

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
April 24, 1995

EVENING SITTING

MOTION UNDER RULE 46

Proposed Amendments to Bill C-68

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the amendment proposed by my colleague from Thunder Creek addresses the needs and the desires of the public of Saskatchewan, the firearms owners of Saskatchewan, for the legislature to do something concrete to provide some protection for them from the Liberal initiatives. They believe that the legislature of Saskatchewan has the ability and the opportunity to do, through legislation, some forms and measures by which protection can be afforded to the firearms owners. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that that form, those measures, are typified in Bills 31 and 48. And I believe that we, the members of this legislature, should support those two particular motions, Mr. Speaker, to provide that protection for the property owners of Saskatchewan; that these measures will indeed do what is necessary to slow up and prevent Allan Rock's initiatives from working to the detriment of firearms owners in Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment and I would encourage all of my colleagues in this Assembly to also support that amendment and to provide some concrete legislation from this Assembly to support the firearms owners and to prevent Allan Rock from carrying out his ill-conceived plans. Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy tonight to have an opportunity to explain to people the views that we in our part of the world, south-west Saskatchewan, have on this issue. Now I'm going to speak on behalf of my constituents and so I must say right away that not everyone supports the position 100 per cent of not having gun control, but it is probably about 90 per cent out in our area that support the position against the federal government and its gun control legislation as it is presently proposed.

The other people who I'm going to talk a little bit about . . . because they do have some valid points and they need to be discussed. They say we do need to have some control of weaponry in our society. We have to have some control in order to control crime and criminals. And to them I say this, Mr. Speaker: we have gun control legislation in our country; we have crime control laws in our country. And the problem is not going to be solved by putting in more red tape, more laws, and more confusion.

The problem won't be solved that way because if you study the issue, as we have had to because of the repetitious nature in which it has been thrown at us over the past couple of years . . . we as parliamentarians at this level have had no choice but to study the issue and to listen long and hard to many different debates and arguments. And after having done that, we find that we have more than enough rules already, and that half of the people in this country really don't even know what all the rules are that exist at the present time.

So the solution to the problem, Mr. Speaker, is not more — more — registration. The problem can't be solved that way. The problem simply needs to be dealt with by enforcing the laws we presently have. And our law enforcement agents — when you study this thing for a couple of years as we now have — have been loud and clear and very succinct in telling us that the problem is they don't have enough manpower to be able to enforce the present legislation.

So making more rules isn't going to make their job any easier. It's going to make it harder, and they are aware of that. So they're all telling us that, for those people who want to have crime control, more laws that will govern gun owners and restrict their freedoms and rights in society will not solve the basic, fundamental problem that they want to have solved. So their arguments and their fears, while they are based on reality, can't be solved with this solution.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about an issue such as the one that the Minister of Justice brings before us today, we have to ask ourselves the question: why did the minister bring forward this motion today?

We have discussed this issue before in the legislature and we have discussed it at some length. Obviously we hear there's going to be a gun rally in Rosetown very shortly, called, I suspect, by the Minister of the Environment who probably is having a difficult time finding enough numbers to be re-elected. And so most probably he put the strong-arm on the folks up in Rosetown to see if he couldn't get a gun rally going to see if he could improve his fortunes in the upcoming election.

So then you have to ask yourself two questions. First of all, are we doing any good with the motion that we've done when you have . . . As one fellow told me downtown here a few minutes ago, he said, oh I thought all three parties in Saskatchewan were already agreeing on this issue. Why would you be wasting a whole other day talking about it, he says. So well I said, I guess because the Minister of Justice wants to talk about it. And he said, well if everybody agrees, what's there to talk about? Why not get busy and have some action. He said, doesn't it cost you quite a bit of money to run this outfit all day long to talk about the same thing you already talked about before? And he's exactly right, Mr. Speaker.

So the fact of the matter is that we're discussing this because the Minister of Justice brings it forward, and then we have to question what his motives are.

First of all, his motives have to be connected to the week's activity which is developing politically in the province on the eve of a probable election coming up this summer. Most likely the Minister of the Environment has seen some polls that are suggesting that he's not going to make it unless he has some dramatic turnaround in voter support in rural Saskatchewan where he happens to live. And so this might be an attempt to try to get him re-elected. Well the truth of the matter is that that's all well and good, and we're glad that they're doing this sort of

thing because I think it will have some impact on Ottawa and the Liberals there. At least I hope it does.

So then we have to look at what the other motives would be, Mr. Speaker. And of course, the other motives would have to be that the Minister of Justice has suggested he wants to go to Ottawa to present a case. And I suppose you don't go all the way to Ottawa to present a case unless you've done some groundwork to build the political momentum to make it a worthwhile exercise in the minds of the people who are going to have to pick up the tab for all of these people that are going to travel to Ottawa on this trip.

Now it is true, I guess, that a couple of the opposition people will be invited to go along. And members of the opposition certainly cannot ignore that invitation. We have to be there. This issue is too important to us. And the members of the third party will have to be there too. It's obviously important to them.

But the truth of the matter is that the message that we are developing and building here today is not the proper and significant message.

Now some of the members from south-east Saskatchewan will know very well that this is not what the people in rural Saskatchewan — who are mainly concerned about this problem with all of the rest of the folks who want to protest this federal law — it's not what they're really asking for. What they're asking for is for the minister to go down to Ottawa armed with the kind of ammunition that they're going to need in order to win this debate and this argument.

Now it's necessary, obviously, to build first a momentum to justify the trip, armed with some consensus from the taxpayers that it's okay to spend . . . What's it going to cost? I'll speculate — 100,000, maybe? No, not likely. More likely about 200,000.

Well we'll be lucky if we can get away with that because obviously a lot of the people that go along are going to be on salaries; they'll be government employees. There'll be hacks and patronage appointees. There'll be drag-alongs, come-alongs, and advisers, all strung along into a great convoy heading for Ottawa.

And I suggest to you that if you added up every nickel and dime of all the wages and everything else that goes with it, you're going to be looking at a half a million bucks of everybody's money thrown into the pot to go to Ottawa on a big trip to tell the minister in charge, Mr. Rock, what? Exactly what we've been telling him all along for the last year — the same old story, only armed now with some wishy-washy concept out of a motion in this legislature that goes along the lines that we should gently nudge the minister into changing some of the rules of the law, rather than going down there and telling him flat out we don't need the law, and it's no good to begin with.

So we're going to try some wishy-washy, back-door approach to why there should be amendments to the new Bill in Ottawa that has already gone through second reading, and with the obvious effects of having very little or no impact whatever.

So we have to question the approach of this administration to serious, serious problems that affect western Canada. Is it all just going to be smoke and mirrors and politics all the time for ever with you folks? Are you never going to get down to the reality of actually trying to represent the people of Saskatchewan in an honest way, an honest way where you say, flatly, we cannot tolerate the same kinds of rules in our region of the country that you can live with possibly in other regions?

The Quebec people have said it quite clearly. They said it quite clearly when they talked about their language Bills. They said, we want to speak French in Quebec, and they went ahead and they did it. They took a positive, forward initiative — one that I happen not to agree with, but they did it. They took a positive, forward initiative, and they said you will speak French in our province, and you will advertise in French, and you will put signs up in your businesses in French. And they did that.

They did that from a provincial point of view because that's what they believed in for their people. They took that stand. They took it deliberately, directly, and they stood up for it, and they fought for it. And it has been years and years before any kind of a challenge was made in the Supreme Court, and even after that was done and the Supreme Court has ruled that they were out of order in what they did, they continue to do what they want because they fight for their people, and they do what they believe in.

Where's that kind of initiative from Saskatchewan on an issue that is just as important to Saskatchewan people? Certainly there are 6 million Frenchmen, and there's only 1 million Saskatchewan folks, and we come from every nationality. But we have a region that is distinctly different than Quebec, with a distinct need for the use of firearms in our lives and in our livelihoods and our way of approaching life. And so while French language is so important to Quebec people, so too the right to use firearms is just as important to the people of Saskatchewan in their way of life.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have to wonder at the approach that the Minister of Justice has taken. We have to seriously question his motives and his approach to the issue. Now I seriously kind of wonder if the minister isn't being confused a little bit by some of the people that surround him. Perhaps the fact that someone near and dear to him in his family ran in an election in Saskatoon on a platform against gun ownership might have something to do with clouding his vision.

(1915)

Now I suspect that many of the people in Saskatchewan that don't live in Saskatoon, and lots of the back-benchers here, may not even know that. But the truth of the matter is that when a minister of this Crown is pulled and pushed by several different forces you can expect him to start jumping around in the middle of all those ideas with something of an irregular step that is not in tune with the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, the registration of all guns is not a reasonable approach; it is not a reasonable solution. It's only a harassment of legitimate owners. And the criminals are going to

continue to break the law.

I've had people tell me the same old story that we've heard from a lot of people but we've got to repeat this because if we don't start getting back to basics and the fundamentals of what's going on out there, we are bound to have this thing so confused in the end that nobody will really understand what anybody believes in.

But the truth of the matter is that the criminals are going to continue to be criminals. We are never going to stop criminals 100 per cent in our society. As long as there are people, I believe we will have some problems. We can reduce those problems and the numbers of them certainly.

But we have also in our society developed a kind of a Christian attitude towards all of people where we use some mercy and compassion. If that weren't so of course we would use some of the solutions that they use in Africa or places like that. I'm thinking of Arabia, I guess, not Africa. Arabia, where thieves have their hands cut off or perhaps Egypt where if you get caught drinking alcoholic beverages you are given the lash.

We don't believe in that kind of extreme justice I don't think in Canada and certainly not in Saskatchewan for minor misdemeanours. Otherwise maybe most of us wouldn't be here any more because our grandparents who fled from Europe would most likely never have ended up living very long in this country.

The truth of the matter is though that this becomes nothing more than a harassment, Mr. Speaker, because simply by registering a gun you're not going to stop people from using it as a weapon. If I were going to go out and do a crime, would I be so foolish as to use the gun that I have registered? That's what a man said to me the other day and obviously he's right. It would take the utmost of fools to go out and commit a crime with a gun that you have registered in your own name. It would sort of be like signing your name at the crime site and leaving your box number and your phone number so that the police could find you easily. Well criminals don't work that way.

And the truth of the matter is that we cannot approach this thing as though it has an easy solution to solve crime because the gun law is not going to solve our criminal problems. In fact if anything, it's going to cause a lot of people to become criminals.

Every day in our society I find people saying to me we've got so many rules, so many regulations, so many laws, that every day when I get up people have told me I most likely before supper time have broken a law without ever knowing I broke one. And that's a fact of life. We just have so many rules and we've got such a complicated society now that nobody can keep up with it.

I had a taxman tell me the other day that there's so many rules and regulations in the tax laws that he, as a trained professional, has no idea what all the rules and regulations are in that one Act alone that our society works under. We are becoming overruled, overregulated, and we've got too many far-fetched laws for

people to be able to understand or to be able to obey, because they simply don't know what they all are.

So here we are about to propose at the federal level another new law, another new law with a whole lot of regulations, a whole lot of rules. And when we study the whole thing very carefully, we find out that it's not going to achieve one simple thing, not one single thing in our society that needs to be resolved when you study why we should be doing these kinds of approaches with the law to try to bring about crime control.

Crime control, Mr. Speaker, cannot be controlled by registering guns, because quite simply, a criminal is going to go out and steal a gun if he feels the need to use one of those in a crime. He'll either steal it or he'll go to the United States and buy one and smuggle it in, or he'll buy it through the underworld economy of our country that apparently exists all over our country, especially in our big cities.

I'm told that you can go — by the news media of last few months — any place in downtown Montreal and Toronto and places like that, and if you know the right connections, you can buy guns that have been imported from the United States illegally. They tell us in the news media also that you can buy guns now that are made of plastic that you can't even find on radar detectors. You can't detect them coming through customs. They can be built out of pieces of this and that and whatever.

Well the reality then, Mr. Speaker, is that registering guns is not going to solve a crime problem. It's only going to cause the problem of honest people saying, no thank you, I'm not going to obey this law because it's going to cost me too much money, too much hassle, or too much irritation — whatever their reason will be, and there will be lots of reasons for it. Or simply just because they are tired of being pushed around and told what to do, a lot of them are going to put these guns into plastic bags and bury them in the ground.

Others are going to hide them under the bed and in the attic and every other silly place where kids will find them and certainly cause a lot of problems. They'll put the ammunition away, forget where it is; next thing you know you're going to have a fire and blow the place up. I tell you it's going to cause more problems than you can ever shake a stick at because, quite simply, that's what people do.

In a mad frustration to avoid becoming the person that gets caught disobeying the law, they will shuffle this stuff around all over their houses and in their granaries and garages and places like that. And after a generation goes by, who knows where all these caches and deposits of guns and ammunition are going to show up.

I know of one instance where I was told, and I suppose this is just a rumour, but they tell me of a guy that supposedly built guns into the walls of the house and then plastered them over. Well if this is the kind of ridiculous approach we have to take in this country, then we'd better re-examine the kind of laws that we're bringing in that force honest people into this kind of behaviour.

Now I'm not going to try to say that everybody that does this sort of thing is a logical thinker, but maybe they have a logical thought in their mind that drives them to do what they are planning on doing.

I know for very sure that I have heard a repetition of this story in my household that has gone back a couple of decades or more — I guess about four or five already. Quite simply put, in the old days they tell me that you had to register your radios, and if you didn't register your radio, you could have it confiscated. When you registered it, you had to pay a licence fee. Everybody that had a radio in the war years was required to pay a tax on that radio, a licence fee.

And so people were busily hiding their radios. Whenever they heard that there was an inspector in the community, they'd all get on the telephone and they'd ring it all up and they'd give a great, big, long ring — of course in those days there was 25 or 50 people all on the same line — called the general ring; they'd ring it for a minute or so — everybody knew that that was an emergency — and they'd say, hey, the radio inspector is coming through. And immediately all the radios were unplugged, disconnected, and hidden in every spot you can imagine, except for one as a rule. And they'd pay the taxes and licence fee on one and as soon as the inspector was gone, they'd all plug them in.

Of course what that tells us is that history has already proven that, as Pierre Elliott Trudeau once said, that if the law is a law the people will not abide by then the law is an . . . and I won't say the word and you all know what it is.

And so the law is the back-end of a donkey, as they say, if it forces people to comply with something that they're not going to do to start with. And this law is exactly the same way. Immediately that you tell people you've got to pay 100 bucks for every gun you've got, half the guns in the country are going to end up being hidden and put away and all kinds of things are going to happen as a result of them being put into obscure locations.

So we've got a serious problem, Mr. Speaker, with this kind of a law, because it doesn't address any of the needs of the people. It doesn't address any of the needs of our province. It may address the needs of people in Montreal. I'm not going to say too much about that; I've never lived there. I don't know what kind of people live there. I don't know what kind of lifestyle they've got. Maybe they need gun control down there. And if they do, I'm saying to them, fine and dandy, let's have a regional law for you to take care of that, just as you took care of your language law. You know what you need for your people, but out here we don't need that kind of gun control.

And I was really upset when I listened to the member from Cumberland House today talk about his approach to this issue and how he supported this particular wishy-washy stand. I hope he goes out and campaigns on that wishy-washy stand in Cumberland House because he won't get re-elected. The people up there will simply say to him, Elijah Harper you are not. Elijah Harper knew how to stand up for his people and fight with them, and he brought a whole province to a dead standstill

for the beliefs that he believed in for the people that he represented. My friend, my friend, I think that the aboriginal community must be very disappointed with you today. If Elijah Harper were in this Assembly today, he would stand here and fight for his people. He would fight for every one of the aboriginal peoples' rights . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I think there are some members who wish to get up and debate but I wish they would wait their turn.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now of course I was referring to the Elijah Harper of years back, when he stopped the Meech Lake accord process in Manitoba. And now they tell me, of course, that he has turned Liberal and can be bought off, and so I guess that's the same old story that if you do things the right way you can get them all swooped over one way or the other.

And that part's unfortunate but the truth of the matter is that the aboriginal people who are listening to this Assembly and the process today must be seriously, seriously wondering about the MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) that represent them, that would suggest a wishy-washy approach like this motion would be the answer to the needs of our aboriginal people who have had entrenched in their rights, almost as much if not more than anybody else, the right to use arms to get game for their food supply and for their livelihood. They have to have the use of firearms in order to protect themselves from the animals when they go trapping. They need to get meat supplies for their families and they have hung on very jealously to that right, as well they should.

But here we hear the member from Cumberland House saying, well we should go down to Ottawa and ask for a few amendments and that will make everything nice and smooth and easy for everybody. Well no thank you, Mr. Speaker, that won't do.

What will do is to have some positive legislation — as the member from Souris-Cannington has suggested here — some positive legislation that gives the minister and his entourage some ammunition of a real nature when they get to Ottawa to negotiate this deal.

They're approaching this thing, Mr. Speaker, in a metaphorical approach that would be similar to giving, to giving a dead cow medicine; after she's dead, you give her the medicine. And what good would it do?

You're going to go to Ottawa with no ammunition, some wishy-washy approach about amendments to a serious law, with no teeth in what you have come up with as your political point of view and your stand, and you're going to go down there and try to negotiate with strength with this kind of a wishy-washy approach. I don't think it's going to work.

And I think the people of Saskatchewan, and especially the aboriginal people, have expressed very clearly that they want you to go fully armed, absolutely dedicated, completely ready to go to the wall for them on this issue, because it's important to

them.

Now there are other important issues, Mr. Speaker, of course. There's the issues of economy and there's issues of health care and education and all those things, but right today we have the Minister of Justice talking to us about gun control and the need to go to Ottawa to talk to the people there about Allan Rock's gun control approach and his Bill. So that has to be the paramount issue at this moment.

And that paramount issue is, how do we best defend the people of Saskatchewan when we get there? Do we do it with some motion that says, we're coming here to ask you for a few amendments? Or would it be better to come down there and say, look boys, if we don't play ball, we're going to take this matter into our own hands because we've already passed in our legislature two or three laws that give us power and control over our own destiny?

Now does that sound more like a negotiating position of strength, or does asking for some wishy-washy amendments to the thing sound like a good position to bargain from? Well I put it to you, the people. You decide which position you think would be best to negotiate from.

And as far as having any kind of an effect on criminals, I want to just go back to that just for a minute, Mr. Speaker, because what we really have to do here is go to Ottawa armed with arguments that prove very persuasively that this law is not needed, not necessary, and won't accomplish what it sets out to do. It won't accomplish what it sets out to do because it will not stop criminals from committing the crimes that they commit.

It will not help to solve our problems because we already have laws that will cover registration. I had to buy a firearms acquisition certificate in order to be able to have a gun. Every gun that I want to buy, I have to show that to the person. It's got my picture on it, and I have to show it to that person and they record the numbers off of it. They record my name, my address, the numbers of my registration, and the numbers of the gun I want to buy. And it's all registered, and it is kept on file. We already have registration.

Now we have a new law coming in this country that says I should now pay, as well, a lot of money for that, and a whole lot of other strings attached.

(1930)

Well I guess, Mr. Speaker, I have to go back to the gentleman who said to me a very short time ago, I really don't see what everybody's so excited about. What's all the fuss about? Suppose you had to pay \$5 to register your guns. Would that be so bad? Well of course not. Paying \$5 to register your gun wouldn't be too bad when you consider that I already put out fifty bucks for the FAC (firearms acquisition certificate) that I had to buy, and go to a photographer and get a picture so that they could glue it on. And that cost me another \$16, plus a trip to Swift Current to get it done. And that's 100 miles out in our country.

This is not a \$5 touch we're talking about. We've already invested \$100 in the process we've got right now. And anybody that tells you that they're going to have a gun registration program after this law in Ottawa is passed that only costs \$5, is not really in tune with the realities of what's going on here.

The reality of what's going on here is that we're going to pay very much more than that. But we're creating some very serious problems for our whole province and the industry that most is budding and flourishing, and that being tourism.

We already have American hunters who are saying they're afraid to come to this country because they're afraid to come to this country and have their guns registered. And here's how things get out of proportion, I guess. They already are reporting down there to one another that maybe they might have their guns confiscated when they get here.

Now how are we going to offset that very negative perception even though it's wrong. We have got this kind of perception that is building and creating around the world, and we have to do something to offset that.

And it's a very serious problem because tourism is becoming a very big, important factor in our lives in Saskatchewan. I know in northern Saskatchewan there's an awful lot of people that guide and bring in hunters and charge them for room and board, and sell them gas and licences and all the things that go along with it and make their living.

Well that's becoming an industry in southern Saskatchewan as well. It's budding and it's growing and it's improving. And it's a most terrible thing to see a silly law in Ottawa that could wreck all of this progress that we have made up to date.

Well this fellow at the same time, Mr. Speaker, that I was talking to who said, well \$5 wouldn't be so bad, well he said, well why would anybody want more than one gun? And I guess that told me right there, again, we haven't been doing a very good job, those of us that are against this gun law, of explaining to the folks exactly what's at stake here and exactly what people who have guns want to have them for and why they have them and why they're so important in their lives.

So maybe we have jumped over a whole lot of this area of explanation, thinking that everybody knows what we're talking about, but really maybe a lot of folks don't. I guess it's like the old story, where they always used to say when I was a kid going to school, this teacher's so smart he talks over everybody's head so nobody can learn anything.

And there's some truth to that, because if a very smart person is a teacher sometimes, instead of dealing with the basic fundamentals at the very start and building up so that the students can learn as they go, then they don't learn because the teacher starts up too high in the scale of the process.

And the member from Swift Current will certainly understand this because he has captured my imagination a couple of times by going back to square one on issues and explaining the fundamentals to me, recognizing that as a farmer I wouldn't have any understanding of how things got into the process and

built and develop. And in Crown corporation estimates he has been very helpful that way. So he will understand what I'm saying about teaching the process to people so that they'll understand.

And when a man comes to me and says, why would people want to have more than one gun, then I say, we haven't done our job. And as boring as it is to have to say these things that we think are boring, the reality is that a lot of people don't know. They don't know the fun and the pleasure that people get out of using handguns in a competition to shoot at targets. And some fellows will say, if you haven't done this before, well what a waste of time. You're going to stand here and poke holes in a piece of paper over there, 50 yards. How can that possibly be fun?

Well I guess if you're a golfer I'd have to say, how can it be fun to chase a little ball all over somebody else's pasture? But it is fun to those people that like to do it. It's their way of recreation. I guess to a skydiver, I would say why would anybody be silly enough to jump out of an airplane heading straight for the ground, with only a piece of silk hanging on your back to stop you from meeting your Creator as you bite the dust? But to those people that do that sport it's great pleasure and they have fun at it.

Well people that shoot little holes in targets at 50 yards find that to be great recreation. The fact that they can shoot two holes into the same spot without messing up the rest of the paper is a great challenge. And I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that not many people can do that. And so it is a recreation, a sport, a fun thing for people to do.

And there are many things to do. This fellow that I'm talking about said, well why would you need more than one? Well the truth of the matter is that there are different kinds of competitions, and there are different kinds of competitions that require different kinds of tool. And the gun is really just a tool of the sport, and you're no better at the sport than what the quality of your equipment is.

Some guns just simply won't shoot straight. Nobody can make them shoot in the same spot twice because they have a crooked barrel or something is haywire with them. And so you have to have good equipment and you have to have equipment that suits the sport.

Anybody that watches the Olympics must certainly be aware of the fact that Canadians are very good marksmen. Canadians do quite well in the Olympics in everything where guns and shooting are concerned. And I've never heard anybody say, well we ought to take the guns away from those guys and not let them practise to go to the Olympics. In fact I hear them cheering all the time, go Canada go, as soon as they get into silver or gold medal contention.

And so at that point I would say if we don't allow people to have guns to practise with and to enjoy that sport, how could we ever have anything like the Olympics or compete on a world scale or even stay in the world theatre as a member of society of the world, as a country? We couldn't do that any more if we

don't keep up with the times and live like the rest of the people to some extent.

Now certainly we need crime control, but to say that we're not going to allow people to have their handguns in order to practise with and not to have two or three different kinds so that they can do silhouette shooting or target shooting or some of the steel shoots and all those other kinds of things, then certainly you can't perfect that precision kind of shooting that's required for those people who are athletes in their own right, who are practising an art form, an art form to those people who do this as a recreation. To them it is quite an accomplished art to be able to put little holes in that piece of paper consistently in the same spot. That's an art.

I've seen guys come up with a sheet of paper with 10 little holes in the centre so proud, so proud of themselves that you wouldn't believe how proud they could be of having made that accomplishment.

Now to take these rights away from the people by allowing Alan Rock to force people to give up those guns, which is what this law is all about in Ottawa . . . And that's why this amendment is being talked about; that the Justice minister wants to go and ask for amendments.

This law is going to take these handguns away from people. It's not going to allow them to have them any more. They're not going to be able to compete any more. They're not going to be able to get ready to go to the Olympics any more.

Only people that'll be able to afford to get into this or people that go to the United States and say, I'm on the Canadian Olympic team but I'm practising in the United States. Does that make any sense to anybody? Does it make any sense that you're going to find some prize shooter out of all your young people in the province. How would you find out which kid is good at shooting little holes in a target if you never ever allow them to have a gun to try or to practise with?

I remember as a kid having a .22 and become rather proficient with it. How would I have ever known how to use it or what was safe to do with it? Or how would I have ever developed the skill and the art of being able to use it properly if I hadn't had a chance to do it many, many times? Because this is a sport of repetition; the repetition is required in order to become good at what you're doing — at anything that you do.

So, Mr. Speaker, then we want to move into the area of the longer guns because this law now wants to register all of them. And why do people fear the law? Well I'll tell you why they fear the law because just a little while ago, a year or so back — or was it two years ago? — suddenly somebody got the brainwave we had to register all these handguns and we had to register all of these other so-called offensive weapons, I think they were called, the automatics and things like that, the full automatics.

It isn't very long after everything is registered and then the government comes along with this new law now that says they're going to have to turn them all in or have them confiscated or go through a whole bunch of rigmarole.

People that had antiques that they had inherited went in and very obediently registered their guns, went to the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), did that. I was shown one that has a new number carved in it. The RCMP got somebody to carve a new number into it so it could be registered with a number on it. Now that person is told that he can keep it as long as he lives — and he's old — but he can never give it to anybody else. Immediately that he dies, he can't pass it on; it's gone, it's going to be destroyed. That's what will happen with this new law if it's allowed to go past.

I think we've got to take a bigger stand than just an amendment, Mr. Speaker. We've got to take a more positive stand than that against these kind of injustices.

And then we get back to the point I was making about why people are afraid of registration. Immediately that everybody has got their long gun registered, what's to stop the next government or even this one from saying, okay now we're going to bring in another law; let's confiscate all the rifles.

And you will say, well there's an extremist attitude; we would never do that. Well nobody ever expected that they were going to have to give away their handguns either, the antiques and the things that they'd inherited from their grandfathers or whoever. But it's happened. It's already happened. That's not extremism. This is reality. This is what's going on in the real world. Read the print. Find the Bill. Check her out.

An Hon. Member: — Five hundred and thirty-three thousand.

Mr. Goohsen: — Five hundred and thirty-three thousand of them. The member from Souris-Cannington is up on his numbers. Isn't that ever something? And then you wonder why people fear the legislatures and the legislators and have disdain for politicians and are down on the system and against registering and are afraid of losing their rights and afraid of losing control of their lives and their privacy and afraid that their personal property will become jeopardized as a result of registering if people find out that they've got them.

And in the same tone of that argument, then you can understand why American people are afraid to come to this country and bring their guns along to go hunting because they have to register them immediately. Interpol (International Criminal Police Organization) and CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) and the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) and everybody else is going to have their numbers and know where they are. These folks know exactly what is happening in our country; they've been watching. They don't want that to happen to themselves, and so they're probably going to stay home.

And even if it isn't going to happen quite that way, the perception that it might will keep them home, and we're going to lose our industry of tourism and all of the money that is made from the hunting in the fall and throughout the year in Canada. People coming to shoots will no longer be buying gas in Saskatchewan because they're simply going to have their shoot in Montana.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when I talked to this gentleman earlier, I had

my eyes opened up a little bit because I thought because I was a gun owner, and I am, and a gun user, and I am — because I thought that and because I'm used to it, I thought everybody knew and understood what we were talking about. I thought that everybody had a visual idea in their minds that we had more rules and regulations from Ottawa already than what are being enforced; that the laws are not being enforced because we don't have enough money for our police forces, and we don't have enough time to get everything done.

But now I realize that a lot of people don't realize that the reality of crime is that if you confiscate guns and going to stop all crime as a result of guns . . . and you're going to stop all the crime by taking those guns away, if that's your thinking, then you have to do like one of my friends told me — you have to take all the baseball bats and all the knives, and you've got to take them all away.

And in reality you say, well that's kind of extreme. Well I'm going to get a little more extreme. You're going to have to take away all the cars too, because the hardest thing to prove in this world of ours is that somebody was killed with a car. And I'll bet you it happens more often than we'd like to think about, and yet we're not going to confiscate all the cars because they might be a weapon. We often hear about people getting run over and killed with cars and pedestrian-car accidents. How do we know that those weren't planned? How do we know that that guy just accidentally got run over? It's the hardest thing in the world to prove because you can't climb into the mind of the driver and find out what his thoughts were.

So reality is that guns are only a tool. And a tool is only as responsible to society as the person who uses it. And you can never know who the person that's using it will be, or what his thoughts will be or how they might change.

I want you to know, Mr. Speaker, and through you the people to know, that I find no offence whatever when people shoot at clay pigeons. They are little round discs made out of clay; you can throw them up in the air by hand but they work better if you throw them up with a machine. And I see no reason why anybody would be offended at someone finding an art form, and shooting at those, and developing a skill at being able to hit one after the other.

In fact I suspect that when Billy Bishop went to war for this country, everybody was pretty proud of him being able to shoot straight. They tell me it was a combination of his good eyesight and his ability to shoot that he learned as a child. Now if he hadn't done that, he could not have protected our country.

Are we about to suggest in this country that we should not be an armed nation to defend ourselves in the world any more? And that's really what it's starting to boil down to. We have people that are seriously questioning this.

And then we have people today on television . . . I guess it was last night, Mr. Speaker, and I was really quite upset. Because here we have one of the most terrible explosions in the United States, blew up a whole building . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I've listened for sometime to the member from Maple Creek and I must admit I find it very difficult to relate many of his discussions that he's having. And now to go to United States with the bomb threat or the bomb explosion . . .

The question before us is here: be it resolved that this Assembly urge the federal . . . Order . . . urge the federal government to introduce amendments to Bill C-68, An Act respecting Firearms and Other Weapons, to allow provinces and territories to opt out of the provisions. That's the question that is before this Assembly and I wish the member would get back to the topic that we are discussing.

(1945)

Mr. Goohsen: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. I realize that Allan Rock and his gun law and the way that we are going to approach it are the reason we are here. And I will have to — as they say in the courts — tie this in for you, and I will do that immediately, sir.

Because the reality is that Allan Rock today, and the people that support his gun law, in the newspapers . . . and I have a copy of the news item here today. People who support stronger and tougher gun laws are saying that right-wing extremists who use guns in their everyday life should now be put in their place and there should be more gun control because there was this terrible catastrophe in the United States where fertilizer and diesel fuel were used as the bomb components. And yet the media is trying to tie that to extremist groups that use guns in their everyday life and I saw it on television. They interviewed them. They interviewed them out there on some prairie with a bunch of guns and they had on army fatigues and they're supposed to be some organized group. And now we have Ottawa trying to tie this terrorism together with anybody that has a gun. So that they're trying to give the impression that everybody with a gun now is a terrorist because somebody blew up a building in the United States.

Well quite frankly I'm saying . . . and my argument is that we better ban nitrogen fertilizer, diesel fuel, and whatever it takes to set that off. Because the argument down there is so ludicrous now that they will go to any extreme to prove their point. And the point is that Liberals and Ottawa can't be trusted and Allan Rock is trying to make criminals out of ordinary, honest people.

So I hope that has tied it together for the folks, Mr. Speaker, because there is a connection here. In fact, Mr. Speaker, when you talk about trusting a federal Liberal I'd have to say — and go a step further — it would be more likely for gun owners . . . if you want to put this into perspective, as far as gun owners are concerned and looking at Ottawa and Ottawa's approach to Saskatchewan, it would be better for a flock of chickens to trust a fox in the chicken house as they say. And realistically, it would be more probably sensible, in context of a metaphor to explain this, it would be better for a frog to trust a scorpion in the middle of the ocean than for the gun owners to trust a Liberal in Ottawa.

And I think everybody knows that story because the frog can

swim; the scorpion can't. The scorpion needs to get across the pond. He sits on the frog's back and the frog says, I'm not going to take you. You'll sting me and kill me, and then I'll drown. And he says you'll drown too. And the scorpion says, of course I won't sting you, I don't want to die. But halfway across the scorpion stings the frog and they start to stink. And the frog yells, why did you do that, we're both going to die. And the scorpion says, because I'm a scorpion; that's what I do.

Well Liberals in Ottawa, that's what they do. They're not going to give you a fair break when you get down there because that's what they do. They take from Saskatchewan to give to eastern Canada. They always have and always will, Mr. Speaker, and there's no question in my mind that the whole trip will end up being a waste of time and a waste of money. But we have to go because we have to try; everybody's going to do that. But the chance of getting this done in a positive manner so that we in fact will see a positive result, I don't believe is there if we take too wishy-washy an approach.

And this amendment, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what is required here to put some teeth into this approach. We've got our members decided some time ago that we have to take some positive, very direct action. And that positive action has to mean taking a Saskatchewan . . . building a Saskatchewan point of view and a stand — a solid, hard stand. And if we can get all of the parties to work together on that stand, that's great. And it looks like we might be heading that way.

But we got to be tougher because when you get to Ottawa, it's not going to be just a bunch of little jellyfish sitting around. These are hard-core, tough politicians looking to get things their own way in eastern Canada. And if you ever think that they're going to give up easy, you're dreaming in technicolor because it's not going to be easy.

You're going to have go down there and you're going to have negotiate tough and negotiate hard. And you're going to have negotiate hard simply by going with good, solid facts and hard ammunition.

And that's why we've brought in this amendment. This amendment puts teeth into this thing. It says, let's put in the opposition amendment. We're going to put in amendments that will say we have property rights that are just as important to the people of Saskatchewan as language rights are to Quebec.

We're going to put in amendments that say that Saskatchewan is taking control of an area of jurisdiction that we've always had control over. We've always had control over property in the provinces. And we must maintain that, and we must insist upon that.

And guns are property. I don't care what the NDP (New Democratic Party) think about property or, philosophically, about ownership. The truth of the matter is that if I buy and pay for a car, for the period of time after I've got it until I sell it, or it gets broken, or whatever happens to it, it is mine. It's property; I have the right to own that for awhile in my life. It may become somebody else's if I die or sell it, but the truth is for now it's mine.

If I buy a gun it's the same way — it's property. It's mine. I bought it and paid for it. I should have the right to own it. And we as a province have the right to say to Ottawa, we have maintained our rights of ownership and our rights of property, and we as a province are going to stand up for those rights for the people.

And so very simply, Mr. Speaker, what we're going to say is that the members ought to seriously consider taking some hard ammunition with them, some solid facts, some good, hard negotiating point-of-view things to do that will give them a chance to win.

Now I don't like to put the Minister of Justice down, but I have to say that his original motion is just too weak. It's not tough enough to withstand the test and the time trials that will come up in Ottawa. Those guys are also politicians as senior as you are. Some of them have been around since the Trudeau years. And can you remember how Ottawa in the Trudeau years treated the West? Does anybody remember how the national energy program . . . and how they treated people in western Canada to get cheap gas for the East, and all that stuff all happened.

Don't go there thinking that these guys are pushovers. They're not going to let you win — not easily, at least. And I read some place here that someone's comment was that a turbot would have a better chance beside a Spanish ship than we will have of getting Allan Rock to change his gun law.

So you know how tough they think they're going to be. So we've got to be tougher than a turbot, and tougher than a Spanish trawler and a fisherman. And we've got to go down there armed with enough, enough determination and a strong enough point of view so that we have a chance of winning.

The property rights that we've talked about are not uncommon, and not been unheard of before. People have genuine fears. They have genuine concerns about the loss of their privacy, the loss of their guns and things that they own, and one thing leading to the other. We've got all kinds of people in our province who have come to hate the word Rock, not just because they lay around in the fields.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we're going to ask the Minister of Justice to take his colleagues back to the back for a minute and have a little huddle like a football game and discuss this amendment before they vote on it. In all seriousness, let's get down to the brass tacks of studying this thing a little further. Reconsider the strength you will need in order to win. If you're going to spend 70,000, 100,000, or half a million or whatever it takes to go to Ottawa, at least go so that you have a chance to win.

So, Mr. Speaker, we need to have the government of this province not just playing politics with this important issue. I hear report after report that we have got way too much politics being played with this issue in Saskatchewan. And I guess it's just a natural process that will have to happen — that people will have to go to Rosetown to try to get the Minister of Economic Development re-elected on this issue, because none

other will work. We'll have to live with that, I guess.

But remember, the issue itself is far more important than partisan politics. It is far more important to the people of Saskatchewan that we go down there and we win. And you are not going to win simply by putting in some jellyfish kind of an amendment to Allan Rock's legislation.

You're going to have to defend yourself in a constitution that I understand was written basically against the West in terms of property rights; written in a time when people like Pierre Elliott Trudeau gave people, I think it was the finger or the thumb or something. They told us to sell our own wheat.

In that context and that line of thinking, people drew up the constitution that deals with this particular issue now. Why, why would you then not take very seriously the need to take very solid ammunition with you to fight this insanity of Allan Rock's.

There are three things you need to do, Mr. Minister of Justice. First of all, you need to support this amendment to put some teeth into today's debate so that the whole day isn't a waste of taxpayers' money. The second thing you have to do is to support the legislation that the opposition has introduced into this legislature. The first piece of legislation of course being the most important, which is the one that deals with ownership of property; the other one that deals with the notwithstanding clause in our constitution.

And even though you have stated to us that you don't think this would hold up in court in the future and all those kinds of things, think about this. How many years have businesses had to have French-only signs in Quebec, even though after many years it was found out, with a ruling of the Supreme Court, that they were doing something that was contrary to the constitution?

You can protect our people for a year, three years, maybe ten years. Anyway, what we're saying to you is you're buying enough time that the government could change. The government in Ottawa could change while you buy the time for us in Saskatchewan; you could do that.

You have the power in your hands today to stave off this thing for the people of western Canada, and particularly in Saskatchewan. But believe me if you take this stand, and take it hard now and win, there's absolutely no question that the rest of the prairie provinces would follow in your footsteps and applaud you all the way.

I would say, Minister, you'd have a better chance of getting the member in Rosetown re-elected if you take that stand, even better than going out to the meeting in Rosetown. Because the people in this province know and understand how tough it is to beat the Liberals in Ottawa and to stand up to them.

So, Minister, do the right thing. This is not a simple little issue. This is extremely important to rural people. It's extremely important not just to the first residents of this province, the aboriginal people, but it's important to every farmer and every

rancher, every person that I've heard from.

In fact I guess it's possible that people know my position and therefore those that are in favour of gun control have said very little to me. But the truth of the matter is that I've only had a couple of people mention some very casual things about why gun control would be important or good; in fact not big enough arguments made to ever sustain going into this process very much further of having more gun control.

So, Mr. Minister, we would like nothing better than to stand up and cheer in this Assembly tonight, and to pat you on the back all the way to Ottawa, to stand you on a stage and give you a medal when you get home from Ottawa because we would like you to be able to win this battle. And we are offering only our best support and our best ammunition for you to be successful. And so I ask you to reconsider this whole process and support this amendment, pass it, accept our support on the full, newly amended motion, and let's go forward from here and win the day for Saskatchewan people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(2000)

Mrs. Teichrob: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I believe that this debate today in this legislature, on the same day as the opening of the hearings in Ottawa, the public hearing process with respect to Bill C-68, is very timely. And I'm pleased to have this opportunity to rise and speak on this issue again although I have spoken on it previously, and my views I think were clear. But now that we know some more of the details of what is being proposed I would like to make some further comments.

It's Bill C-68 that is before us or before the public hearing process in our national capital today. But in 1991, Bill C-17 received Royal Assent. Its stated goals were also public safety and the reduction of the criminal use of firearms. Implementation of these considerable amendments — these are over four years ago, Mr. Speaker — is still not complete, and costs have exceeded estimates for implementation. Has the expenditure made on Bill C-17 provided the public safety and reduced criminal gun use it was intended to purchase? It is apparent that this is a question that the federal government has not yet answered.

In his 1993 annual report, the Auditor General turned his attention to the federal gun control program. The lack of adequate evaluation of even the 1978 amendments, much less Bill C-17, much less those that are before us proposed today, led him to this recommendation:

Canada's gun control program is controversial and complex. An evaluation of the program is therefore essential to give the Canadian public and members of parliament the assurance that its objectives are being met. A more up-to-date evaluation of the program is essential.

This is remarks related to Bill C-17 — passed in 1991 — by the Auditor General in 1993, prior to the proposal of Bill C-68. He

also recommends in that same annual report in 1993 — this is the Auditor General — and I quote:

The Department of Justice (this is the federal Department of Justice) should undertake a rigorous evaluation of the gun control program.

To which the recorded departmental response was as follows:

The current gun control initiative made only limited use of the 1983 evaluation. More reliance is placed on the statistics available since the 1970s on homicides, suicides, accidental deaths, and robberies. In any event (and note this, Mr. Speaker) the legislation and regulations were driven by clear public interest considerations which needed to be acted upon despite the absence of precise data.

And now the minister is proposing the enactment of Bill C-68 without any data on how the recently implemented gun control provisions in Bill C-17 have worked. It is submitted that it is unacceptable and irresponsible in the current economic climate for the Department of Justice to compound its previous error by introducing a costly new gun control Bill without having completed an evaluation of the existing program.

The cost . . . Mr. Speaker, I believe that the money would be much better spent on education, health care, and a number of the real needs of the people in this country. Time is also money, in terms of the time that enforcement officers will have to spend on filling out forms, checking serial numbers on the property of law-abiding people — time which would be better spent enforcing laws against criminal activity.

There's a great deal of frustration already amongst our peace officers, Mr. Speaker, in this province and elsewhere, because they know that harassment of law-abiding gun owners, hunters, collectors, and target shooters, will not reduce crime. They do say that . . . there is that old saying: if you outlaw guns, only outlaws will have guns. And enforcement officers have told me that there's evidence that there's already, in anticipation of stricter gun laws, a growing movement of the underground acquisition of firearms by people who don't qualify under the current laws — much less more stringent ones — and that this activity is already growing, Mr. Speaker.

The concerns expressed by the Saskatchewan Federation of Police Officers are as follows, and I quote:

SFPO (Saskatchewan Federation of Police Officers) . . . in their recent survey, overwhelmingly voted down the principle of registration, viewing it as an extremely expensive initiative that targets law abiding firearms owners and does little regarding crime prevention or crime control. Saskatchewan officers also believe registration will have little effect on the criminal element.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that we should pay attention to what the peace officers of this province are saying to us about their work and about what these regulations proposed will do to

assist them in that work.

Another element of the cost, Mr. Speaker, is found in the summary of what this legislation is purportedly proposed to do. One is enhancing firearm acquisition certificate application procedures. And there's a long list of provisions that will be in a detailed questionnaire pursuant to the regulations of the proposed legislation, addressing a number of issues, including but not limited to, previous behaviour problems, depression, alcohol or drug abuse, recent divorce, separation, failure in school, loss of a job, or bankruptcy.

And this implies, Mr. Speaker, that if these are to be considerations that will be looked at on the original acquisition certificate, then it implies that there will be some kind of a monitoring procedure so that if any of these conditions stated occur after the acquisition, that there would be ways of removing the certificate. Now this is as expensive and very . . . could be extremely invasive in terms of people's privacy and very discriminatory.

There are some other provisions. Some other members have mentioned, I believe, the succession and the confiscation — for instance, firearms that are considered restricted now that will not be allowed to be transferred and that upon the demise of the current owner, even though they have a valid firearms acquisition certificate or registration certificate, that their property will be confiscated. And in many cases these firearms have historic value and sentimental value.

There's also the provision of search and seizure where enforcement officers would be permitted to enter the premises of a private citizen to search for firearms on the basis of such a thing as a telephone call. And I'm sure that's not the kind of society that I want to live in.

I want to quote, Mr. Speaker, from a source that we on this side of the House do not often quote, but the Fraser Institute published in March of 1995, a very recent Critical Issues Bulletin entitled: *Gun Control is not Crime Control*. And the author of this report from the Fraser Institute is Professor Mauser, Ph.D., who is a professor in business administration, and in the Institute for Canadian Urban Research Studies at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby.

His publications include books and over 30 published papers in criminology, political science, and research methodology. For the past several years Professor Mauser has been researching issues related to firearms and firearm legislation. He has published two articles comparing Canadian and American attitudes towards firearms and firearm legislation, and another examining the treatment of polls and gun control by the mass media. He has published econometric analyses of the effects of the 1977 Canadian firearms legislation on homicide. And he is currently working on a parallel evaluation of the same law's effect on armed robbery.

Professor Mauser is a gun owner and a certified Canadian firearms safety course instructor.

I want to read briefly from what Professor Mauser, established as an authority in this field, says about the current legislation

where there seems to be a perception that it's wide open, home on the range out there in terms of gun ownership now. And what I want to outline is a quote from Dr. Mauser's article that describes the situation generally in Canada now, today, without Bill C-68. And I quote, Mr. Speaker:

Firearms ownership is a significant part of modern Canadian life. Many Canadians own firearms for hunting or target-shooting purposes; this has been true for hundreds of years. With reasonable care and attention, firearms do not pose a significant threat to the public in the hands of the ordinary person. Owners of long guns (rifles and shotguns) tend to be hunters; handgun owners tend to be target-shooters or collectors.

Canada has some of the strictest firearms laws in the world.

Firearms are covered in the federal criminal law. Part III of the Criminal Code, Sections 84 through 117, is devoted entirely to firearms regulations. Provincial hunting regulations also cover firearms use. In addition to federal and provincial legislation, there are hundreds of pages of regulations that specify how these laws are to be interpreted.

And, Mr. Speaker, I repeat, I'm outlining as set out in this article the situation today, without Bill C-68.

Anyone wishing to purchase a firearm must hold a valid Firearms Acquisition Certificate (FAC). To obtain an FAC, the applicant must pay \$50, subject him or herself to a full character investigation by the police, pass a 3-hour firearms safety exam or course costing between \$100 and \$180, and wait a minimum of 28 days. In practice, the wait is often closer to three months. First-time applicants must often wait 6 months or more. Prospective hunters must also obtain a provincial hunting licence, which involves passing a second exam or course costing at least \$75.

The purchase of a handgun, or any other firearm classified as a "restricted weapon," requires further permits and police checks. Canadians have required permits to purchase handguns since 1913, and handguns have been registered since 1934. For the past 20 years, the police have required all purchasers of restricted weapons to undergo police checks and to join a gun club. All restricted firearms are registered, and a police permit is required to transport a restricted firearm to and from the owner's home or place of business. In order to shoot the handgun or restricted rifle, the owner must apply annually for a carrying permit which will allow him or her to take the restricted firearm to an approved shooting range. This permit requires another thorough police check every year.

This doesn't sound to me, Mr. Speaker, like home on the range in Canada or Saskatchewan.

In Saskatchewan, there are some interesting statistics with

respect to gun ownership in this same Critical Issues Bulletin from the Fraser Institute. In Saskatchewan, according to an Angus Reid survey, 87 per cent of households in Saskatchewan — 87 per cent — own a rifle; 61 per cent own a shotgun; 13 per cent own a handgun — at least one.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that perhaps those who think that Bill C-68 has some currency in some parts of the country, will certainly understand from those statistics why it doesn't have a lot of favour in Saskatchewan.

And some other myths are sort of exploded in this report in the statistics that they give, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the kind of people who own firearms for various reasons. There's a profile of Canadian firearms owners in this report compiled by Dr. Mauser, and he talks about the demographics of firearms owners 18 years old and older. Fully 72 per cent have at least a complete high school, some post-secondary or completed university; 45 per cent of firearms owners have annual incomes of over \$40,000, and a full 57 per cent are, by occupation, owners, professionals, clerical or service workers; 33 per cent are blue-collar workers, and 8 per cent are farmers.

And I think there might be a few surprises in those statistics for some people who think they know the profile of a gun owner and relate it to somebody that has a rack on the back of their half ton with a couple of guns on it.

Another interesting statistic is the number of firearms accidents. This is a table of causes of death in Canada in 1992 — total accidents being 8,800; total firearms accidents being 66.

(2015)

There were 3,400 motor vehicle accidents; 2,100-and-some people died through falls; 726 by poisoning; 706 by drowning or suffocation; 328 in fires; 66 people, Mr. Speaker, 66 in firearms accidents in all of Canada — less than half — being 154 — who died in surgical or medical misadventures . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . My hon. friend across the way says, outlaw doctors. Well, I'm not sure we'd go that far.

But I think those statistics are very telling, and I think that what we have now really is, in Bill C-68, embodied in that, is politics of the worst kind, Mr. Speaker. It is legislation that appears to be a political response to a perception that crime is increasing in Canada when in fact crime is not increasing in Canada. I think it is not an appropriate response. And I just cannot understand why the perception and the hysteria that's created by that — making people feel as if their streets are not safe and that crime is increasing — I think that is a crime, Mr. Speaker.

I think partly the legislation is a money grab in terms of the amount of fees that will be required to register. And I think that if someone can prove to me that more owners' registration laws for the .410 shotgun that I have, that I inherited from my grandmother who was a pioneer woman in the province, and that I use occasionally to dispatch magpies and skunks; if somebody can prove to me why paying money every year and going through this kind of a rigmarole and involving the time of peace officers in checking serial numbers and filling out forms

for me to maintain ownership of that firearm, the day that somebody can show me that that is going to prevent a random, unfortunate shooting incident — a drive-by shooting in some large urban centre in this country; if putting me through that, putting peace officers . . . wasting the time and money of the system is going to prevent such an incident, then, you know, I might be able to, being open-minded and honest, I think that I would be able to take another look at it.

But I do not see, I fail to see, any relationship whatsoever between those situations. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion and I will not be supporting the amendment. But I certainly will be voting on behalf of the main motion. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to stand up today and join the debate on the motion before the Assembly on the federal government's gun control legislation. I spoke on the issue about a year ago in this Assembly, and I remember talking about the fact about how my mother has a .22 and she uses it to shoot gophers that are hassling her garden, and magpies and stuff like that.

And just to follow up on the former member's comments, I fail to see how making my mother register her .22 is going to make life much safer in my community or my country. I think that this is . . . in my opinion, it is an economic issue.

I think also last year when I was responding on the budget, I called on the federal government to come forward with a sound financial plan to get the government's finances in shape, in order, with a long-term plan. And of course they didn't do that, and instead they come out with a bureaucratic, expensive, I believe, expensive system of registering long rifles in this country, that has been mentioned time and time again in this Assembly, that's not going to achieve or control crime or try and make our society any safer than it's been in the past.

This past weekend, Mr. Speaker, on Saturday night, I had the opportunity to spend . . . went to an awards night for the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation in Willowbrook. Now Willowbrook is a little community just about 12 miles north of my place, and they had the awards night in the curling rink. And I didn't really take a good look at the crowd, but — as about how many were there — but there was well over 100. I would say there was a 150, 160 individuals at this Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation banquet and awards night.

And it was a real family gathering. I mean there was parents there, and children, and grandparents, and members of the community out. There was a supper. Following that was the presentation of awards to junior white tail hunters, photography, fishing, seniors' awards. There was a lot of awards given out that night that's been sponsored by the wildlife federation in the area.

And it wasn't just older people there, Mr. Speaker; there was a lot of young people there. And these people are involved in recreational activities in our province, in hunting and in fishing. And of course, this was to recognize their achievements in

hunting and fishing.

But to put these young individuals, who have gone through a course that the wildlife federation teaches on hunter safety, gun safety . . . and it is a fairly in-depth course, and they get to understand the use of a rifle and the respect that needs to be shown towards that firearm.

And you know the communities are . . . certainly it's one part of the community, is to have these activities going on. And to put another hardship amongst rural families, an economic hardship about, you know, the cost of rifles, the cost of ammunition, the cost of licensing, for getting your hunting licence, and then to throw an additional cost of registering these firearms, to me, Mr. Speaker, does not make a lot of sense. And I think it is, in my opinion, an economic issue as much as it is . . . or more than it is a safety issue.

The other night, when I was travelling back to my community, I was listening to the radio. And they were interviewing an MP (Member of Parliament) from Edmonton Southwest, I believe it was; he happens to be a member of the Reform Party, and he himself, personally, is in favour of the gun legislation. He did a survey amongst his constituents and his constituents appeared in the survey . . . however he done it, a majority of them were opposed to it. But he had decided that he was going to support it.

Or they were in favour of it; he was going to oppose the legislation. And he based it on an economic issue, on the fact that, you know, it's only going to cost a few hundred million here and a few hundred million there and a few hundred million some other place. And you know that's the way we've got ourselves into this economic crisis that we find ourselves in in this country. It doesn't sound necessary like a tremendous amount of money, but you've got to start some place to try and get spending under control. And to waste more money on a system and on something that's going to force people to register rifles who are not criminals, I don't think is going to address the problem.

But I think if you look back in your smaller communities in rural Saskatchewan, I mean that seems to be a thing, that rifles are something that people use certainly very often to chase animals away from their cattle or chickens or other animals, other domestic animals. And to put this extra hardship on them — who knows? — you're probably going to . . . I believe you're going to have to have show your licence or your registration for this particular rifle when you go to buy shells. And I mean this is just going to . . .

An Hon. Member: — Abide by the rules.

Mr. Carlson: — You've got to abide by the rules, the member says. That's right.

So I just think that it's going to be very burdensome, very hard for individuals to function, and it's not going to achieve what it wants to achieve.

I think in the past we've seen other countries that maybe there's

more violence than there is in Canada, and maybe they've got a little bit less controls than we have because we do have a fair bit of controls. And I think the amount of controls we have are more than enough, and I don't think we need to take this extra step to make just a whole bureaucratic run-around for individuals who want to do some hunting, want to do some recreational shooting, or who maybe even want to go into competition. There's a lot of shooting competition in this country, and it's just going to make life much more difficult for them.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I will be supporting the main motion when it comes to a vote, and I urge all members to support this too because it's a very important issue. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise here today and participate in this particular debate, a debate that certainly evokes a lot of emotion in Saskatchewan and amongst a lot of people and for good reason. Mr. Speaker, it's very visible that our government has been very strongly opposed to this particular legislation, and for very good reason.

I think all of us can go back to the federal election of 1993, and as we followed that particular election, and most of us participated in that campaign, it was interesting to note and to look back now, and we never had it mentioned once during the campaign by the Liberals, about proposed gun legislation or any enhancements or modifications they were going to be making to gun legislation in the future.

And again, this of course, when the current minister came out and decided that he was going to bring forward new gun legislation, took us, the government, by surprise, and I'm sure everybody in the Chamber. And of course our government has been very strong in opposing this particular legislation.

Again it's interesting to note that nowhere in the 1993 legislation, whether in the red book or anywhere, was there any mention of proposed changes to the gun legislation.

Now the previous federal minister of Justice had brought forward a package of amendments. And I'm sure that all members are much aware of those particular amendments and what was included in those particular changes. And we felt at the time that we could support most of those changes — and we did — because we felt as a government that if that was the compromise, then that was . . . we could live with that. And so we supported that, knowing and feeling that that was going to be the end of gun legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, some years later, we have another ambitious Justice minister who wants to bring forward another whole array and another whole set of packages and has got them before us. Well I can tell you that our government is going to oppose this right to the bitter end because we believe that Saskatchewan people, the majority of Saskatchewan people, are opposed to these particular amendments.

One of the things as I followed the debate . . . and I'm not a gun enthusiast. I don't collect guns, but I do have some at home. One of the things that I found amazing about the former Justice minister's gun legislation and now the new ones that the present minister is bringing forward, is that there has never been a thorough evaluation of what our objectives are with this particular gun legislation.

And I think it's very important that we take time to evaluate, to assess, to analyse, whether we have sound objectives set forward and that we try to see if we are meeting those objectives before we get on with bringing forward a whole new package and passing a whole new package of amendments.

I find it completely baffling and completely — to me — irresponsible to be moving forward again when we haven't done that. So I would recommend, first of all, that we take a good, strong look and evaluate whether we are meeting our objectives with gun legislation, and in fact this has been voiced by many officials in Ottawa and even the Auditor General has commented on that.

I want to talk a bit about the gun registry and obviously in Saskatchewan as we see the mounting opposition to this and this is really amazing. And we see the current minister going around the country. And I heard him today even as a witness to the parliamentary committee claiming that this new gun registry would certainly go a long way in preventing violent crime. And even today he went as far as saying that it would curb the incidents such as we have seen in Oklahoma City.

Well I want to tell you, and I want to tell the people of Canada, that that almost borders on being preposterous. I mean the fact is, the fact is, does anyone in Canada think that a national gun registry is going to stop these kinds of incidents?

(2030)

I want to ask anyone in Canada, do you think that the criminal element in Canada is going to come forward and is going to register their guns? I would say no, Mr. Speaker, I don't think they will and I think it's amazing to think that the criminals are going to line up and are going to be coming forward to register their guns. That is not going to happen and this gun registry is not going to curb that one iota

Now one of the biggest problems we have, obviously, is the smuggling of guns. What this government, the federal government, should be doing, should be tackling that particular problem and putting more emphasis on the current gun laws and trying to enforce those particular gun laws instead of bringing on a whole new package of enhancements.

And I think it's very, very important that the federal government start to place the priorities in the right order — and certainly enforcing the present laws would go a long way — instead of trying to bring in some new amendments.

Now they're saying, of course, that the cost to this — and this is where we really have some grave concerns — the costs of this, which I don't think have been clearly quantified . . . I hear

figures of \$87 million. I'm not sure that's accurate. I don't think it is. I think it's going to be considerably higher.

But this again, Mr. Speaker, speaks to the mixed priorities of this federal government, the mixed priorities, Mr. Speaker. They're going to spend \$87 million or a figure around that — I think it's going to be higher — but they're going to spend on a national gun registry, while what we have seen in the last budget, they have cut education and health and agriculture. The Crow is gone. And they're going to put \$87 million towards a gun registry that is not — is not — going to meet the objectives that it's set out for.

You are going to be placing a burden on law-abiding people who have respect for rifles and have respect for guns. Those are the ones that you're going to be hurting and are going to be placing a burden on — not the criminal element, Mr. Speaker. You're not going to have any effect on them. And you're going to be spending \$87 million — misplaced priorities. And that is really something that I think this federal government has to answer the Canadian people across. Why are we going to be placing that much money into this kind of a gun registry.

So what I want to encourage all of my colleagues is to try to place as much pressure in any way they possibly can to try to encourage the federal government to reassess this particular decision in light of what they're hearing in Saskatchewan and right across Canada.

And I want to ask the federal government and urge the federal government, and in particular the Justice minister, to refocus his priorities, refocus them on what they should be. And that is, number one, health and education; number two, agriculture — not spending \$87 million on a piece of legislation that, first of all, is not going to meet objectives because the objectives are not identified. We don't know what the objectives are. They claim that this is going to stop crime. This is going to stop bombings. I'm not sure how it's going to stop it.

So I think before they spend \$87 million, they better demonstrate to Canadian people in a tangible fashion what exactly are the objectives, how they're going to meet them, and then I think engage the Canadian public in the big debate. So I would encourage the federal government to get on with that and again place the priorities where they should be, place it on what Saskatchewan people need, place it on what Canadian people need — and that is jobs. That is quality education, quality health care, and not a national gun registry.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that I will be supporting this particular motion, and I appreciate the opportunity to have spoken here today. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 8:36 p.m. until 8:38 p.m.

Amendment negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Swenson	Martens	Goohsen	— 6
D'Autremont	Toth	Britton	
Nays			
Van Mulligen	Thompson	Lingenfelter	— 24
Shillington	Johnson	Trew	
Goulet	Calvert	Cunningham	
Mitchell	Penner	Upshall	
Hagel	Teichrob	Cline	
Crofford	Murray	Sonntag	
Flavel	Roy	Scott	
Kujawa	Carlson	Jess	

economy here in Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I would like to move this amendment then based on those numbers. And the amendment would read:

That the motion be amended by adding the following words after the word "licensing":

which would impose a cost of \$70 million on the provincial economy, over and above the hundreds of million of dollars the federal government is already taking out of the province by its unilateral decision to end the Crow benefit and to reduce federal funds for medicare; and instead allow the people of this province to better use that \$70 million for law enforcement, crime prevention, economic development, and medicare.

The Speaker: — The debate will continue on the main motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to join in the debate here in the Assembly with respect to the federal gun legislation, and at the end of my brief remarks, I will be moving an amendment to the motion.

As many, many of my constituents point out to me, Mr. Speaker, there seems to be that this legislation the federal government is proposing certainly does not punish the criminal but makes criminals out of ordinary people in my constituency right in Meadow Lake. It makes criminals out of friends and neighbours of ours.

I think what this really requires is a logical approach to things. When I look back in the 1960s and earlier, it is my understanding that the number of deaths related to firearms in Saskatchewan amounted to something over 100 deaths per year. And since that time I think we've taken a logical approach and have brought into place hunter safety courses and those sorts of things. And it is now my understanding that we have probably in Saskatchewan less than 10 deaths a year related to firearms.

So I think what we've done is we've taken the logical approach to firearms. And I think that it also proves that education is the approach that we should be taking.

One of the things that I think that Mr. Rock doesn't realize is that this has absolutely nothing to do with stopping criminals from continuing on with the crimes that they're about to commit. And I refer to the member from Kinistino earlier, who made remarks about Minister Rock who said that the bombing that took place in Oklahoma earlier this week could have been prevented had we had this registry in place. Well I agree that it makes absolutely no sense at all.

I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that in 1993 the auditor's report said that he anticipated the average cost for registering guns to be about \$100 per gun. Now the wildlife federation says that the number of guns in Saskatchewan is approximately 700,000, so if you do quick multiplication, 700,000 guns times \$100, that amounts to \$70 million taken out of our provincial

This amendment will be seconded by the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand in my place this evening and just say a very few words in support of the amendment moved by my colleague, the member from Meadow Lake, on this issue of gun control.

I think one of the important things that we have to recognize is that the view of western Canadians in relationship to guns is different from what it might be of our friends in the eastern centres. When we think of guns, we don't associate them with crime. We don't associate them with violence, as perhaps our friends in the larger eastern cities do. We think of guns as being tools that are used for hunting or pest control or the humane destruction of farm animals, as my colleague, the member from Nipawin, explained earlier on today. We see guns as a necessary part of rural life. We have a gun on our farm. In fact we've had one since we bought the farm. And I don't see that, and I never have seen it, as a threat or as a danger.

We already have, Mr. Speaker, quite comprehensive gun legislation in Canada which is very restricting, particularly for handguns. In fact we have a lot of legislation in Canada, and we know that. But what we don't know is how effective this legislation is. No one has ever evaluated this legislation, as the member from River Heights said earlier on today. What no one has ever shown me is how this proposed federal legislation is going to reduce crime, how it's going to reduce violence, how it's going to make any woman, any child, or any person, safer in their home.

What I have been told is that we have crime in Canada, we have violence in Canada, and if we just had more gun control laws, that would stop the crime and that would stop the violence. Well, Mr. Speaker, I just don't believe that. I think that crime is a complex problem and I think to just give us more gun legislation is a solution that is just not going to work. I don't think that it's fair for us to expect legitimate gun owners to fill out yet more forms, do more paperwork, and spend yet more money, as the federal government will have to spend more money — \$70 million more — and somehow expect us to

believe that that's going to make Canada a safer place. I just don't believe that.

So I'm very pleased to stand in support of the amendment that's just been presented by my colleague from Meadow Lake. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Flavel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to rise in support of this amendment.

I want to go into some statistics on this and to let people know that research has shown that if the Liberals really wanted to save money, and this is what they say the gun control is for . . . is to save lives rather, rather than money, that they would not be wasting this hard-earned tax dollars on gun control. Statistics for 1992, which shows that . . . over 170,000 Canadian men and women dying of heart disease, cancer, digestive disease, mental disorders, motor vehicle accidents, accidents, falls, etc., and in order to put firearm deaths in perspective, in the year 1992, only 247 Canadians were murdered by firearms.

Certainly this is the still of . . . too many when you look at any number. I mean any number of people that are killed with firearms is . . . if one is killed, that's one too many. Only 1,050 committed suicide with firearms and only 63 died in fatal gun accidents.

The registration of all firearms will cost hundreds of millions of dollars, and Justice Minister Allan Rock cannot explain to us how that will save even one life; how many lives could be saved by spending these hundreds of millions of dollars in areas where they would have a chance of saving hundreds and possibly even thousands of lives.

In 1992 mortality statistics charts show that 76,211 Canadians died of heart and circulatory disease. That's one death for every seven minutes. And only 247 were murdered with a firearm, and that's one death every day and a half.

Still the Liberal government is trying to convince us that half a billion dollars spent on gun control will save more lives than if it was spent on heart disease research or improved care of patients.

In 1992, one woman died every two hours from breast cancer. A total of 4,830. But only one woman died every five days as a result of a homicide by firearms. So whether a gun is registered or not, it could still be used to kill Canadian women. But I bet if we took that half a billion dollars the government will spend implementing gun control and spend it on breast cancer research and treatment, we could save a lot more than 69 women's lives.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Flavel: — In 1992 one Canadian died by suicide every two hours for a total of 3,709, but only one every eight hours committed suicide with a gun. Gun control hasn't reduced suicides, and gun registration won't either. How many suicide

prevention centres could be opened up with \$500 million? How many families could have been counselled with half a billion dollars, and how many domestic disputes could be avoided? How many women's crisis centres could be financed with that much money?

These mortality statistics show that the Liberal government has its priorities all wrong. Whether you own a gun or not, all Canadians should be asking government three questions: how much will gun registration cost, how many lives will gun registration save, and how could this money be better spent?

I think, Mr. Speaker, a couple more statistics that show . . . and as I said before, even one person may be dying at the hands of someone with a gun is one too many. On a statistics chart that shows what is killing Canadian men, cancer — one person dies every 17 minutes from cancer in Canada, one man. But one person is killed by a firearm every two days. And if you take those statistics to every 17 minutes, why would we be spending all that money registering the guns when we could be spending that money on cancer research and saving many more lives.

Same as what is killing Canadian women — cancer. There again, one death every 21 minutes. Killed by firearms, one every five days. And I don't know how many times a person would have stress . . . maybe one is one too many. But there are so many other places that we could be spending that money on research, saving lives, and making life better for people that have these diseases and so forth, and making life in Canada just general, all-round . . .

It's just a waste of money. As my colleague from Lumsden says, guns in rural Saskatchewan are our way of life, our necessity in lots of cases. I own a farm with sheep, and I don't know how else I would keep the coyotes from coming in and stealing our lambs and so forth. I can't throw a rock that far to keep them out, and it's a way of life in rural Saskatchewan. We have creditors coming in. We have pests coming into our yards, and the rifles are not the ones that kill. We have controls now on handguns, and yet I understand that most of the homicides are created with handguns. The control shows that it isn't working.

So then why do we not take . . . and I certainly agree with the statistics — let's take this money, let's put it to better use. Let's put it to cancer research, breast cancer research, or some other . . . traffic safety and so forth, and let's put it where it can be best used by Canadian people.

I stand, Mr. Chairman, and will be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat appalled at the amendment that we have before us. And I guess one would have to ask what the real motive is behind the amendment that would talk of a \$70 million cost to the provincial economy. And I'm not exactly sure where the \$70 million was arrived at or how it was arrived at.

But I can appreciate some of the comments that have been made

regarding the amendment. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, there's no question that we in our society need to take a more serious look at how we treat others and how we focus our attention on some of the other major problems. As I indicated earlier this afternoon that there are so many other issues that are very important and imperative that we take the time to review.

But to bring this amendment forward tonight, it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the amendment really does not address the issue before us today and the question that will be facing the Minister of Justice and every one of the legislators that would travel to Ottawa to meet with the committee.

And putting their . . . bringing forward the issue of Saskatchewan's stand regarding Mr. Rock's Bill C-68, some statistics haven't been brought forward by government members that have shown that certainly to just argue that this is going to protect people more . . . as Mr. Rock even today went so far to indicate that his piece of legislation would certainly make it a much safer society and a much better society to live in.

And yet I think if we took the time to review the statistics that has been presented to us in this Assembly this afternoon, certainly the statistics show and go to prove that we have come a long ways in the way we respect and treat firearms. And the fact that they have, in reality, a much less . . . or less of a significant impact in mortal crime than they even had 10 or 15 years ago.

And so I think what the government has done in bringing forward this amendment to the present Bill before us it just goes one step further in watering it down that much more. And I think that's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because it's taking us away from the real issue before us.

I'm not sure if it's the fact that the government is so taken up with the issue of the federal government reducing funding in the areas of health and education and other third-party grants and that's why this motion is before us; and the fact that they have come up with a level of some \$70 million and they feel that the government should compensate the province so that they could turn around and put that kind of funding into health care, into research in the area of health care or education or economic development.

But certainly, Mr. Speaker, I think what this does, does not add to the legislation or to the motion before us but it takes away from it. I think it's very important. And that's why the amendment we introduced earlier, we brought it forward, Mr. Speaker, because I believe it dealt more directly with the motion and with the views of Saskatchewan taxpayers and with views of the gun owners and the firearms individuals, the Saskatchewan firearms association, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, and all the different groups that have stood up in support and rallied around and basically brought together, if you will, a team of individuals to face Mr. Rock and suggest that it's to his folly that he continue on with Bill C-68.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, the fact that we had addressed this afternoon, and asked for the government to join with us in bringing forward legislation that would really bring his motion .

. . . and give more credence to his motion, was significant and important.

However I find that this amendment that we have before us, talking about the unilateral decision to end the Crow benefit . . . and yes, the federal government who are currently a Liberal government in this country, have eliminated the Crow benefit. But whether this will be a benefit to the province of Saskatchewan and address the transportation costs that will be faced because of the demise of the Crow benefit, or whether the dollars they're talking of here will have any significant impact in medicare in this province, versus the economic impact that we are going to face should Bill C-68 pass, is something that one has to really question.

So, Mr. Speaker, while we agree in principle with the motion before us, yet the fact is we would like to have seen more teeth to the motion.

(2100)

We can certainly agree that it's time that we in western Canada . . . And I trust, as the minister has indicated in his motion, that they're more than prepared to look at the idea that was presented by, I believe it was Alberta and Manitoba and the Territories, in a made-in-western-Canada piece of gun legislation.

And that in fact . . . I guess I would like to believe that once the committee from this province, and possibly working in conjunction with the committees from Alberta and Manitoba and the Territories, are able to convince Mr. Rock that there is an appropriate place in his gun legislation to allow the motion that we're dealing with this afternoon rather than getting and making it . . . well, even a little more convoluted and watering it down that much more.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would indicate that while I'm disappointed the amendment we brought forward was defeated, we're ready to certainly to support the motion brought forward by the minister.

But I do not understand how this really applies or makes the minister's motion that much more credible or gives that much more weight or credence to his motion. And so that's why it's important for us, Mr. Minister, to have raised these few questions, asked these questions, and ask the government what the real motive is in bringing forward this amendment at this time.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, to allow for the motion to have the most significant impact that it would have, it would be appropriate for this amendment to be defeated.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Being confused with the member from Meadow Lake certainly puts us a long ways apart, but on this issue we're closer together.

While we have another amendment, Mr. Speaker, I think it's necessary that I speak a little bit about this amendment, having gone to some length to explain our position on the motion as a whole.

The amendment deals with an extension of the whole process. And certainly I welcome that, because as a I spent quite a long time earlier in this debate explaining to the members that they had put together a wishy-washy position that really didn't have enough strength in it and really didn't have enough teeth to do very much for Saskatchewan people, any addition to that certainly is an improvement on a proposal that is supposed to be the groundwork or the basis for delivering a message to Ottawa that is going to cost this province many thousands of dollars to send people down there.

So as I pointed out in that first debate, and certainly applies in this amendment, there's not much sense going to Ottawa and spending all that money if you're only going to do a half a job. So we might just as well go down there with some ammunition and some real teeth in this motion and try to accomplish as much as we can. That's what we've got to do. We've got to get after it and try to do as much for Saskatchewan as possible. This helps.

I wish they'd have gone a little bit further. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, if they had accepted our amendment as well as this one and put those two together with the main motion, then we'd really have had something. We could have gone down there with amendments and legislation as put together.

We could have had these amendments that the government has put together today and we could have had the legislation that the opposition has introduced into this Assembly on gun ownership and on the notwithstanding clause. We could have put them all into one, great big, solid package and we would have really went to Ottawa and done a job on those fellows and had some real power for the Minister of Justice to use down there in the process of negotiation.

So, Mr. Speaker, while I'm disappointed that the government has to play partisan politics with such an important issue and defeat our amendment, which would have in fact given this whole thing the kind of perspective it should have had, we certainly can't say that we are totally opposed to what's going on because there are at least some elements of possibility of merit in the direction we're going because we are building this thing a little by little and getting a little more strength into it.

And I'm sure that the people from the Cumberland House area will be happier with the member from Cumberland House now that his government has seen the wisdom to extend this process a little further and to try and put a little more teeth into this whole mechanism, to try to defend the people that he represents in northern Saskatchewan.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that for those of us who enjoy the sport of using guns and related equipment, enjoy the sports of hunting, enjoy the sports of target shooting, we certainly hope that the government can achieve the goals that they are setting out for themselves in getting Allan Rock, the minister federally, to change his mind.

Unfortunately, I don't think that this process is going to work and that we're going to succeed unless we do in fact take a

provincial stand. And the only really true test of a provincial stand is for the government to stand in the Legislative Assembly. The power bloc of any government has to be built in the Assembly in the province and here we have to make legislation — good, hard, solid legislation, saying that we're taking control of the situation, saying that we are taking control of our own destiny, that we are going to be masters of our own destiny and that we are not going to allow the eastern Liberals to push us around as they've always done in the past.

Constantly they push western Canada around; constantly they give us the short end. You can bet when a Liberal government gets elected in Ottawa, they're going to take from the West and give to the East — it's almost a stamped, guaranteed contract and it's a time we put a stop to that kind of nonsense by going down there and saying we're going to stand for ourselves and pass some legislation that truly does defend Saskatchewan people against the tyranny of eastern Canada. And that's what it is, a form of tyranny that they take advantage of us all the time. Simply because we're few in numbers, they think they can get away with that.

Well I say let's pass some legislation, just as the Quebec people did with their language Bill, and stand in there in Ottawa and say, we're going to take care of our own. We're going to fight for our people and fight for our rights. Now you guys take us to court and fight over that, wherever levels you want to go. And instead of us always fighting against them, let them take us on for a change.

And that's what we've been saying all along. Not that we're against what the government's trying to do. We're trying to beef them up. We want to pour some cement in their spines so they go to Ottawa and win. We can't afford to lose.

We've got too much at stake in western Canada. They're going to destroy our economy and finally this amendment does go along with that part. And I think that's a good idea, to show them that it's important to our economy. It's important to our medicare system that we talk about what's going on through this amendment.

It's important that we talk about \$70 million more going out of our province, if that's what the figure is. I'm amazed at how high that is. But if it's anything close to that, then certainly it is a travesty of justice for Saskatchewan people to see a federal government bleeding that kind of money out of Saskatchewan people. And we certainly have to support any effort to stop that kind of nonsense from happening in our province and in our country.

We see here that we've got a position taken now that we're going to look at using some money for crime prevention and crime control. And that's exactly what we should be doing right from the start. We shouldn't be controlling honest people. We should be controlling criminals and we should concentrate our efforts on the crime element of our society.

The member from Meadow Lake made a fine point about all of the things that go on in relationship to the misnomers about the use of guns, and having come from the north country where

bear hunting and hunting and trapping and all that is a way of life, I'm sure that there's no one that doubts his sincerity in knowing exactly how this is going to affect his people.

But I want you to know that it affects the people in southern Saskatchewan just as crucially, especially in the area of economic development, as we talk about in this amendment, Mr. Speaker.

Economic development needs to have that extra money, and we do need that desperately in Saskatchewan and we need it in the area of tourism in south-west Saskatchewan to provide a little dam on our creek so we can have fishing, so the wildlife can have a drink of water, so we can sell more hunting licences for antelope and deer, and have more people come into the area on those tourist adventures.

And that's economic development, Mr. Speaker. And that's the Battle Creek in south-west Saskatchewan that needs to have that dam, as some of my colleagues are wondering where I thought that would be necessary. And certainly we've alluded to that in this amendment. And for that, I commend the members opposite for at least extending this process so that there's a little more teeth in this motion today. In having talked about it for so long today, we might as well get it as strong and powerful as we can and make our points on things like the Crow benefit, which of course is mentioned in the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

And certainly everybody in Saskatchewan knows that we are taking a beating again in Saskatchewan over this abolition of the Crow benefit, in the process that it has been done, and the way it's being undertaken. We see instead of \$7 billion coming to the farmers of this province and of this country, instead of that we have a billion and six hundred thousand dollars, which is really chicken-feed, for that whole process.

And it's just a disgrace to realize that the federal government will probably eat up half of that in bureaucratic red tape and all kinds of things that are going to eat that up — in job creation programs that is only paper pushing from one desk to the other instead of genuinely developing western Canada into the prosperous place that it can be and should be and would be if we didn't have eastern Canada trying to drag us down every step of the way all the time, especially with gun laws and that kind of commotion that we've got on here today.

So, Mr. Speaker, while I was hoping that the members opposite would take our point of view and our arguments and our contribution to this debate even more seriously than they have, we're glad that they're at least putting some more strength into this thing. And I hope that they can go down there and actually win the day for us, because this is a tremendously important issue to the people of Canada and to western Canada, especially to Saskatchewan.

We've heard situations mentioned already, Mr. Speaker, where in some of the experiments done in the United States, people have actually passed laws saying that every household should have a gun in order to cut crime. And in fact now they have sort of proven some limited experiments in Oregon state that it appears in fact the crime goes down when you have more guns

in more homes, because now the criminals start to fear the honest people. And that's the way it should be. The criminals should be afraid of the honest people. The honest people should have the right to put the fear of everything into them and send them right out of here and right out of anywhere that they happen to be.

So let's concentrate on the criminals. Let's not make criminals out of honest people. Let's give every bit of strength and effort to this cause that we can possibly muster, Mr. Speaker, because it is so important to all of us that we ought to all shed our political clothes and put on a united uniform and march to Ottawa for the people of Saskatchewan and come back victorious with Allan Rock's Bill defeated.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that the government members again gave me the opportunity to rise today on this very important issue, especially the member from Meadow Lake.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I won't take a lot of time on this particular date because I have said a significant amount today on this particular issue, although it does disappoint me that the government has brought in this particular motion to try and change the direction of the debate.

We initially started off this debate, Mr. Speaker, talking about gun control and now all of a sudden we're talking about medicare, economic development. Now the law enforcement is part of the Bill C-68 so that is certainly valid. But the Crow benefit, Mr. Speaker, I think is stretching it a little bit, although the federal government has certainly taken away from Saskatchewan with the changes to the Crow benefit.

Mr. Speaker, when the government opposite talks of the \$70 million, it's my estimation that they're on the low side when it comes to costs in Saskatchewan for the registration system as proposed by Allan Rock. It could be, in my estimation, as much as double that — up to \$150 million, Mr. Speaker. And that is a considerable amount of money and would certainly be much more valuable when used in Saskatchewan rather than being sent to Ottawa to feed more bureaucrats down there.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this amendment as proposed by the members opposite adds little of any value to the original discussion that we were debating the entire day.

So, Mr. Speaker, having said that, I believe that this motion should be defeated, that it provides very little, very little of assistance, of assistance in the gun debate. There is a lot of area that should be debated in this. The Crow rate is certainly one of them, Mr. Speaker, but that should be dealt with in the context of agriculture, economic development. The minister himself has failed miserably in this province to provide new jobs — miserably, miserably.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's another area that we should be debating perhaps on another day. And certainly medicare, while the government is condemning the federal government for

decreasing the payments to medicare, the people of Saskatchewan certainly can't condemn the government for spending less on health care in Saskatchewan. We can't do that.

They have indeed increased the budgets on health care, but they have certainly decreased the service that health care has provided, Mr. Speaker, decreased the service.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this amendment adds little, if any, value to the original motion and the debate on gun control. Thank you.

The Speaker: — Order, order.

The division bells rang from 9:16 p.m. until 9:17 p.m.

Amendment agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Thompson	Lingenfelter	Shillington
Atkinson	Johnson	Trew
Goulet	Calvert	Cunningham
Mitchell	Penner	Upshall
Hagel	Koenker	Teichrob
Cline	Crofford	Murray
Sonntag	Flavel	Roy
Scott	Kujawa	Carlson
Keeping	Jess	

— 26

Nays

Swenson	Martens	D'Autremont
Toth	Britton	Bergman

— 6

The division bells rang from 9:19 p.m. until 9:24 p.m.

Motion as amended agreed to on the following recorded division

Yeas

Van Mulligen	Thompson	Lingenfelter
Shillington	Atkinson	Johnson
Trew	Goulet	Calvert
Cunningham	Mitchell	Penner
Upshall	Hagel	Koenker
Cline	Crofford	Murray
Sonntag	Flavel	Roy
Scott	Carlson	Keeping
Jess	Goohsen	D'Autremont
Toth	Bergman	

— 29

Nays

Swenson	Martens	Britton
---------	---------	---------

— 3

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — As it relates to the questions mentioned, I would convert to motions return (debatable).

The Speaker: — Questions 63, 64, and 65, motions for return debate.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

The Speaker: — Sorry, why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I noted today a memo came around regarding some committees that must operate tomorrow, and there's some name changes to be made, so I'm asking leave to present names of changes to committee.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

Substitution of Members on Committees

Mr. Toth: — I move by myself, seconded by the member from Souris-Cannington:

That the name of Mr. Jack Goohsen be substituted for that of Mr. Bill Neudorf on the list of members composing the Standing Committee on Education.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Toth: — I move, seconded by the member from Souris-Cannington:

That the name of Mr. Jack Goohsen be substituted for that of Mr. Bill Neudorf on the list of members composing the Standing Committee on Estimates.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Toth: — I move, seconded by the member from Souris-Cannington:

That the name of Mr. Don Toth be substituted for that of Mr. Harold Martens on the list of members composing the Standing Committee on Estimates.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Toth: — I move, seconded by the member from Souris-Cannington:

That the name of Mr. Jack Goohsen be substituted for that of Mr. Bill Neudorf on the list of members composing the Standing Committee on Non-controversial Bills.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Toth: — I move, seconded by the member from Souris-Cannington:

That the name of Mr. Don Toth be substituted for that of Mr. John Britton on the list of members composing the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Toth: — I move, seconded by the member from Souris-Cannington:

That the name of Mr. Rick Swenson be substituted for that of Mr. Harold Martens on the list of members composing the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Toth: — I move, seconded by the member from Souris-Cannington:

That the name of Mr. Jack Goohsen be substituted for that of Mr. John Britton on the list of members composing the Continuing Select Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Toth: — I move, seconded by the member from Souris-Cannington:

That the name of Mr. Don Toth be substituted for that of Mr. Harold Martens on the list of members composing the Continuing Select Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Toth: — I move, seconded by the member from Souris-Cannington:

That the name of Mr. Dan D'Autremont be substituted for that of Mr. Harold Martens on the list of members composing the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures.

Motion agreed to.

(2130)

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Souris-Cannington:

That the name of Mr. Rick Swenson be substituted for that of Mr. Bill Neudorf on the list of members composing the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures.

Motion agreed to.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 60 — An Act to amend The Department of Health Act

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I very much appreciate the opportunity to present these few short remarks in second reading for . . . to move second reading of An Act to amend The Department of Health Act.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment will allow Saskatchewan to benefit economically from our knowledge and achievements in the health field. By amending this Act, we will be enabled to enter into commercial agreements related to health technology, expertise, and information.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's leadership in health renewal has already attracted international attention. In recent months, health officials have visited our province from the nations of Wales, South Africa, the Republic of Georgia, and in the meantime, we have received and fulfilled speaking engagements and invitations from many other countries and organizations including the Pan American Health Organization in Washington, D.C.; we've had invitations from Bolivia, Taiwan, and Northern Ireland.

Now this international interest carries the potential for significant economic development in the health field. Mr. Speaker, last year Saskatchewan Health established the international division to develop commercial aspects of our health care initiatives. And at that point, Mr. Speaker, I would want to congratulate members of our caucus and our caucus committee, and particularly the member from Saskatchewan Sutherland, who gave a great deal of impetus and interest to seeing this development happen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Having now established the international division within the department, this amendment will allow the division to conduct market research and establish partnerships to achieve these objectives.

The amendment equally confirms our deep commitment to keeping all individual health records confidential. No information can be released which would allow the identification of any individual. Mr. Speaker, in the past we've taken great care to protect the privacy of individuals, and this amendment provides clear guidance to ensure that the protection of privacy will continue in the future.

Mr. Speaker, economic growth in our province will come from building upon our strengths in biotechnology and resources and tourism and in health, Mr. Speaker. It is said that a wise person will make opportunities that he or she can find. We, Mr. Speaker, in the Department of Health, are in the process of making opportunities. By positioning ourselves to take advantage of the growing interest in health reform, we are once again demonstrating the spirit of innovation that has made Saskatchewan a recognized leader in health.

And there, Mr. Speaker, therefore I hereby move second reading of the Act to amend The Department of Health Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are some interesting words in this little Bill that the minister has presented which take me somewhat by surprise when it comes from the government opposite in dealing with health care. When I look at words like commercial potential, market health systems, it makes you wonder, Mr. Speaker, what's going on in this province when the minister and the members opposite are prepared to deal in the market-place with health care. It's somewhat of a surprising context for the minister and the members opposite.

I can think of one particular item within our health care system, Mr. Speaker, that is indeed of interest around the world, that has some commercial value, and that is marketable around the world, Mr. Speaker, and that is our health card, which was brought in by the previous administration and was a very advanced technological innovation at that time. It gives us a great deal of potential, Mr. Speaker, to carry our health information around with us. Mr. Speaker, this is the type of thing that we should indeed be doing in Saskatchewan, is marketing that type of expertise.

But, Mr. Speaker, later on in the Bill, I also come to some other areas that cause me some concern, where it talks about giving the minister power. I'm always nervous when the minister is giving himself power, Mr. Speaker. And I realize that the two members from Moose Jaw enjoy this feeling of empowerment, Mr. Speaker — it gives them something that in their own daily lives they lack, I suspect, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when you take a look at this power that the minister is taking on to himself, you have to also ask what controls will be put in place to limit the exercise of that power and to limit the spending that accompanies all exercising of power within government.

So, Mr. Speaker, those are a couple of the avenues that need to be explored. The people who deal in medical technologies in this province need to be consulted, Mr. Speaker, on these particular initiatives. There may very well be a number of areas that are commercially viable that we could export and sell. Those need to be explored, Mr. Speaker; therefore I would move that we adjourn this debate at the present time.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply

The Chair: — Before we deal with the first resolution, I would ask the minister to please introduce the officials who have joined us here this evening.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I know that all members of the House will want to join me in welcoming Saskatchewan's new deputy minister of Finance, Bill Jones, who is seated to my left.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Seated behind him is Larry Spannier, the executive director for Treasury Board branch, and seated immediately behind me is Craig Dotson, the associate deputy minister, budget analysis division.

The Chair: — At this point then I would ask that the minister move the first motion.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I move, resolution no. 1:

That a sum not exceeding \$701,474,000 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 1996.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to join the minister in welcoming the new deputy minister of Finance to the Assembly. I know he's been here many times before in other capacities, but we do, from the official opposition point of view, extend a welcome to him and give him the best of luck in his new position. Sometimes Finance ministers and their assistants need luck.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if you could tell us if this is exactly one-twelfth, and would you be prepared to send across the list of the expenditures?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — It is exactly two-twelfths, with no exceptions. Two-twelfths is in fact what I am told; this is the traditional amount that is voted when the . . . On the second interim supply it's traditionally been two-twelfths. That's what this is, and I will have this sent to the . . . Oh yes there is, indeed. If I could get the assistance of a page, I will have one copy sent to the opposition caucus and one to the member of the third party. Okay. I guess he's going to make me a copy.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm wondering why at this stage, given that we can expect the House to perhaps sit for another month, that you would deem it necessary to go for two-twelfths. I thought your practice . . . your Finance minister told us in the last interim supply that that was all that was necessary, to go one-twelfth at a time; that she didn't expect any untoward events to occur, that it would make sure that the government couldn't operate until it came back before the Assembly.

Your budget has not been passed yet and I would think you would want to keep it to an absolute minimum until you did have the okay of this Assembly to go out and spend money. Why the need at this point in time in April for two-twelfths?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'll ask the page to give this to the member of the third party, if I might. The tradition has been that the second time interim supply is called, it's for two-twelfths in order to ensure that sufficient supplies are voted to the end of the Assembly. That's been the tradition when this government's been in office. It was also the tradition when members opposite formed the former administration.

(2145)

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm sure that it probably was but I remember a great deal of whining and snivelling from the opposition benches when I was in government about two-twelfths being granted at this time, and assurances that if you ever had the opportunity to take the Finance estimates forward that you wouldn't do those sorts of things. And now I find it strange, Minister, that you have looked for a convenient excuse.

It changes the nature of this task before us, Mr. Chairman, because it's quite easy, when we're only dealing with a twelfth, to look at the numbers and ascertain exactly what is going to happen. Two-twelfths gives the government far more latitude in its spending habits. The numbers, of course, are a lot larger and if the House should go on for some time it, I think, calls into question . . . and I have a nice little quote here from the member from Churchill Downs about grievance before supply, I think that he delivered about the third day of a debate on interim supply back in 1991. But I won't quote that back to him.

But perhaps he can alleviate our concerns by just going through the list and pointing out some of the highlights, anticipated government expenditures during the next couple of months; then why numbers are what they are and where he sees certain pressures being brought on the government to meet its expectations; and why he needs the latitude of two-twelfths at this time.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, there's the . . . what this highlights is good, sound budgeting and good, sound financial control. In all cases it's exactly two-twelfths, which is . . .

An Hon. Member: — That was traditional.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Well it's been traditional with this . . . Good, sound management, good financial control has become a tradition of this government. It was not exactly a hallmark of the former administration. There are no exceptional expenditures in here. What is being voted is exactly two-twelfths, which covers one two-twelfths of the year.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, does that . . . on the non-budgetary side, you have a few items there. Are they exactly the same as they were before? I haven't had time to do the mathematics. Can you give us a run-down on those items.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes. The answer to your question is yes. They're exactly the same as before.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, during the last interim supply Bill, we asked the minister some questions dealing with taxation and the expectations that she had on the revenue side, given the tremendous pressures that were coming forward from Alberta — which is, as you know, a sales-tax-free zone — and what it does to the Saskatchewan economy. And I know that the representations from communities along the border have continued apace; that communities like St. Walburg and others have still felt that they are second-class citizens because of what happens there and the amount of money that flows out. She said at that time that there were no discernible changes in the tax collection rate in Saskatchewan.

Can you bring us up to date on exactly how the sales tax revenue are doing and if there are any changes occurring, particularly on the west side of the province.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We're just barely, by a few days — 24, I guess, to be precise — into the new fiscal year, so it's a little too early to discern any changes. However, with respect to the tax collection rates for the previous year, there's no discernible changes. The problem that communities along the border experience is not new; it has been around for . . . well since this province began having sales tax, and it will likely be with us for a period of time to come. No government, including the former one, has found a solution to this problem.

Strictly speaking, your question is whether or not there have been any changes in the tax collection rates — none that we can discern, although it's too early for this year.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, perhaps you could give us some numbers from the last quarter of the last fiscal year, which I'm sure you have. Can you tell us what growth has occurred then in retail spending? I'm sure you must have some ideas about certain areas of the province on the retail spending side. How does that compare to, say, the last quarter of the previous fiscal year. And maybe we can get some numbers then that we can start to make some comparisons with.

It's very difficult for us to ascertain exactly what's going on unless you have those numbers. And I'm sure that if you are not suffering a hemorrhaging of money on the west side of the province, that you would have figures to show that retail sales are up in a number of communities and that therefore your tax collection would be up in a number of communities.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I am told that that information is normally supplied in Finance estimates. It's normally not supplied in interim supply. This is an Appropriation Bill, not estimates. I'm told these sort of figures would normally be provided in Finance estimates which we had offered to do later this same day. As a matter of principle however, it's inadvisable — I believe — inadvisable to be supplying those sort of figures in the interim supply.

Mr. Swenson: — That's unfortunate, Minister, that you don't want to give that to the Assembly at this time. I think people are concerned enough about it.

I just read an article again the other day with some comments from an individual from Swift Current talking about \$55 million in lost sales revenue in that direct area. And that's a lot of money. And that's based on only 10 per cent of the total retail sales in the Medicine Hat area, that it was a comparison against.

So if we are losing \$55 million in sales in just that region, that tells me that it must be of some concern, certainly to merchants. I mean the people that have to pay not only sales tax, but they pay business tax and personal income tax; if they make any money they pay tax on their domicile.

And it's very difficult to pay all of those taxes plus all of the

utilities that they have to pay, and be in competition with someone 150 miles away and still maintain a livelihood. And I think those figures are important. They're important to formulation of public policy in this province.

I'm wondering . . . I'll ask a question directly off of here, seeing as you're not going to give us any that you deem to be an estimate question. In the portion of the budget dealing with the Provincial Secretary, are there many expenditures in this — I believe it's one million . . . What's the number here? Provincial Secretary — \$1.134 million. How much of that is dedicated to the Celebrate Saskatchewan, the birthday party for '95? Any idea?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, we really wouldn't. And even if we were to check with the department, it might be difficult for them to provide any kind of a precise statement as to what portion of this one-sixth would be used for that program.

Expenditures are often mixed up and often not easily identifiable. But certainly we don't have that information, nor do I think detailed questions about individual departments make a lot of sense. It makes a lot more sense to ask those questions of the departments when they come before you for estimates. And I would remind the hon. member that all of the departments' estimates are still open.

Mr. Swenson: — Perhaps you could identify for the Assembly, Mr. Minister, the . . . I noticed the minister responsible for Municipal Affairs was making comments yesterday and again today about an emergency expenditure which was going to happen because of all the flooding and the damage to grid roads. Can you tell me where in this two-twelfths this expenditure's going to come out of. Is there money budgeted separate from this, or is this going to come out of existing budgets to meet the commitments that the minister and the Premier have been talking about?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — There has been for some time, a program of funding for emergencies; however, it's impossible to know what sort of emergencies are going to arise, and in some years, indeed for the last few years — in many years — there haven't been any calls upon this particular expenditure. They're really more often related to flooding than any other single phenomenon, and that has not been a problem for some years actually. For some years flooding was not a problem.

This is sort of a long-winded way of saying that there is nothing budgeted in this budget for emergency aid. And that's one of the items which I think is yet to be determined but will be determined very shortly. But it's one of the issues which is yet to be determined, exactly what form aid will take.

So we don't have a decision to share with you this evening, although I think that will be forthcoming fairly shortly.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Minister, I understand there's a cabinet meeting dealing with the issue tomorrow. And my recollections of going to cabinet meetings was if I had that responsibility, I better have my documents prepared; and I'd go before cabinet and say I'd like to spend X amount of money because of. Are

you telling me that no one in the Department of Finance has been in discussion with the minister for Municipal Affairs in preparing her cabinet document to go ahead and spend money?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Oh, there've been a fair number of discussions but there've been no decisions made. And we'd be happy with you to share the decisions when they're made and to justify them.

However, it's quite a stretch to suggest that we ought to share the discussions with you. I'm not sure that that's an appropriate request to make of a government.

Mr. Swenson: — Minister, I don't expect to know the details of your sworn oath. What I asked you was where in this particular document is the money that you are going to discuss tomorrow which you are probably going to turn around and spend within a few days? That's all I ask. There is a certain sum and it could be very large. Where does it fit into this proposed expenditure?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Well there's two-twelfths for the Department of Municipal Affairs. It's conceivable that it may come from existing funding. Another option is it may be extra, in which case it wouldn't be in here, it would be in addition to the budget.

So what I'm saying to the hon. member is there's a number of options and those options have not yet been narrowed down to one. And so I'm not able to tell you what the program is, and therefore certainly not able to tell you how it'll be funded.

Mr. Swenson: — This whole area, Minister, is in some . . . what would be the proper term? — some things have fallen in abeyance. The Minister of Highways had a piece of legislation before the House that didn't meet a deadline and has gone. And that was about \$20 million. There was infrastructure money and federal money that was involved in it that because it didn't happen, it has potentially changed the way that your budget looks. Now instead of taking that money out of last year, you now have to take that money out of this year, and it takes your budget surplus from 20-some-odd million to a few million dollars. Are we looking at a situation with the disaster relief monies that, if you have to do extra budgeting, that actually would take your budget from a surplus position to a minus position?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes. All the . . . there's still a number of options open to the government as I explained. When a decision is made, we'll obviously be providing full details to the legislature at its inception. And I think the Premier indicated the other day he expected a decision fairly shortly. So when the decision is made, we'll then be in a position to justify it. We aren't in really a position to tell you today since no decision has been made.

Mr. Swenson: — Minister, does any of that money that you wanted to spend out of last year's budget, does it show up anywhere in any of this expenditure in this year's budget?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, as you acknowledged, that was out of last year's budget.

Mr. Swenson: — So there's been no attempt by the Minister of Highways to come forward with a different proposal at this time that would include in his . . . and I ask these questions because obviously the highway-grid road system, town systems, everything else is under a great deal of pressure right now given the weather situation. And we clearly want to understand where the monies are going to come and move around. Is there a chance that some of that money that the minister was dealing with in that legislation could in fact end up in this particular disaster program?

(2200)

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, that really was a separate program.

And it is not reflected in . . . none of that is reflected in here as I think the member understands. It is conceivable the minister may come forward with some alternative, but that's not reflected in these figures and wouldn't be reflected in anything until a decision is made.

Mr. Swenson: — But you're not categorically ruling out then, Minister, that that particular program which that Bill . . . which didn't make it through the Assembly in time, may in fact resurface at a future date dealing with the situations occurring on the east side of the province with flooding and the other various components.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The Bill is still before the Assembly. I'm not in a position to either categorically deny it, categorically admit it, or waffle in between. Those are questions which would have to be put to the Minister of Highways. We don't make those decisions; nor do I have either the background nor the jurisdictional authority to comment on that. Those are questions that would have to be put to the minister, or in the alternative, the Premier. But I don't really have the . . . I'm not really in a position to comment one way or another, categorically or otherwise.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Minister, you shouldn't be surprised if I made the comment. It was why I didn't really — and no offence to the member from Churchill Downs, he's a very competent and able minister — why I didn't want to do the estimates of Finance without Madam Minister present, Mr. Chairman, so that she could answer those kinds of questions. Because we're talking about a lot of money here — there's \$20 million that was involved in that particular Bill.

We now have a situation on the east side of the province where there are going to be large expenditures needed, perhaps to solve some very serious infrastructure programs. The Minister of Highways hasn't darkened the door of the place for about three weeks because he's out trying to save his political skin. Therefore we have to go to the next best alternative which tonight is the Associate Minister of Finance. And it is a legitimate question because there are literally hundreds of people phoning and writing and wondering what exactly is going on and wondering where the government's going to come up with the money necessary. And I look over the numbers. The

minister assures me — I believe him — that there isn't anything on this sheet of paper that says that the government is preparing to deal with that situation.

But I think it was a reasonable question we'd ask — if that particular \$20 million which was earmarked from last year's budget where they had a very large surplus because of the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) funds being taken from the farm families of this province and used to balance that budget . . . that with this year's budget now in a very small surplus position, that people are wondering if that money is going to be used for communities like Melville, Langenburg, Preeceville, Canora, and others. And I think it is legitimate. And the minister and his officials in Finance are going to have to be the ones that come up with the funds to fund that program.

And I just say to you, do you not think it a legitimate question to know where the expectations are of that money?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The question is legitimate. As you yourself acknowledge, the \$20 million was budgeted in last year's budget. It is our intention to meet the deficit target set out in the budget. And it is our intention to do so whatever unexpected emergencies may arise. And it would be our hope that if we spend the additional money on the emergencies, the savings and economies can be found elsewhere which will cover that off so that at the end of the year we meet the deficit target which we set.

So the answer to your question is no, it's not available since we want to meet our deficit target. And that will mean if we spend extra money on this emergency, we want to try to find economies elsewhere.

Mr. Swenson: — Is that money not available, Minister, because the federal government is involved in it? Would that be one of the reasons that that money wouldn't be available?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The member, I think, sort of crossed from one area into another. Twenty million dollars as a sum of money was in last year's budget and we've got to meet this year's budget deficit. And so I said if we spend additional monies here, we will want to find economies elsewhere to cover it off so that we meet our deficit . . . our budgeted targets.

We are very, very, very firm on meeting budgeted targets which we set. It is part of the whole process of restoring our credibility as managers of public assets.

The program whereby the federal government may share — will share — the cost of the roads we're building, it is conceivable that program may be available. Can't put it on any higher plane than that until we have a definite proposal to take to the federal government, and they say yes or no.

But it is conceivable — and I can't put if any more definite than that — it is conceivable that that program of shared costs may be available to deal with this emergency.

Mr. Swenson: — You see, Minister, we want to clearly

understand where this money comes from, because you balanced . . . and had a very large surplus in the previous year, but most of that money was money that came out of the GRIP surplus. Now I've asked a lot of questions in here of the Minister of Agriculture about a hundred and . . . he says 112; I say \$115 million that's sitting out there — people have got notices. And he's saying that the government is not going to ask it back.

Now you're saying we're very, very definite on our targets. That means you got to come with enough money to fix the problems that are being caused out there. That means that some place in here there's going to have to be some give.

And unfortunately farm families in this province have been a pretty easy target for you because, number one, you neutered their political ability by redistributing seats — taking away eight seats from rural Saskatchewan. And number two, there's only about 56,000 of them left — farm families in this province.

Now the minister's got \$115 million in dunnies out there with him which says he probably won't . . . He can't guarantee us that some people won't have to pay 50 cents an acre or a buck an acre.

And we've got a big problem on our hands and you're absolutely firm on your budget numbers. What's to stop the Minister of Agriculture from saying, oops, we need a little more money? I know I said you wouldn't have to pay it back, but we're in a bind. You go down the list here and who else is going to give it up? And those are pretty easy targets.

And we're pretty darn sensitive after what you did in the last budget year with that money. I mean you spent it. You gave back the federal Liberals \$317 million, Minister, and they took it off to Ottawa and now we've got a disaster on our hands out in rural Saskatchewan. We've got roads washed out all over the place. The gravel's all gone. We've got provincial highways with the top coming off, they tell us, and it's going to take a lot of money to fix it.

And I look down the list and I say, where are you going to take the money from to come up with this expenditure because it isn't budgeted here; it has to come from somebody. And I guess I'm a little leery when I know that the Minister of Agriculture has got the dunnies out there already, and all we have so far from him is his word that he isn't going to collect them.

Now, Minister, you don't know where it's coming from. You tell me you're absolutely firm on your deficit numbers. Can you give me an indication that would give those farm families, who are going into a very uncertain seeding year, with the changes to the Crow and everything else . . . that you aren't going to grab some more of that agricultural money to make up the difference?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Well if the Minister of Agriculture has given his word, then that can be relied upon. In addition to being careful to meet our targeted surplus — the member used the phrase targeted deficit; we're in a happy position now of

having targeted surpluses — in addition to being firm about our targeted surpluses, we're also firm and careful to ensure that when we give our word, it can be relied upon.

So if the Minister of Agriculture has given his word, we're most unlikely to go back on that. I can't tell you where savings might be made. That . . . because if we could, we'd have taken them now. But in the course of a year there will be underexpenditures that can be managed and there are, there are some areas where you overexpend; there are some areas where you underexpend.

Part of the . . . one of the many services which these officials provide to the government is that they attempt to manage the underexpenditures so that they meet the overexpenditures. Where are they going to arise? Nobody can tell you. Will they arise? They always do. And we have managed so far to match one with the other. We expect to be able to do so this year.

Mr. Swenson: — I think the minister, Mr. Chairman, misunderstood me. The problem was the Minister of Agriculture hasn't given his word, because he says, I can't categorically promise that I won't be out there collecting — and he used a figure with me of a dollar an acre. Well that's maybe not a lot. On my farm that's \$1,600, you know. But there's lots of people it's more. And it's money that's really hard to come by. And that's the problem.

He won't categorically give us his word. We've asked him many times saying, will you categorically say that you will not take any of that money, and he won't do it. So that's why I'm asking you the questions tonight because you've got to come up with some money, and he won't give us his word.

So we have to assume that he's prepared to dig into rural Saskatchewan once more and take more money out of farmers' pockets to pay for this program. And what I wanted you to do was categorically say no, Minister of Agriculture, you're not doing that. That's what I was hoping I'd hear from the Minister of Finance tonight.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The member from Thunder Creek is indeed an optimist. If the Minister of Agriculture — and I'm taking the member's word for it; I'm unaware of this conversation — but if the Minister of Agriculture was less than categorical, I am likely to repeat his comments. So whatever you found his comments to be, mine would be the same.

Let me just assure the member from Thunder Creek, we don't see agriculture as any sort of a source for making up anything we might overexpend. And we have not yet decided to overexpend. It may be that the problem can be managed by advancing money to them earlier which they would get in any event, so that the end of the year we'll still meet our target. That may not be possible.

But let me assure the member, we do not see that particular program as a source of making that up. It will be made up in ways which I cannot now describe to you. But experience has shown there are always underexpenditures. If you're careful to manage them and marshal them, they can meet your overexpenditures which also arise in any given year.

(2215)

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hear members over there talking about a nest egg for a rainy day. I think the rainy day is coming. It's called an election. And I'm sure we'll see the nest egg get spent. So I understand that language that the member's talking about. It's just a forewarning to the taxpayers of this province what their money is going to be spent on.

Minister, I don't see anything here, and I'm puzzled by this. Your seat mate there is gung-ho on building casinos in the province, and I understand the one downtown is going to be going full blast so that he can get it done by Grey Cup time.

And I don't see anything on here from the Gaming Corporation at all. And I'm wondering how it is you can spend several millions of dollars on that entity which you'll have contractors and you'll have all sorts of people being paid, why you haven't budgeted any money here for your seat mate's expenditures?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — That is being done by the Gaming Corporation without any expenditure, as I understand it, without expenditure of funds from the Department of Finance.

Again when the members have the opportunity to question the Minister of Economic Development, that would be a more appropriate time to get the details of that. But those expenditures are coming from the Gaming Corporation and not directly out of the Department of Finance.

Mr. Swenson: — I don't understand that process, Minister. When you wanted to buy VLTs (video lottery terminal) in their thousands, the Minister of Finance had to come up with the cash. I remember it clearly. Why is it now, all of a sudden, that the Gaming Corporation is off on its own, doing its own thing and not coming before the Assembly for supply . . . can go out . . .

Are you telling this Assembly that the minister, your seat mate, can now go out and spend all kinds of money on a casino wherever he is wont to because he's got enough cash flow inside the corporation that he doesn't have to worry about going through the Minister of Finance and his officials to garner money? Is that what you're telling us?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — There's nothing in this money that you're voting which will be spent on a construction of a casino. It's not being paid for out of this. It is being financed by the Gaming Corporation.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Minister, I thought the whole reason for this process and the phrase you were so wont to use earlier on in your career about grievance before supply, that if we're, as a province and as taxpayers spending . . . and I understand we are. It's clearly within the bailiwick of the provincial taxpayer to spend several millions, tens of millions of dollars on a casino in downtown Regina. Why we would not have those expenditures scrutinized by the Assembly when we had all of the VLTs scrutinized by the Assembly and other things that you did when

you were setting up the Gaming Corporation.

Why all of a sudden . . . tell me where we're going to scrutinize this then, I guess. He's going to make all these expenditures. Where are we going to talk about those things if not in here?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — As is the case with any Crown corporation, you have an opportunity to scrutinize those before the Crown Corporations Committee. We certainly believe and follow the principle of grievance before supply. However we're not supplying anything for the construction of casinos. That is being financed by the corporation, and indeed as I understand, it's being financed out of future earnings. However you'll have ample opportunity to pursue those issues when the Gaming Corporation comes before Crown Corporations Committee.

Mr. Swenson: — Minister, that's bizarre, because that'll be a year from now or a year and a half from now. I mean you came before this Assembly and Finance, and you needed money to set that corporation up and buy all of those thousands of machines, which you did.

I mean what kind of a shell game have we got going on here? Is this the way it's going to be in the future? That a minister comes before the House. He gets a bunch of money. He goes off and sets up his own little corporation bailiwick. And then for a year and a half you don't have to answer to the Assembly for the expenditures. You're going to spend 20 million or \$30 million in downtown Regina on a casino, and that's going to be going on right as . . . all summer long, during this period of time that you've come to the House for expenditures. And yet you're not going to tell us about it. There's no money allocated.

I mean how in the world are we suppose to know if that corporation is running itself into a hole or if it's making a profit; how much profit it's making, where it's coming from? Are you telling me that the Minister of Economic Development can go off and decide to spend that kind of money outside of the budget of this province and then expect us to wait for a year and a half down the road to see how it's going?

That's not the kind of language I heard coming from you and others prior to 1991. That simply is not the language I heard. Do you think that's appropriate?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Well the members have ample opportunity to pursue these issues. The Crown Corporations Committee now deals with them and, I want to add, is more or less current in dealing with Crown corporations — something that was not the case during the decade you people were in office. And the estimates are open and the *Estimates* in this House are available.

These committees now function and function well. The members have ample opportunity to question Crown corporations before that committee, to question line departments in here — something that was not the case when you people were in office. The system is working and working in an exemplary fashion, actually.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I just asked my colleague

from Moosomin where they're at in there and he said '93-94. We're going into the '95-96 budget year. They haven't finished '93-94 yet. They've hardly caught up to when you spent the money on the machines, much less getting into building casinos for tens of millions of dollars.

I mean, current? That's two years ago. How in the world . . . And I'm sorry that interim supply has to be the place where we ask these questions, but we don't appear to be getting any answers at all.

And I asked you a question: do you believe it's appropriate when the committee is in '93-94 and you come for interim supply and the minister, your seat mate, is spending that kind of money out of something at that rate we won't see for two years?

I don't understand the logic behind it. Why you would not say we're building a casino in downtown Regina, here's the expenditures that we're going to do over the next three months; or you have to have it ready by Grey Cup so you're going to spend an awful pile of money. And why that would not be budgeted for in the interim supply of this province, and in fact in the budget of this province, like the very machines that you bought to set the corporation up with. They were all accounted for.

We knew. The minister came in; he said, here's the expenditure — \$24 million for the first bunch and another 20 million for the second bunch. And we're supplying with this, and that, and the next person. We had great debates in here about whether those suppliers were up to the mark. And now you tell me you're going to spend that kind of money and there's nothing showing up and that we're going to have to wait that long for answers. I don't think that's acceptable. And I heard you and your colleagues say many times that that wasn't acceptable. Now do you believe at this juncture that it is?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — One of the many ways in which this government has become more accessible, more open, is that the Crown corporations . . . In reviewing the activities of Crown corporations, you're no longer restricted to the year under review — one of the many innovations that we've made so that this government is as open and accessible as possible. So that it's more or less meaningless to say that you're dealing with '93-94 because you can deal with the whole range of a corporation's activities and not be restricted to the year under review.

I say again, there is nothing in this interim supply which goes to pay for casinos, for the construction of casinos. It was otherwise — and the member's right — it was otherwise with respect to video lottery terminals. Those were financed by the government, owned by the government. That was a different arrangement. But the casinos are being done through the Crown corporation and the taxpayer is not putting any money into those.

Mr. Swenson: — Well I beg to differ, Minister. There's a lot of taxpayers putting a lot of money in those machines. A lot of taxpayers probably can't afford to put money in those machines. And I think it's very weak of you to come to this Assembly and

tell us that it's none of our business. You know full well that that casino will be built and up and running, and there will be a provincial election before the committee ever gets around to meeting again to ask those questions. And whether it's current or not current, that simply ain't going to happen. And that's a fact of life.

So I think we have a bit of a problem here. I would have thought to do this properly, that there would have been a line on here and the line would have been, along with some of the other entities here . . . I mean we've got the Sask Water Corporation on with non-budgetary; Property Management. We've got other entities that are very similar.

And I guess if you'd wanted to go with a non-budgetary and put in here the Gaming Corporation, we would add a line that would have given us something to understand and work off of instead of . . . I mean all I've got is your word that this self-financing is going on. Is that predicated on another 10,000 people going out and pulling the handle? Is that the self-financing that we're talking about?

Well I understand that the handles are on the way; that we're going to have slot machines besides VLTs in this province very shortly. And they're going to be paid for from somewhere too. Are we going to see them show up in the Assembly? Is it just buildings and the tables and that kind of stuff that don't show up in here? Machines show up, and buildings and tables don't — is that what I'm led to understand by the answers that you're giving me?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The video lottery terminals were bought at an earlier . . . were purchased at an earlier period of time in a different fashion. They were bought directly by the government and then owned by the government. The casinos and the equipment and the furniture and fixtures contained therein are being purchased . . . are being obtained by the Gaming Corporation with no outlay of tax dollars. And so yes, the tables and equipment, the furniture, and the fixtures, as well as the building, are being purchased through the Gaming Corporation.

Mr. Swenson: — Well you see the problem, Minister — maybe I've got too long a memory but I remember some other entities that used to kick around this province called Saskoil, and PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc.) and — what was the one that you used to run uranium mines with — SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation). There are all sorts of these supposedly self-financing operations around that had real high values put on them, and they went out and they sourced money all sorts of different places, and they didn't show up in this Assembly either.

And quite frankly, Minister, I don't think that was totally appropriate at the time and I don't believe this is. I mean I have no way of knowing that this Gaming Corporation is self-financing, no way of knowing at all.

We're in here talking about the budget of this province. You tell us that that Gaming Corporation . . . and it is a big component of your budgetary process. You've predicated surpluses on that corporation and the take that comes from it, but I have no way

of knowing if it's self-financing, what the revenue flow is — what the monthly revenue flow is.

And the minister has repeatedly said he wouldn't answer those questions. And he's been asked that many times by members of the official opposition, the member from Rosthern has asked over, and over, and over again . . .

An Hon. Member: — And told it wasn't appropriate.

Mr. Swenson: — And told it wasn't appropriate. And now you're saying, well don't worry about it folks, it's self-financing. The member from Elphinstone can run off and spend all sorts of money and not worry about this Legislative Assembly at all. I mean we could have gold-plated bathtub fixtures in there for all I know.

I remember a few other of your corporate connotations that got a little fast and loose with the taxpayers' money back in another era, and I'm really wondering if you think it's appropriate that that should happen. If we should just take your word for it that it's self-financing, that we as taxpayers shouldn't worry about the expenditures your Gaming Corporation's making. And the Minister has the sole discretion to direct it wherever it will go and nothing show up on interim supply; not back to Crown Corporations until after the next election and you're casino's up and running.

I don't follow your logic, Mr. Minister, of why you believe that should not come before the Assembly. Because I have no assurance that that particular entity is self-financing and will not be looking for money some place else.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — There are no revenue . . . no revenue is . . . no revenue from casinos has been assumed as part of this budget or as part of the next cycle — the next four years. There is no revenue assumed to be obtained from casinos; it's not part of this budget.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, there is revenue assumed to be coming from the Gaming Corporation in your budget; you've picked the number. There's no gambling money coming into the government that's showing up in the budget anywhere. Then what are you doing with it?

(2230)

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, there is of course money from the liquor and gaming corporation, but we do not assume any revenue from casinos. Yes, the liquor and gaming corporation, quite obviously there is. But we do not assume in the budget any revenue from casinos.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we aren't going to solve this tonight, but one last question before we shut this place down.

So then what you're telling me, Minister — and this gets more interesting as we go — you're saying that we're going to allow the Minister of Economic Development, the minister in charge

of the liquor and gaming corporation, to go off and build a casino with internal money which may or may not contribute to the dividend to the provincial coffers. But if he loses a whack of money on it well it's not a big deal because he's self-financing it from inside the liquor and gaming corporation. Is that what you're telling me? There's no problem if the minister loses a bunch of money on his casino in downtown Regina?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I repeat, for the purposes of this Appropriation Bill, there is no revenue assumed to be received. There is no revenue taken into account or assumed for the purposes of this budget that the four-year cycle is based upon.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:33 p.m.