication, we can do absolutely nothing.

This is an unacceptable situation and it must be addressed. And we believe that it should be addressed by an independent commission as part of its mandate. The only way to remove these uncertainties

surrounding the payments of members, of ministers, of the caucuses, is for immediate amendments to The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act -- amendments that will allow the expanded type of committee that I've proposed, followed by the immediate formation of an independent commission.

I've done my homework on this issue and I am prepared to meet today with the Leader of the Opposition and with the minister of SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation), just as I have been prepared, and I understand that the Leader of the Opposition has been prepared, since January 6 of this year.

I think that the time has come to stop talking about this commission and that what we need to do is to get on with the job. To that end, I move the following motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, seconded by the member for Regina North West:

That this Assembly urge the government to demonstrate its commitment to the formation of an independent commission on MLA remuneration by directing the government minister responsible for the Board of Internal Economy to call a meeting with the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Leader of the Third Party, as he committed to on January 6 and March 3 of this year, 1994.

Mrs. Bergman: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to second the motion by the member for Saskatoon Greystone calling for a meeting by the three party representatives to determine the mandate for an independent commission into MLA remuneration.

During the recent by-election campaign in Regina North West, I made a promise to my soon-to-be constituents, a promise that I would not collect the \$94 per diem. I want to read into the record today the following letter, which I sent to the Clerk of this Assembly, dated February 24 of this year.

I am returning the form, solemn declaration regarding attendance, covering the period February 7 to 18, 1994. You will note that I have not signed this form, as I will not be claiming the \$94 per diem to which members of the Legislative Assembly are currently entitled.

During my recent election campaign in Regina North West, I stated publicly that I would not accept this form of payment. I understand that the Board of Internal Economy will soon be empowering a commission to examine all aspects of pay and reimbursements for MLAs. Until such time as this commission has made recommendations to the Assembly on this issue and those recommendations have been adopted, I do not wish to receive any more declarations.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge, no other member of this Assembly has chosen to forego this allowance. The reason my constituents were offended by this particular allowance to Regina MLAs is that it does not reflect any real increase of expenses on the part of those members. However, as the latest **Public Accounts** reveals, no other Regina MLA has chosen to forego the \$94 per day sessional payment.

(1430)

The MLAs for Regina Albert North, Regina Rosemont, and Regina Churchill Downs -- all three of whom have tried to impress us all with their heartfelt concerns for ordinary working people -- all three of these members will, as of today, collect \$6,580 in per diems just for showing up for work.

They merely drove to work, like they supposedly did every other working day of the year; they probably bought their lunch or dinner as they would have had to any other working day of the year. Yet they collected over \$6,500 for exerting this minimal effort.

They are not alone, Mr. Speaker, however, because the other Regina MLAs have happily collected their bonus. The MLAs for Regina Lake Centre, Regina Wascana Plains, Regina Albert South, Regina Hillside, Regina Dewdney, and Regina Victoria have all in the past claimed their full per diems during the sessions. The member from Estevan has also collected \$155 per day per diem for his rural constituency while living for the past 10 years in Regina.

I would be interested to know on what basis these MLAs think they deserve this payment. How does this group of Regina MLAs rationalize to their constituents the collection of over \$59,000 in per diems among . . .

The Deputy Speaker: -- Order. The member for Regina North West places the Chair in a difficult position because the member for Regina North West chooses to involve the Deputy Speaker in her remarks, yet it's difficult for those who occupy the Chair to respond to someone. And therefore the member for Regina North West should be cognizant of the rulings that have been made over time and the contents of Beauchesne's which suggest that members ought not to involve those in the Chair in their debates.

Mrs. Bergman: -- Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I apologize for that inclusion.

I am not aware that any of these members has had to incur the expense of setting up a second residence in order to attend the legislature. How then can they justify collecting this perk? I could not justify it, which is why I chose not to collect it.

Another point that the member for Saskatoon Greystone just told this House was that our caucus conducted research into the commissions into MLA remuneration that have been proposed elsewhere in Canada. We also obtained from the Manitoba government a copy of the *Report of the Indemnities*

and *Allowances Commission*, dated March 1994, the most recent commission of its kind.

I think it is important to share with all members of the Assembly some of the findings of that commission. To illustrate the degree of importance with which the public views this issue, the Manitoba commission received more than 1,200 submissions during the public hearings held last fall. In a section entitled, *The Public Viewpoint*, the commission's final report contains the following paragraphs, quote:

There is much public dissatisfaction regarding the current system of MLA indemnities and allowances. The tax-free allowance, the car allowance, and the level and accessibility of pension benefits were all seen by the public as unfair provisions in the current system.

The report continues on:

Commentary on pay levels of MLAs, ministers, and the Premier often focused on the adequacy of the level of service provided by elected officials, rather than on the responsibilities of the positions themselves. There is public confusion surrounding the actual level of MLA remuneration due to the number of allowances and their varying tax status.

Chairman of the Manitoba Indemnities and Allowances Commission, Mr. Wally Fox-Decent, said that:

Manitobans spoke loudly and angrily about MLA pay and pensions, often expressing the general view that elected officials should not receive benefits that ordinary taxpayers do not get. "We were told this tax-free business is not on," Mr. Fox-Decent said. "And so we are the first jurisdiction in Canada to abolish the tax-free allowance."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I support this motion because I believe, know, and understand that it has the support of people across this province. The tax-paying, voting, hard-working people who keep Saskatchewan moving, all too often find their wallets at the mercy of politics.

Why, Mr. Speaker, why do the people of Saskatchewan support a motion to set up an independent commission to review MLA salaries? The answer is obvious. One does not have to look far at all to find out why people across this province support this motion.

The reason why people support it is so obvious it underlines just how out of touch . . . and how little concern this government holds for the feelings of the people of Saskatchewan. If this government would begin to ask itself what people think, it might begin to truly represent the people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan want an independent commission to review MLA

salaries for several reasons. They want the commission because they suffered from 10 long years of recession, drought, collapsing prices, economic restructuring, Tory mismanagement at both federal and provincial levels, and more recently they have suffered from high tax loads by this government.

The people of Saskatchewan have indeed suffered, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The people of this province suffer, and they do so patiently because they're an optimistic people who believe tomorrow will be brighter than today. They know the day will soon come when Saskatchewan has a government that listens and responds to their needs and concerns.

Mr. Speaker, many people in this province suffered under the weight of hard times, and most believe politicians have not. They're right in believing this, Mr. Speaker. They believe politicians have not suffered because they can set their own salaries and benefits. While the government may have claimed to have taken cuts, these are far less than what the farmer in rural Saskatchewan has experienced, or what the welfare recipient who once had work must deal with.

While benefits have been frozen until the budget is balanced, politicians are still a privileged lot. Elected officials are here to represent the people of Saskatchewan. On this issue, this Assembly does not even try to represent the people. As representatives of the people we should emulate them and lead them. While the good people of this province are suffering economically, losing work, facing hardships that harm their lives and their families, politicians -- that's us -- give themselves raises and severances in the 1980s. They did this as though it didn't matter to the people of Saskatchewan.

While the gravy train may not be getting more generous, we do need to lead by example. This problem can be changed by placing the decision-making power over the benefits in the hands of the public, in the hands of an independent commission where it rightfully belongs, where the public believes it should belong.

Saskatchewan people also support this resolution because they believe in accountability. The government tells them there is accountability and then turns and tells them that they, the politicians, will set the salaries and benefits. Where else except in political life can employees set their own salaries? Salaries, benefits, should always be set by others, and someone should be held accountable for the decisions made. Not so in politics, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan support this resolution because they are just plain tired of politics and politicians. They're offended by people who promise one thing and then go off and do another. They're weary and suspicious of elected office holders who greet them with a warm smile and a handshake, call them by their first name, and then forget who sent them to sit in this House, and who it is who pays the bills. Nowhere is this more true than when it comes to salaries and benefits.

Mr. Speaker, this reminds me of a candidate for office who one time went on and on to a constituent about all the patronage waste and deceit in political life. The constituent turned to the candidate and asked, well what are you going to do to stop it? The candidate sharply replied, stop it? Well no, I want to get in on it.

This motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will do much to get rid of the politics of those who want to shower themselves with perks and benefits. Mr. Speaker, people have little regard for politics and little regard for politicians because they do not feel that they as a people are part of the legislative process. They feel even less welcome in the governing process.

They look at what goes on in the papers, and on television, and they see a closed clique of people that can afford to live in extravagant houses and collect money just for showing up to work. This, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is what the heart and soul of our population considers normal . . . it isn't what they consider normal.

The average Saskatchewan resident would feel a lot better about institutions like the legislature, about our government and our democratic process, if they were welcomed to take a more active part. They would be less cynical about bad decisions if they were consulted more often and in a more meaningful way.

Everyone will accept tough decisions, even wrong decisions if they played some role in making them. We can tell this just from looking at the members opposite on the government side. At times they make questionable decisions and sometimes wrong decisions, but they accept them and even defend them to the end because they somehow feel part of the process.

Mr. Speaker, that is all people want. As Wilfred Laurier used to say to the British, if you want our help or our money, invite us to your councils; let us have a say.

We in this province could take a significant step forward to letting people into the system by supporting the creation of an independent commission to decide how our politicians are paid. By having citizens -- ordinary citizens -- invited to sit on a commission, politicians would be on the road to regaining public respect lost over the many years of scandal and cynicism.

Politicians could likewise go to sleep at night knowing when they picked up their cheque they were paid for a hard day's work, paid what they deserve and nothing more. They could live with the comfort that they lived up to one of the standards and principles that has made our economy productive; our province and our country, one of those envied in the world.

Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I urge the members opposite to support this resolution. Let the people in. Make them once again part of the legislative and governing process.

The pay of MLAs is a fundamental issue. Certainly it does not account for much of the overall government spending, but it has a significance well beyond dollars and cents. When dealing with this issue the members opposite must realize that they are dealing with something much more valuable. They are dealing with the principles of honesty, fairness, and openness. These are at the heart of democracy, the heart of this province, and our country. Should we ignore these, we will certainly falter.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I repeat that I am pleased to second the motion by the member for Saskatoon Greystone today. I trust that in the dying days of this legislature, the members of this House have not lost their will to reforming the payment system and that the member for Prince Albert Northcote will commit to calling a meeting of the three parties, as he has said he would four and one-half months ago.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Upshall: -- Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that this debate do now adjourn.

Debate adjourned.

(1445)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

Resolution No. 28 -- Accountability of Crown Corporations

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed resolution by Mr. McPherson and the amendment thereto moved by Ms. Lorje.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Resolution No. 36 -- Commendation of Farm Support Review Committee

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed resolution by Mr. Flavel and the amendment thereto moved by Mr. Neudorf.

The division bells rang from 2:47 p.m. until 2:54 p.m.

Amendment negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Swenson	Britton	Muirhead
D'Autremont	Devine	Goohsen
Martens	McPherson	Boyd
Bergman	Toth	

Nays

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Thompson	Murray	Lingenfelter
Hamilton	Anguish	Trew
Teichrob	Draper	Johnson
Serby	Goulet	Sonntag
Atkinson	Flavel	Carson
Roy	MacKinnon	Cline
Penner	Scott	Cunningham
Crofford	Upshall	Wormsbecker
Bradley	Stanger	Koenker
Knezacek	Lorje	Harper
Lyons	Keeping	Lautermilch
Carlson	Renaud	Langford

-- 36

The division bells rang from 2:58 p.m. until 3:26 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Thompson	Draper	Lingenfelter
Serby	Teichrob	Flavel
Goulet	Roy	Atkinson
Cline	Carlson	Scott
Penner	Crofford	Cunningham
Stanger	Upshall	Knezacek
Bradley	Harper	Murray
Keeping	Hamilton	Carlson
Trew	Langford	

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Nays

Swenson	Toth	Muirhead
Britton	Devine	D'Autremont
Martens	Goohsen	Boyd

-- 9

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Deputy Speaker, I request leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much. I'd like to introduce to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to the rest of the Assembly my oldest son, Bob, in the west gallery, and my brother, Ron. I just ask all members to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: -- Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all the members

of the House a former constituent of mine, Mr. Lonnie Sowa, who's seated up in your west gallery. Lonnie is the RM (rural municipality) secretary for the RM of Bayne 371 with its head office . . . with the office at Bruno.

Lonnie is down here in Regina today as part of the RM secretaries' convention. And Lonnie is, as I said, a former constituent of mine, having been born and raised in Hyas, Saskatchewan, where his parents, Harry and Sonya, who are very good friends of mine, still carry on a very active and prosperous farming operation.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'll ask all the members to offer Lonnie a warm welcome here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1530)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

Resolution No. 44 -- Integrity of the Justice System

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed resolution by Mr. Toth.

Mr. Upshall: -- Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Before I get into my remarks, or short remarks on this, it was a few years ago when I could remember seeing faces in the gallery and I'd like to welcome the administrator from the RM of Bayne in my constituency as well, along with the member for Canora. I normally borrow some glasses to look up into the gallery . . . galley, rather.

Mr. Speaker, or Deputy Mr. Speaker, I have read the resolution very carefully and I want to say that this government in the last two and a half years have had to make very many tough decisions, but I believe that every one of those decisions was a law-abiding decision based on the fact that the government makes laws, amends laws, and the fact that the tough decisions had to be made fairly. And I think in every instance they were made very fairly within the context of the legislation and the amendments that we put forward.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that no person or no government is above the law and I think this government has proven that in the decisions that they have made to date. And I just wanted to make those short comments and now I would like to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Resolution No. 59 -- The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act Amendments

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed resolution by Mr. McPherson and the amendment thereto moved by Mr. Upshall.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Resolution No. 66 -- Reduction of Number of Cabinet Ministers

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed resolution by Mr. Swenson and the amendment thereto moved by Ms. Hamilton.

Amendment agreed to on division.

Motion as amended agreed to on division.

Resolution No. 80 -- Health District Board Elections

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed resolution by Mr. Martens and the amendment thereto moved by Mr. Cline.

Amendment agreed to on division.

Motion as amended agreed to on division.

Resolution No. 86 -- Government's Gambling Strategy

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed resolution by Ms. Haverstock.

Motion negated on division.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 1

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Swenson that Bill No. 1 -- An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (Legislative Utilities Review Committee) be now read a second time.

The division bells rang from 3:36 p.m. until 4:06 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Swenson	Britton	Martens
D'Autremont	Boyd	Goohsen
Toth		

Nays

Romanow	Murray	Van Mulligen
Trew	Lingenfelter	Serby
Teichrob	Sonntag	Johnson
Flavel	Goulet	Cline

-- 7

Atkinson	Scott	Carson
Crofford	MacKinnon	Wormsbecker
Cunningham	Stanger	Upshall
Knezacek	Lorje	Keeping
Pringle	Carlson	Renaud
Langford		

-- 28

The Speaker: -- Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Pringle: -- To introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Pringle: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to all hon. members. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to the Assembly 31 grade 8 students from Alvin Buckwold, in my home in Saskatoon. It's good to see you here. This is the second year in a row that the group has come to visit. And Alvin Buckwold is just a half a block from our place. Our two sons went to Alvin Buckwold, and I had the pleasure of sharing the day care centre there for three years, and it's still there and functioning very well.

And it's my pleasure to introduce, along with the students, Mr. Joorisity, Mr. Semko, the principal; chaperons, Mrs. Butcher, Mr. Smith-Jones, Mrs. Cammidge, Mrs. Spratt -- I hope these people are all there -- and bus driver, Mr. Wallace.

And we'll be meeting in a few minutes for pictures and drinks, and I look forward to having a chat with some people from home. So I invite all members to help me in welcoming the Alvin Buckwold School to the Assembly. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 4

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Swenson that Bill No. 4 -- An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (Four Year Term) be now read a second time.

Mr. Upshall: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say a few words about this Bill. I find it a little bit hypocritical, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite would table legislation that would look at four-year fixed terms for government when in fact it wasn't very long ago when the members opposite were government, and went a full five years plus a day. Mr. Speaker, that doesn't really . . . it's not in sync

with what this motion says.

Mr. Speaker, I would remind the House as well, and the members opposite, that before that time elections were held basically every four years. It was right around the four-year mark, was a tradition in this province for Houses to rise and have an election about the fourth year.

So this legislation coming now from members in opposition who abused that tradition when they were government, is very hypocritical . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite would like to get into the debate. And I must have hit a little nerve, because that is true and he knows it's true.

So the truth is, Mr. Speaker, that five years is far beyond, far beyond what the norm in this province was. And I would encourage the members, I would encourage the members opposite if they were to ever, if they were to ever be government in this province again -- heaven forbid -- then the first thing they should do to save us all some grief, is to put forward a motion or a resolution . . . legislation rather, that would fix a four-year term.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move that the debate do now adjourn.

The division bells rang from 4:12 until 4:23 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Lingenfelter	Murray	Teichrob
Trew	Johnson	Serby
Goulet	Flavel	Atkinson
Scott	MacKinnon	Crofford
Cunningham	Stanger	Upshall
Knezacek	Hagel	Keeping
Koenker	Carlson	Calvert
Langford	Renaud	

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Nays

Swenson	D'Autremont	Martens
Goohsen	Boyd	Haverstock
Toth	Bergman	Britton

-- 9

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 11 -- An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (Free Votes)

Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise in the Assembly

today and talk about another one of the Bills put forward as part of a package of democratic reform by the official opposition over the course of this session.

And the Bill before us today, Mr. Speaker, the one that we're discussing, is the idea that free votes in this Assembly should be used far more than what they are at present. In fact to my recollection, Mr. Speaker, that has almost been nil in the nine years that I've sat here.

And it was one of the things that when I was in government, that I had a lot of people talk to me about, Mr. Speaker. They felt that there were a lot of things that MLAs should be able to deal with in a less confrontational manner than what we have been able to do under our present system and rules.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of very contentious issues arise in this province over the last decade. I think of the agricultural situation; I think of the questions surrounding Crown corporations and whether they should be private or public -- issues which have been widely talked about and thought about by members of the public.

We in this institution, Mr. Speaker, tend to get very isolated at times, I think, from reality. And one of the reasons that we get isolated is because the party system in Canada has become very strong. The idea that prime ministers and premiers, that cabinets, can pretty well dictate the agenda of the elected bodies in our country, is something that people are increasingly becoming uncomfortable with.

So what we have done, Mr. Speaker, with this particular Bill, is bring the issue to the floor of the Assembly so that members can debate this and show the public that they aren't afraid of representing their constituents on a constituency-by-constituency basis.

My study and look at Canadian parliamentary history, Mr. Speaker, tells me that until very recent times there was a lot more latitude for individual members to represent their constituents in our elected Houses. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the example of Great Britain which is the parliament that we model ourselves after, we see all sorts of situations where that particular parliament has evolved to the place where members quite often speak out against their own party, against their own Prime Minister, their own cabinet, and they do so without the repercussions which appear to happen in the Canadian system.

And I would remind all members of what has taken place in our own House this session, now that the member from Shaunavon has moved from the government benches over to the Liberal Party. And every time that an issue arises where the member from Shaunavon maybe had material which he received when a member of the government benches, there's quite a foofaraw in here and lots of activity.

Well I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that in the British House that event isn't uncommon, not uncommon at all. And the fact that a member may disagree with his party on a number of issues doesn't mean that that

member should be ostracized. We have this idea that has developed in Canada over the last number of years that caucus is the only place where you voice dissent, where you argue.

The problem with caucuses, Mr. Speaker, is that they're not public, you're not accountable in any way for what you say in there, that you can take a stand on an issue and then you can change your mind a few weeks later; and in that forum you are all members of the same party who may be ideologically the same and you represent nowhere close to a majority of the population.

And that happens in Canadian parliamentary systems all the time, where we see parties attaining power with 30-some per cent of the vote. And then they would say that that particular caucus has got all of the answers on issues. And I think it's time in our parliamentary system, Mr. Speaker, that we grew up a little bit.

If Great Britain, the very people who defined and developed parliamentary democracy for the world, have the ability to have government members regularly voting against their own Prime Minister, their own cabinet, their own party, on issues, then for goodness sakes, places like the Saskatchewan legislature and the Canadian parliament should also have the self-confidence and the latitude to do likewise.

(1630)

I remember a very contentious debate in the British House on a defence issue where Margaret Thatcher, the then prime minister of Great Britain and considered at that time one of the most powerful leaders in the western world -- this was shortly after the Falklands war -- lost a major defence vote on the purchase of equipment because many of her own back-benchers would not support her.

And what was the repercussions of that, Mr. Speaker? They didn't buy the equipment. No one was ostracized, no one was thrown out of the party, no one was shoved aside because they stood up and expressed a belief on behalf of the people that elected them.

And, Mr. Speaker, is that not what we are sent here for? Are we not elected by constituencies, by people, not political parties? That's the process, Mr. Speaker, that we operate under. I was elected by the constituents of Thunder Creek, not by the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan.

The Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan chose me to be their candidate to seek election, but the people elected me. A member across the way says, when did I start thinking like this? I started thinking like this many, many years ago. And my experiences in government . . . my experiences in government taught me that there has to be better ways. Just as the experiences when you people were in government in the 1970s should have taught you a lesson or two. But it didn't obviously, because I see the same old garbage

and mistakes made in the 1990s that I saw in the 1970s, because no one in the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan or Canada woke up to the fact that the people are dissatisfied with the existing system.

So that's why we have things like the family of Crown corporations forging ahead because might is right. And now that some of these fine members here who ran on a package of democratic reform while in opposition now sit in the treasury benches, they don't like these initiatives any more.

I mean we just had the member from Humboldt want to adjourn debate on the concept of four-year terms. And yet I looked at the pamphlet of the New Democratic Party in the last election and there it was in bold headlines -- bold headlines, Mr. Speaker -- elect us and we'll change. Have they changed? No. They don't want to even bring it to a vote in this House.

They don't want to have to stand in their place on behalf of the constituents that elected them because they're afraid of the party they represent. And that's the problem. That's the cynicism that is so ripe in the public today, Mr. Speaker. There is some sin for me to stand in this House today and talk about the concept of free votes, that I shouldn't have that right, that I shouldn't express that belief.

The member from Saskatoon says, when did you change? How does she know that I ever changed. Maybe I've always felt this way. But it's time, Mr. Speaker, as I do now, to have a position of leadership, to express those views -- express those views because they are the views of the majority of people, I believe, in this province today.

And I would challenge all members of this House no matter what party they belong to, to walk down the streets of their community and ask people what their views are on party solidarity, on always having to vote the party line. Ask people in your communities if they feel that brings about the best legislation. And they will tell you, they will tell you time and time again that that doesn't, that they are tired of the old politics, the old system.

I bring this Bill before the House and my party brings it before my caucus not because we expect it to pass -- that simply will never happen in this term of government -- but it is something that we should not be afraid to discuss. What would be wrong with speaking on the issue, one by one, on behalf of your constituents and at least bring it to a second reading vote? What would be the harm in it? Why the fear? There should be no fear because you simply are representing the people that sent you here.

There isn't a member in this House that has not had a problem with standing and voting on an issue because they were ordered to. I've had that problem. It is not a comfortable position to be in. It is not a comfortable position. And it is incumbent upon us to design a system that doesn't turn us into an Italy where we would have a new government every few months, but

allows the members of this House to vote on issues, on an issue-by-issue basis, and not have the government fall. Governments elected by majority should have the right to govern. That is a concept that is fundamental to the British parliamentary system.

But there are issues of importance and they should be ranked, as they are in the British parliament; that it should allow members to cross party lines because they would be fundamentally good decisions on behalf of the people we represent and the taxpayers that we represent. Because often the decisions arrived at by cabinet and by caucus will have more political ramification to them than they will the well-being of the people. And that occurred in my caucus when I was in government and it occurs in the caucus of the New Democratic Party now, and it occurred in the caucus of the Liberal Party in the 1960s.

And that is the challenge. That is why members should not be afraid to stand and debate the issue. Members should not be afraid to design a mechanism that allows those types of votes on certain issues without the government falling, without the government falling.

The budget, Mr. Speaker, of a government is the foundation of that government. That is the principle that we've always subscribed to and that should be protected -- that should be protected. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, as members, we come in here and we go through the estimates so that there is grievance before supply. And if a government were defeated on their budget, then they should fall.

But you and I both know, Mr. Speaker, there have been many issues come before this House. There are moral issues. There are social issues. There are issues that I don't believe a government should fall on if that initiative comes to a halt because this House has some displeasure with the way that it is brought forward.

And that is right and proper. And there should be no stigma attached, Mr. Speaker, there should be no fear attached. And that's the problem that we have to overcome in this House, that political parties are going to have to overcome. Because political parties, I believe, Mr. Speaker, will not continue to survive in their present form if they do not change.

There isn't a person in urban Saskatchewan today that doesn't have access to American cable television. Now I grant you, Mr. Speaker, the American system is far different than ours -- far different. But people sit there and they watch confirmation hearings of major public officials. They see Democrats and Republicans voting together on many Bills and issues. They see all sorts of things going on which they then turn around and ask their elected representatives about. And they say, why are we not taking the best of all systems and putting them to work? Why do we fear, why do we fear, Mr. Speaker, even talking about it?

And it's obvious from the reaction of the government members that they fear the issue. Are New Democrats so hidebound, are they so controlled by special

interest groups that they fear this type of discussion? It makes me wonder, Mr. Speaker. It makes me really wonder.

If they are so afraid of the people that control the party side of the New Democratic Party that they would take that into consideration over the people that they are duly sworn to serve -- the people that elected them.

And the same goes, Mr. Speaker, for members of my party. And my party has special interest groups, the same as everyone else does. And how you handle and address those special interest groups, Mr. Speaker, I believe would be best done in this Assembly with the knowledge that you could freely speak and vote on issues without repercussion. Because if you have the knowledge that at the end of the day your constituents will support you above all else then, Mr. Speaker, you have the entire freedom to do what needs to be done, because ultimately they are the most important people to you as an elected representative.

So I find it very strange, Mr. Speaker, that members would not want to stand and debate a Bill like this. Yes, sponsored by the official opposition this time; perhaps sponsored by the third party next time; perhaps sponsored by the government or a government back-bencher another time. But I tell you what, Mr. Speaker, we had better start talking about it and let the public know that we aren't afraid of it before they turn on the political system in this province, in this country, and say a pox on all of you. A pox on all of you.

So, Mr. Speaker, if I'm going to have one of the government members stand up and recite a long series of ills about 1982 to 1991, then they will have learned nothing because the recourse, Mr. Speaker, is for someone on this side to stand up and recount a long series of ills from 1971 to 1982 and from 1991 to 1994. And at the end of the day what will we have solved? Absolutely nothing. Will the cynicism go away? No. Will the people on Main Street, Saskatchewan quit asking the question about democratic reform and changing our system? Will they quit asking those questions? No, they won't quit asking those questions.

Will their cynicism in the political system go away? No. Will the taxpayer be better served? I don't think so, I don't think so at all. The taxpayer will be better served when they know for sure that their elected representative will stand in this House and speak on their behalf on an issue without somebody telling them, no, you must be silent; or no, you must say this; or no, you must toe the party line. That's when the taxpayer will be better served, Mr. Speaker.

So I say to the members of this House: let's have the maturity and the initiative to at least talk about it. Let members say what's on their mind about free vote, and get it on the record as a starting point, Mr. Speaker, as a starting point for the future, as a starting point for the future.

If the member from Cumberland, who's been talking from somebody else's seat for several minutes now, had used this approach in designing no-fault insurance rather than the one he's done, he'd be in a lot less hot water today, a lot less hot water today.

Because what he is implementing today is a classic example of toeing the line. And toeing it at all costs, toeing it at all costs. Because that minister's performance, Mr. Speaker, in this House -- that minister's performance in this House is a classic example of what people don't like, don't like about the political system. And the minister knows it, the minister knows it.

Those kind of issues, where you are talking about rate increases and serving the taxpayer, would be better dealt with, in my view, Mr. Speaker, removed from the political realm.

The Minister of Finance is different. The Minister of Finance has a budget to bring down and a game plan to follow, in a totally different category.

Mr. Speaker, this issue is no different than the committee structure being enhanced; utilities being discussed by members in this House in a format that allows them to have control of Crown corporations. The issue of free votes, Mr. Speaker, is a direct, has a direct correlation to all of those issues. And it is what the public expects of us.

(1645)

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to say any more on the issue, but I do say to all members of this House, regardless of where they sit, let's see if you've got the courage to stand up and say the things that you hear in your constituencies, on the main streets of your towns and villages and cities when people discuss this issue. Let's see if you've got the courage to tell the truth in here, or simply talk the party line. Let's see if you've got the courage to discuss the issue as it should be discussed -- on its merits -- the merits of free votes or the demerits of free votes.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, shortly we will find out if that courage exists to all parties and all members, or if they simply refuse to listen to the people of this province and the people of this country who, any pollster and anyone that is in touch with the public today, will tell you the issue is there, it's on, and we should discuss it.

I move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the member from Moosomin, that Bill No. 11, An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (Free Votes) now be read a second time.

Mr. Upshall: -- Mr. Speaker, I would move that this debate do now adjourn.

The division bells rang from 4:47 p.m. until 4:57 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Shillington	Trew	Teichrob
Serby	Carson	Cline
MacKinnon	Scott	Upshall
Crofford	Hagel	Wormsbecker
Pringle	Stanger	Calvert
Carlson	Murray	

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Nays

Swenson	D'Autremont	Martens
Goohsen	Boyd	McPherson
Toth	Bergman	Britton

-- 9

The Assembly adjourned at 4:58 p.m.