

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again on behalf of the great citizens of the province of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the closure of the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The names on the petition are from Regina, from Hodgeville, from Shamrock, from Shaunavon, and other small communities in southern Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, I also would like to present petitions and names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petition are from numerous Saskatchewan communities including Regina, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan. The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly showeth that the government has failed to address the serious concern of the landlords who provide rental accommodation to Saskatchewan renters. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that you Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take action to allow an increase in the security deposits on rental properties to the equivalent of one month's rent; and that your Hon. Assembly review the remedies available to landlords who are not given sufficient notice by social assistance tenants who vacate properties and whose rent in their new accommodation is paid by social assistance without regard for outstanding obligations in previous rental agreements.

The people that have signed the petition are from Saskatoon, Regina, and Springwater. I so present.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to present petitions of names from Saskatchewan residents regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are

primarily from Regina and Weyburn.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise as well to present a petition on behalf of the people concerned about the closure of the Plains Health Centre. The prayers read, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The signatures of the people are primarily from Regina but also from the outlying rural areas.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people who have signed this petition are from Francis, from Sedley, from Vibank, from Montmartre, from . . . oh, all over southern Saskatchewan.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition with names from the residents of Saskatchewan, from all over Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that this Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider the closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The petition is signed by people from the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also wish to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre, and the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

And those who have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Southey, Balgonie, Kennedy, Grenfell, White City, Pilot Butte, and also Regina, just to name a few.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

People that have signed the petitions, Mr. Speaker, they're from Regina here. They're from Gull Lake. They're from Webb,

from Eastend, Swift Current, and there's one from Vancouver, B.C. (British Columbia); from Tompkins; from Hazlet, Saskatchewan. They're from all throughout Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to present this to the Assembly.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today on day 26, the 26th day that we have presented petitions regarding closure of the Plains Health Centre, Mr. Speaker. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed these petitions are pretty much all from Regina other than a few from Vibank and one from Cunningham . . . oh, no, that's the name. I'm sorry. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received.

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Thursday next ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance regarding all of government employees' superannuation plans: (1) which if any superannuation plans have purchased Cameco shares; (2) what is the total dollar value of these purchases; (3) what was the price per share of these sales?

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall day no. 31 ask the government the following questions:

(1) What are the total operating maintenance and construction costs for the training centre and office building of the Northlands career college in La Ronge; (2) how was the construction of this building financed; (3) have any educational program dollars been redirected to cover some of the costs of construction, operating, and maintenance of the Northlands career college?

A second notice of written question, Mr. Speaker, that I shall on day 31 ask the government also the following questions:

(1) Has there been any in-depth study to the affects of student enrolment, success rates, and program completions in the regions affected by the amalgamation of the northern career colleges into the Northlands career college in La Ronge; (2) is there a planned commitment to ensure that the Westside Community College program based in Buffalo Narrows will continue to get its fair allocation of training dollars for that particular region?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and to the other members of the Assembly a member of my constituency, Mr. Wayne Bacon, sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Wayne is a very active farmer in the constituency and has been very active in many issues of agriculture. And he also is a very prominent Kinsman, and has worked at Telemiracles and projects of the Kinsmen throughout the province. And I would like to ask all members to welcome Wayne to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and all members of the House today, I'd like to introduce a man who needs no introduction in this House. Seated behind the bar, Mr. Rick Swenson, a good friend and former colleague of ours here in the House, a former MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for the constituency of Thunder Creek.

Rick has taken on some other endeavours these days, Mr. Speaker. I'd like you to know he's active in the Western Canadian Wheat Growers, just been elected as a director to that group. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Western Canadian Wheat Growers is the largest voluntary farm organization in Saskatchewan and the only farm organization in Saskatchewan that knows anything about farm policy these days.

So I'd ask all members to please join with me in welcoming Mr. Swenson here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to take this opportunity to introduce to you and through you somebody who, as the opposition or third party leader stated, needs no introduction. But he is a man who is well respected in the Thunder Creek constituency and I would like to also ask my colleagues to join in welcoming him.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Saskatchewan Indian Federated College 18th Annual Powwow

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very often you will hear members of the Assembly talk about the importance of preserving and promoting the different languages and cultures that are a part of the fabric of Saskatchewan.

Today I'm pleased to announce that the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College will be holding its 18th annual powwow at the Regina AgriDome April 6 and 7. This year's powwow is going to be very special because the college is also marking its 20th anniversary.

The powwow will include participants not only from Saskatchewan but from across North America. Grand entry times will be 12:30 and 7 p.m. each day. It will feature adult, youth, and young men's traditional dancing as well as girls' jingle dancing, men's traditional and boys' grass dancing. That's just to name a few activities, Mr. Speaker. There will also be traditional food, crafts, and singing.

Mr. Speaker, I invite everyone to come to the Regina Agri-dome Saturday and Sunday to enjoy all aspects of this powwow.

I would like to congratulate the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College and all first nations groups from across our province, along with the powwow organizers, for their hard work in promoting Indian culture in Saskatchewan.

To all of the visitors to this powwow, a big Regina welcome. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Easter Greetings

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to take a moment today to extend Easter greetings to everyone. Easter is a time of celebration for many people in Saskatchewan. Many view Easter weekend as a time of reflection on their own religious beliefs. From small-town churches in Saskatchewan to massive religious gatherings across the world, forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace will be celebrated.

As we leave the House today, I would like to extend, on behalf of the official opposition, my heartfelt wishes to all those travelling to be with their families and friends this holiday weekend. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Flavel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also want to wish everyone an Easter weekend, because today begins the final weekend of the Easter season and for Christians all over the world this is the most significant religious observance of the year, the culmination of 40 days of reflective preparation. Today is Holy Thursday, or Maundy Thursday, the day on which the commandment to love our neighbour was given; tomorrow is Good Friday; and Sunday, of course, is Easter.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, but the symbolic suggestiveness of such a significant holiday as Easter goes beyond anyone's particular creed. Easter is a highly appropriate celebration at this time of year because it begins with the remembrance of betrayal, sorrow, and death, just as the season of spring begins with the approaching of the end of winter, the season when life in the natural world is put on hold.

This is the most optimistic of seasons because it celebrates the rebirth of life, the promise of new beginnings, the eternal hope, the ultimate good will triumph over evil. And of course Easter tells us that the world will once again turn green, a promise we desperately need after this winter.

As we should throughout the year, Mr. Speaker, we pray for peace among the nations, for goodwill to all people, for help and respect for the less fortunate. And I would like to now take and wish everyone a very happy Easter weekend. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Agri-Food Trade Mission

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the coordinated plan between the Minister of Agriculture and the federal Minister of Agriculture for their upcoming agri-food trade mission to the Pacific Rim. Instead of constantly blaming each other, this is an excellent example of the partnerships that the federal and provincial governments should have in trade ventures in international markets.

Accompanying them on part of this tour will be a prominent businessman from my constituency, Lorne Thomson. He is the chief executive officer of Thomson Meats of Melfort. Just this morning he was packing to head off to Seoul, Korea to participate in Seoul Food '96.

Lorne says the presence of both Agriculture ministers is extremely important because of the scare concerning mad cow disease. He says that he can give potential international investors many assurances, but it really helps to have government officials reaffirming that Canadian beef has not been exposed to this devastating disease.

I would like to wish both ministers and Mr. Thomson all the best in their international trade mission. It's this kind of cooperation and partnership that can help turn around Saskatchewan's economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Passover

Ms. Lorje: — Mr. Speaker, I want to join the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood by reminding us of another equally significant and older holiday being celebrated this week. Last night, sunset marked the beginning of Passover week, the week Jewish people the world over observe the preparation for and the flight from oppression in the land of Egypt as told in the Book of Exodus.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, it is from Passover that much of the ritual of Easter comes. So it is only fitting that the two holidays be recognized on the same day in this Assembly.

As the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood said, this is not the place to extol a particular creed, but it is worth saying, I believe, that as we approach the new millennium it would do us no harm to remember that we are the sum total of the experiences of millenniums past.

The story and the significance of Passover still has much to tell us. The first Passover took place thousands of years ago, but the story shows us in dramatic detail the worth of perseverance, the dignity of suffering, the value of patience, and the clarion determination of the human spirit to be free from tyranny.

It is fair to say that perhaps the most significant migration in the history of western civilization took place because a people refused to be enslaved. Staying together in the face of seemingly overwhelming forces, they triumphed, and left a message and a lesson for all the ages.

So on this very important weekend, Mr. Speaker, I join all members in saying, be well, and shalom. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Goohsen-Nystuen Nuptials

Mr. Boyd: — Today certainly and this week certainly is a week for reflection and celebration considering the Easter season, but today, Mr. Speaker, it also is a special day of celebration for our caucus. And you may wonder what I speak of, but today, Mr. Speaker, the MLA for Cypress Hills's family is enjoying a very special day. Their daughter, Lisa, is marrying into a very prominent New Democrat family — the Nystuen family from Spalding. And given . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — The special celebration, Mr. Speaker, is taking place in Saskatoon later today, and I'm sure all members would want to wish them well. But given the events of this week and the speculation about people coming to the PC (Progressive Conservative) Party, and it appears that even the New Democrats are coming over in droves now, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Genesis Community Conservancy Incorporated Launched

Mr. Jess: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently the Catholic Rural Life Ministry and the Interchurch Committee on Agriculture held a conference at St. Peter's College in Muenster to launch a land trust called Genesis Community Conservancy Incorporated. I had the pleasure of attending this conference on behalf of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture.

The purpose of this conservancy is to support ecologically sustainable activity and to implement sustainable land stewardship practices by making land available under long-term security of tenure to lessees, who are obligated to use sustainable farming methods, will be assisted in developing an economically viable farming unit by leasing this land, and through their farming practices will promote soil and water conservation.

Land will be acquired for the community conservancy through purchase, donation, bequest, or lease. Capital for land acquisition will be raised by establishing a holding company. Management of the land will depend on the direction from the current owner at the time of transfer to the conservancy. Leaseholders would have secure access to the land on a long-term basis and might pass the lease on to their children as long as the lease conditions are met.

I would like to congratulate the Catholic Rural Life Ministry and Interchurch Committee on Agriculture for their efforts in ensuring our land is put to good use and ensuring its viability for the future. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute Contract

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute in Humboldt. They have secured a project to do comparative testing and evaluation of replacement components for armoured personnel carriers used by the military.

Armoured personnel carriers provide protective transport to military personnel and are used in Canada's peacekeeping efforts around the world. PAMI (Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute) is well suited to test armoured personnel carriers because of their history and experience in farm equipment evaluation. Testing will be begin immediately at the former Dana Radar Base at Sagehill and is expected to take four to six months.

I would also like to congratulate David Gullacher who has recently been named president and CEO (chief executive officer) of the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute. He will manage operations in both Humboldt and at the test station at Portage la Prairie. Congratulations, David Gullacher and PAMI.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Health Districts Funding

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, almost 200 people packed the hall in Melfort last night to hear local health care officials explain what they can expect in terms of district funding this year. It was announced that \$1 million will be slashed from the North Central Health District's budget because of the move to needs-based funding.

Mr. Speaker, the problem is that needs-based funding does not recognize the fact that the Parkland regional hospital in Melfort treats many long-term care patients and those who are disabled and require special, high cost attention. Will the Minister of Health explain why such added responsibilities are not addressed in funding to districts with regional health care centres?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The good thing about the funding formula that we've arrived at in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is it is based upon the population health needs of the district — something that has never been done before — and it is evidence based. It looks at the demographics of the district and the characteristics of the population. I think the funding is a much more rational and fair system than we've had in the past.

And speaking of funding, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the

member that the federal government removed approximately \$50 million in funding from health care in the latest federal budget. And in our latest budget, for every dollar the Liberals took out of health care, we put a dollar back in, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — And we're doing our very best for the people of the member's district to provide the best health care we can, notwithstanding the fact that we've had no cooperation from the Liberal Party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister of course misses the point and goes on into another blaming speech. Mr. Speaker, \$1 million in health care cuts in the North Central Health District will undoubtedly mean that there'll be further service reductions or job losses to front-line care-givers.

With this constant downsizing the people of rural Saskatchewan are questioning — and rightly so — when is this going to end? We continue to see it in health care. And people are really afraid that the same will occur in education and other vital services that our rural families — indeed all of Saskatchewan residents — are counting on.

Will the minister explain when this constant downsizing and cuts to quality health care will end?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well this is the sort of doom and gloom that we hear from the Liberal Party, Mr. Speaker. But I want to say to the member that notwithstanding the Liberal cut-backs to health care, we're putting the money back in, Mr. Speaker, and we're doing our best to counteract the measures being taken by the Liberals.

But I want to say that this is indicative of what the Liberals do. They come into the House and they say, we're not going to have any specialists in Saskatoon or in Regina; we're not going to have any CT (computerized axial tomography) scans in Regina; we're not going to have any health care in Melfort. And it just goes on and on.

But I want to say to the member, Mr. Speaker, that notwithstanding the lack of cooperation from the Liberals in terms of the health care system, notwithstanding the doom and gloom, the people of the province — according to the latest public opinion surveys — continue to regard our health system as good to excellent. And we're going to keep it good to excellent, notwithstanding a complete lack of financial support from the Liberal Party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure there's any physical way you could reword the question so that you could get an answer that actually answers the question. But I will try one last time.

The Parkland regional hospital provides very specialized care for very seriously needy people of disabilities and age

problems. It is now only a regional hospital in name only because the funding formula does not address this special service. After hearing that the district will have to do with a million dollars less in funding, a lady approached me last night at the meeting and said, when will the government exercise some responsibility and leadership to come up with a plan for health care and services in rural Saskatchewan?

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't give the woman an answer. Will the minister explain when his government is going to live up to its responsibility and come forward with a plan that will address the needs of rural families?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well if I was the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, I'd be embarrassed to talk about the record of the Liberals as well. The Liberal Party opposed the introduction of medicare in this province in 1962. The Liberal Party has opposed the plan of this government to keep our medicare system sustainable. It's the job of the Liberal Party in this legislature to complain. They do it very well.

They will come into this legislature and say they're not going to have a hospital in Melfort, they're not going to have CT scans in Regina, the doctors and nurses are all going to leave. But I tell you, Mr. Speaker, we are building a health care system in this province that is sustainable and that is going to serve the people of the province and the people of Melfort very well, well into the next century.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Tax Relief

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, an article in today's edition of the *Regina Leader-Post* further confirms what the people of Saskatchewan have been saying since this NDP (New Democratic Party) government came to power. It clearly shows that Saskatchewan residents pay the highest level of provincial income tax in this country. The facts clearly show that the people of this province are being suffocated by this government's high-tax policies, and the minister agrees to that. And I quote: "One of the best ways to create consumer confidence is to ease the tax burden."

Will the minister explain why then she will not announce a tax-reduction plan that will allow the people of this province some tax relief?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. The member opposite should have read further down through the article, because if he would have done so, instead of just stopping at the headline, he would have realized that Saskatchewan is still the least expensive place in Canada in which to live.

And when you take account of a family, you don't just look at one tax issue; you look at what is the cost to live in that particular community — the cost of housing, the cost of

utilities. And Saskatoon and Saskatchewan remain the least expensive place in Canada in which to live. And I would add to that, in terms of the quality of life, the best place in Canada in which to live.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, all the \$15-ticket luncheon theatre tickets in the world aren't going to sell the people of this province on this government's performance.

Mr. Speaker, once again the government tries to defend its high-tax policies by indicating that it's cheaper to live here. The fact is that this government is about to substantially increase these other costs. This government will substantially increase these other costs by cutting grants to municipalities and forcing them to increase taxes.

This is combined with the already stifling level of taxation that they have forced on the people of Saskatchewan since coming to power. The people of this province want a firm commitment to tax relief, not another study, and certainly not more excuses. Will the Minister of Finance make that commitment today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I would say that in this budget we continue the track of reducing taxes. We've reduced the aviation fuel tax on a permanent basis; we've reduced taxes for truckers, and we've reduced taxes for families. There is a further implementation of the cut to the debt reduction surtax. And we have said to the people of Saskatchewan, we will continue to reduce taxes as we can afford it.

Why is he after us about our study? He was notably quiet when Paul Martin, after having increased taxes, said he's going to study taxes. Is it okay for Paul Martin to study taxes and report back in his next budget but not okay for the people of Saskatchewan? We will continue to speak up for the people of Saskatchewan. They can continue to be the mouthpiece for Ottawa.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Job Creation

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, my questions this morning are for the Minister of Economic Development. Mr. Minister, today we have another report card on your government's job creation strategy and again you get another big fat F. From March '95 to March of '96 Saskatchewan has lost, unfortunately, 2,000 jobs. For the first three months of this year, we're averaging almost 4,000 less jobs than last year, not the 4,000 new jobs that you've been predicting.

Mr. Minister, when are you going to admit that your economic policies are failing miserably? When are we going to see a real job creation strategy from your government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite that obviously the biggest problem that we are facing in this province still today is the massive deficit that was built up by your administration.

An Hon. Member: — Mine?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — When a province . . . Yes, yours. You can try all you want to run and hide from the Devine administration but the sad fact is, is that they are a Conservative administration and you are Conservative members. Now you can run from that and you can pretend that you're not. But the fact of the matter is that the people who sat in this side of the House from your party led to the \$15 billion debt that we are trying now to pay down.

Now obviously if it weren't for the debt, we could totally eliminate the sales tax in this province. Obviously you would know that we have a sales tax that amounts to \$80 million per point, or \$720 million in total, and the interest on the debt is \$850 million. If it were not for the interest on the debt that your administration left us, we could eliminate the sales tax tomorrow and still have a surplus of \$100 million in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you can continue blaming anyone you like, but the fact remains over the past year we are losing jobs here in Saskatchewan. Despite all of your rosy predictions, there are no new jobs here in Saskatchewan.

Do you know how many new jobs there have been created in that same time frame, March of last year to March of this year, in Alberta? There are 32,000 new jobs that have been created in that same time frame. That's more job creation in one year than you are predicting in the next decade. And you're not even coming close to meeting any of your predictions, Mr. Minister. And the Finance minister says Alberta's tax structure is overrated. On the other side of us in Manitoba they've created about 4,000 jobs in the same time period.

Mr. Minister, how can Saskatchewan continue to lose jobs while our neighbours next door don't have that problem, and obviously, Mr. Minister, are doing something in the job creation field.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the member continues to talk about Alberta and the issues in another province and fails to defend the \$15 billion debt that his administration left us with that has to be not only the interest paid on, but hopefully some day we can start paying down that debt, which is what this budget and previous budgets, where we had balanced, are doing.

What I want to say in terms of job creation is that year over year, between '92 and '95, the job numbers increased by 3,500 jobs per year. We project that this year . . . although obviously with the weather conditions in the early part of 1996, many areas, for example in agriculture, the total number of job loss that you're talking about is in the area of agriculture. In the key

areas of manufacturing, in the key areas of manufacturing and trade, the job numbers are up, and up significantly.

So if you were being honest you would say that for the past three years there have been increases in job numbers of 3,500 per year, and we project that trend to continue. So hold your horses. We expect to have a very good summer in terms of construction. And you will see that . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Minister, if you were being honest with the people of Saskatchewan you would realize that your lack of job creation hurts everyone, but particularly it hurts the young people here in this province.

I had a couple of high school students from Regina here in my office the other day and they were particularly discouraged. They don't even consider finding a job in Saskatchewan as an option. They know that they are going to have to look elsewhere for work just as today's job stats indicate.

In one year the number of jobs for the 15- to 24-year-olds in this province have dropped by 5,000 — 5,000 jobs for young people gone in one short year.

So while the NDP can find that 170,000 job for the Premier's 50-year-old room-mate, there's no jobs in this province for the 20-year-old people here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, do you think that it's acceptable, do you think that it's acceptable to lose 5,000 jobs for the young people of Saskatchewan and what are you going to do to reverse this dismal record in this area?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I say again, to the member opposite, that the job creation record, not of the government but of the business people of this province and cooperatives, is actually very good given the circumstance that your administration left the province in — that is 3,500 jobs per year net increase in '92, '93, '94. And I want to say to you, sir, that you should check those numbers year over year. Any month you can take, it may be up or down, but in the three years since the introduction of *Partnership for Renewal* the job numbers are up, 3,500 jobs per year.

I want to say though, in terms of Alberta, in terms of Alberta, our job would be a lot easier if Grant Devine had been premier of Alberta for those nine years instead of premier of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Teachers' Collective Agreement

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education. We've all heard by now that your government and the teachers have reached a new contract agreement, and I emphasize your government and teachers. And I think we need to mentally underline . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order, order. The Speaker's having . . . Order. All caucuses come to order. The Speaker is having difficulty hearing the question being put by the hon. member for Rosthern, and I ask all members of the Assembly to cooperate with question period and allow the member to put his question.

Mr. Heppner: — As I was saying, the contract arranged between your government and the teachers — and I underline again, your government, so remember this — I say that because the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association) was unable to attend the final round of negotiations and that they have not signed this new agreement although they are left millions of dollars short in covering the new costs.

Madam Minister, not long ago you made a promise. In articles, you said you provided, quote: assurances to the SSTA in writing that any cost increases in the collective agreement associated with teachers' salaries would be covered by the province. Do you intend to break this promise just like your government has broken so many others?

Madam Minister, just how many millions of dollars short will the boards be in the 1996-97 fiscal year? Madam Minister, how many millions short because of your broken promise?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that we have been able to reach a tentative agreement with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — This process has been long and arduous. The teachers and the management committee have agreed that no details surrounding the tentative agreement will be released until teachers have had an opportunity to vote on the new collective agreement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Details I was referring to is the fact that you negotiated this one on your own without the school boards being there. You know full well that because you have broken another promise, the only choices school boards will have is to reduce the number of teachers, cut programs for our children, and go back to ratepayers for money. The teachers' federation said your government's budget meant loss of jobs, bigger class sizes, cutting of vital school programs, lack of resource materials, and that quality education for Saskatchewan children is only a dream. That was your budget, Madam Minister.

Now school boards face millions more in costs to cover salary increases and benefits to teachers. Given these facts, how can you possibly justify renegeing on your promise to cover all increased costs in salaries and benefits to teachers. How can you do that, Madam Minister, and still claim that education is a top priority with your government?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I would remind the

members in this Assembly that school boards in this province were the only third parties that received a \$2 million increase in this fiscal year. I would remind the members . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I would remind the members that if they look at the budget carefully, that we have back-filled every dollar that was reduced by the federal government — some \$114 million.

Mr. Speaker, we have honoured our commitments. We've said to the trustees in this province that we would cover the incremental costs of salary increases and we have done that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to remind the minister that indeed the educational development fund of \$2 million has been scrapped and your increase of \$2 million still puts the boards of education behind. They have lost money this year, Madam Minister.

This morning we also received a press release from the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) announcing that a tentative provincial collective bargaining agreement had been reached. Although no details will be released until ratification, I understand this agreement includes a 2 per cent salary increase for teachers.

What this means is that school boards will be forced to pay for the wage hikes but aren't being compensated by the government to cover the extra costs. The government seems more than willing to make promises with other people's money. Will the Minister of Education explain how her government can be involved in promising to raise teachers' salaries without promising the financial backing?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the member, if he scrutinizes the budget closely he will note that in this fiscal year — 1996-97 — there is a \$2 million increase in operating grants to school boards. That honours our commitment to school trustees that we would cover the incremental costs of teachers' salaries.

Now I don't know what else I have to say here, Mr. Speaker. Please look at the budget. Please look carefully at what this government committed to, and I assure the member that what I say will be verified.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What the minister is stating is that the money has been reallocated from the educational development fund — which was a \$2 million expenditure last year — to the grant. The same 2 million. Therefore boards of education are out 2 million if that's what she says the salaries will be.

Madam Minister, if the teachers receive a 2 per cent increase, bus drivers, caretakers, and other school staff will also want an increase, and justifiably so. School boards will be forced to cover the entire cost. This will be a Goliath task because they are already trying to cope with \$2 million less from your government.

Is the minister willing to make a commitment here today that her government will provide financial support to the school boards if and when they are forced to renegotiate contracts with other school staff?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Liberal member opposite that it was his Liberal cousins in Ottawa that reduced funding to this province by some \$114 million for health, social services, and education. Mr. Speaker, we did everything in our power to back-fill every single federal Liberal funding cut, and we did so.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, that is the difference between Liberals and New Democrats.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Liberals, in this country, try and destroy social programs. New Democrats try and sustain them. And that's what we've done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, kindergarten to grade 12 education is the responsibility of the province. Let's admit that. Kindergarten to grade 12 education is your responsibility, Madam Minister.

Although the provincial government will channel \$900,000 more into K to 12 education next year, boards will be forced to deal with the full impact of all negotiated raises. Estimates show that our K to 12 system will actually be staggering under an estimated increase in expenses of 12 to \$14 million. If the boards are not given more money, they will have no choice but to make do with less. And less money probably means less staff. And we know, and the members opposite know, that the last thing this province needs is more job losses.

Will the minister assure teachers and other school staff that the government will work with the school boards and provide the necessary funding to make sure jobs are not lost?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I find it absolutely amazing that this member would say that K to 12 is only the responsibility of the province, when the federal government comes into this province and puts money into stay-in-school programs, preschool programs, and so forth. And they put money in, get them going for awhile, and then they take the money away. That is the record of the Liberal government in

this province, Mr. Speaker.

Now let's talk about what this government has done. The members opposite should take a look at the utility rate decreases from SaskEnergy and SaskPower for school boards. We reduced utility costs significantly, Mr. Speaker. That was done by an NDP government, not a Liberal government in Ottawa.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would just ask the member, take a look at the budget book. Take a look at the budget book. There's a \$2 million increase in the budget book for operating costs this year. We have honoured our commitment to cover incremental teachers' salary increases.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Members will have plenty of time to give advice to one another as to what they should do on the Easter break a little later on today.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply

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

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — With leave, to introduce guests, Mr. Chairman.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, to you and to the Assembly, I would like to introduce to you, in the Speaker's gallery, Karl and Joan Will. Karl and Joan farm in the Tisdale area, and Karl is a very successful farmer, but it's a good thing that Joan manages the operation, that's for sure. I would like to wish Karl and Joan a Happy Easter, and welcome to Regina and to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply

Mr. McPherson: — Well thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I welcome the officials back today and try and answer for the minister's requests and perhaps mistakes, and we'll get into that in a few moments.

I would like to start, Madam Minister, by asking: on the figures that you sent over yesterday, and right at the top I see Ag and Food, and you're asking for some little over \$21 million. Could you tell us, Madam Minister, what portion of that money is being used to perhaps live up to the promise made by the

Premier and the former Minister of Agriculture in regards to the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) bills that were never supposed to be sent out in the first place? But for you to come out and be asking for 21 million in a department that, in fact, the season — the growing season, the planting season — hasn't even begun yet.

So, we're only assuming by looking at your own figures that it has to be for the GRIP bills. Could you confirm this?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, none.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure if the minister was paying attention at all. In fact she usually isn't in this House, so we'll pose the question again. In fact I had asked her what was the \$20 million for and she said, none.

Either she doesn't understand the question . . . I could print it out. Her officials could work with her. She's having trouble with this kind of stuff. Could you tell us what the 21 is for?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, my understanding of the question was, how much of the money is going to be used to compensate farmers so they do not have to repay their GRIP bills. None is the answer to that.

Mr. McPherson: — Well, Mr. Chair, of course the farmers are going to find this disappointing because of the promises made a full year ago and last spring just before the election. And the very fact that they were expecting, they were expecting, Mr. Chairman, before going into spring seeding, that there would be an expenditure, there would be monies requested by the Minister of Finance, or Madam Minister, to in fact deal with the Premier's promises, and yet she's saying none of this 21 million is for that. So then we must assume it's for what? New farm programs?

Could you tell us, give us an idea, what it is you're asking \$21 million for in Agriculture?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, the one-twelfth is there because the government has not . . . the opposition has not agreed to pass the government's budget. We have to ensure that third parties such as health boards, schools, can continue to operate until the budget is passed, so we pass one-twelfth of the budget and the money is used for the operations of the particular departments so they can continue to provide the essential programs that are required.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a pleasure to be able to ask some questions here today with respect to the interim supply motion put forward.

I'd just like to ask the minister to tell us how much of the funds expressed here today will be allocated to the government's severance programs for scaling back the civil service by some 554 positions?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, the answer to that is none.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could the minister

outline for us just how much money of the severance packages that will eventually be paid will be preparing laid-off employees for job searches; and how much of the \$350 million — or \$350 a month, sorry — of bridge funding is going to be spent directly on pensions themselves. And lastly, would she be able to provide just how much of the severance will be paid to laid-off workers, because I'm just not sure if the answer is none.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, maybe I should explain to the member opposite, under accrual accounting any costs associated with severance have to be accounted for the moment you know that severance is going to occur. So that was all included in the 1995-96 budget. And I think that if you want to get into that sort of detail, you need to ask the individual departments.

I would also say to the member opposite, these will still be estimates because we do not know what will occur with respect to bumping, as people bump through the system. It's impossible to know exactly how many people will find themselves without a job. And the other thing is, we're working very hard to match people whose jobs have been abolished to new positions across the public service.

So you can ask that question when the individual departments are here, but they probably will not be able to give you a definitive answer. They will still be working on the basis of estimates.

(1100)

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would just also like to ask, how much of the spending today before us might be for Crown corporation borrowings? If there are any borrowings, what purposes are they for? And what sort of borrowing will they involve? And will the borrowing be from foreigners or just exactly who?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, again to explain what we're doing here. This is only government spending. And we're saying to people out there in the health boards, in school divisions, the budget has not been passed; the opposition has not gone through the process of deciding to pass off the budget, to make the budget law. So we still have to fund these groups. And this will be . . . this is just money that is used to fund essential services of government. So there's no Crown spending involved here.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I could also just ask the Minister of Finance, I note here, under servicing the public debt, there's nothing with respect to that here. And certainly there must be a certain amount of monies within this interim supply that must relate to financing the debt charges of the province. If you could just elaborate on that.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, financing or providing payment of the public debt is statutory. There are a number of different things that are statutory. They occur automatically by statute; you don't have to get approval of the legislature for them.

What the legislature does have to approve is basic spending —

as I say, in areas like Health or Education, where money goes to third parties, or we have to continue providing the essential services of government. And you can't stop that just because the budget has not been passed through the House.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. With respect to the budget the minister referred to, could the minister tell the House how much money was spent on preparing the budget, how much was spent on printing the documents, and who received the work?

And I'd also like to know how much of the spending was for design of the document and who received that work. And what, if any, firm was retained to offer advice in preparing the budget and what were they paid?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, this is a question more appropriately asked when we get into the estimates of the various departments. Again I would like to draw the member's attention to what we're doing here. We're saying that because the legislature, the opposition, hasn't seen fit to let the budget pass, we have third parties out there who are waiting to receive funding — people in health boards, people in school boards — and we want to continue to operate the essential services of the government. That's one process.

We will have another process in which we will get into the details of all of the different departmental spending. And your question then can be asked more appropriately at that time.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do wish to point out to the Minister of Finance that it certainly isn't our intention to hold up financing for those who are in need, but we do wish to ensure that the monies here will in fact be spent for that purpose; that they will be spent wisely. So if you would bear with me for a short while longer, I do have a few more questions here that I would like to ask.

You know when I opened the paper on the weekend, I saw that the government had advertising concerning the budget. And I assumed that that money was also part of this motion for supply here today. Could the minister tell us what those ads cost and who were given the work and how many ads were placed?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, once again I would draw the member's attention to the purpose of what we're doing here. If you would like to pass interim supply, go into the Committee of Finance, we would be quite prepared, we would be quite prepared to pass off interim supply right now and bring the Department of Finance forward and then allow you to ask those detailed questions. So you have . . . there is a forum in which those detailed questions can be asked.

But I think this is not the proper forum. What is happening here is we are talking about the fact that agencies across the province require funding in order to provide their vital services, and we want to ensure that the government services continue.

And as I say, there's another forum in which we can get into as much detail as you would like. And we would be prepared, right away, if you want to vote off interim supply, to bring the Department of Finance forward and to get into some of this if

that's what you'd like to do.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know I'm sure that the spending involved here today is going to also involve a road trip for the Minister of Finance, Mr. Chair. And it's somewhat of an annual affair that the minister and the Premier travel to New York and Toronto to talk to the bankers and the investment dealers.

Would the minister tell us when these trips are planned and how much they will cost and how much will be spent on entertainment? And what staff would be accompanying her and the Premier, and who do they intend to meet?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, again I would say to the member opposite, first of all this is not the proper forum to get into that sort of questioning. And I again make my offer, if he would like to vote off interim supply, we would be prepared immediately to bring the Department of Finance forward and we would look at the detail of what's occurring here.

I would say to the member opposite just a word about being Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. It is a serious undertaking to be the loyal opposition to the government. I think your responsibility is to try to convey to electors that you have an alternative vision for the province that would actually equip you to be the government.

And I would say gently to the member opposite, this petty little dollar here, dollar there appeal to the lowest common denominator approach to politics, does not serve you well. Because you do not come across to the public as a group of people who are credible as an opposition that some day they would like to say, maybe these people could run this province.

There is \$4 billion of spending going on in this province. And to say, please tell us when you go to New York who you might be having lunch with and how much it might cost, might seem like good doorstep politics, and it may very well be good doorstep politics. But I'll tell you it is not the kind of thing that the people of this province look to when they say, who do we think could form the next government. And I say this in a friendly way because I'm sure that there are many decent people over there.

But I honestly say to you, unfortunately the members right next to you are, when we go and knock on our doorsteps, coming across as a credible alternative because they talk about the big issues, they talk about what their vision of this province is. They don't ask us, now when you go to New York who is it that you're going to have lunch with and how much is your lunch going to cost.

Please, Member, try to elevate your approach to politics. And I say that in a friendly way.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I hope the minister's reference to reducing the debate here today to the lowest common denominator has nothing to do with any reference to the lower income people in this province, because I assure the minister opposite that pennies do count to those folks and that's why we're here asking some questions today. So if she could

just have a little bit of patience with us, we are being serious and we do wish to represent our constituents in this matter.

But I'd just like to follow up, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, just in following up to my previous question, the minister once said last year upon her return that the people she spoke to liked her budget but they hated the federal government's. Now in reaction to that, given that the federal and provincial governments are on the same team, what does the minister intend to say about the federal budget when she's asked this time?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, I would say this. First of all, when we go outside the country, we do our very best job to put the best face on what every Government of Canada does — every government. We try to explain what . . . put the best face on every single government. But we have to be honest, and when they say to us, do you believe that the attack on the deficit has been too slow, too unplanned, too lacking in vision to stay relative to our approach, that's accurate. But I do not believe that any government in this country . . . I don't think there's one government in this country that goes outside of this country and does anything but tries to put the best face on the whole country.

But you know, Mr. Member, you keep on trying to avoid the real issue. You never really address what we're saying. It's sort of like we say, what colour is the house and you say, it's 10 feet high. The issue is this: we have one issue with the federal government and that's the fact that the vast majority of their cuts have been to health, education, and social programs. Three-quarters in the 1996-97 budget. You look at '97-98, it gets worse — 79 per cent of their cuts are to health, education, and social programs. That has been the focus of what we've been saying, and we've been saying their priorities are dead wrong.

And quite frankly — again, I say this in a friendly way — we've been disappointed in the members opposite that you're not willing to say look, you know we're Liberals and we're prepared to defend them on many fronts. But you know on this one, we have a concern because when the member from Greystone was the leader of your party, she struck, I think, a very effective balance. She was prepared, when she had to, to defend the Liberal Party and what it was doing; but when she fundamentally disagreed with what they were doing, she was prepared to speak out. And I'm very disappointed that the members opposite don't seem to have that capacity. Because from my point of view, you still do represent the people of Saskatchewan, not the Government of Canada.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would just like to say that the Minister of Finance provided some words here that are a little bit disconcerting to us again. At first she stated that she's a Canadian first. But then she went off into a long dissertation about all of the problems that the federal government are causing. And I would just like her to just elaborate a little further, just provide us with a little bit more comfort that will you support Standard and Poor's version that the federal government is doing the right things, or will you continue blaming them and damage our national reputation in front of our lenders?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Member, what I've said to you is I've said our criticism of the federal government has been very direct. It has been that their priorities are dead wrong; three-quarters of the cuts coming to health, education, social programs. This is our problem. And as I say, we're sorely disappointed that you're not willing to break ranks and speak for Saskatchewan people, because Saskatchewan people believe these priorities are dead wrong.

First of all when we go out of the country, two comments — it's very rare that they ask us about the Government of Canada; they're more interested in the Government of Saskatchewan; and we represented the Government of Saskatchewan. If they ask us any questions, they're very likely to ask our Premier, because of his stature as a national statesman, what he thinks about the Quebec situation and what his analysis would be with respect to that. And he's taken very seriously and very credibly.

So those are the sorts of questions that they ask and I don't think there's a premier in this country that has done a better job of portraying Canada outside of the country. And he consistently does it.

So I find your question, even the question, a little disturbing. When have you ever seen the Premier of Saskatchewan go outside of Canada and do anything but defend Canada and tell people what a wonderful place it is and what a wonderful place in which it is to invest.

(1115)

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just with respect to the government's recent polling, the February polling, it did point to the fact that there's a growing dissatisfaction on the part of the people here in this province with respect to how this government is managing the finances of the province. So I would again just request a little bit of patience on their part.

I have just one other question and it does also relate to polling. Does . . . or has the minister resumed doing any polling regarding her spending decisions, like those in the budget before us today? And if so, what is the purpose of the polling? Who will do the work? And who will it benefit — will it benefit the taxpayers? And what will it cost?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — To the member opposite: no, we're not doing any polling.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I just have a couple of questions for the minister. And my biggest concern, Madam Minister, is with municipal government funding. There's a number of municipalities out there that are waiting for futures to be paid. And my concern, is one-twelfth adequate to cover these futures? Because these municipalities are in bad need of this money.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, I would say generally to the member opposite what the funding will be for is for the ongoing expenditures that will occur in the month of April. So if in fact the futures that you're talking about should be paid out by the department in April, that will occur. But it's

just to allow the ongoing programs and services of the government to continue.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Madam Minister, though, it always was my understanding that these futures built up until the budget was passed and they were paid in a bulk all at once. And my concern is that most of these RMs (rural municipalities) are starting into their spring maintenance programs and definitely need this funding. So I would hope that by what we are doing here and only putting a twelfth on the Table that we wouldn't hold the money back for these people.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Well again, Mr. Chairman, what I would say to the member opposite, that's the purpose of interim supply — to ensure that people out there, other groups like municipalities, are not caught short. You'll have to ask the Municipal Government department the details of what their essential services are.

But that's why we're doing this, so that third parties aren't caught short and don't find themselves in a difficult position just because we have not in this legislature agreed yet to pass the budget.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Madam Minister, I just want to ask you one question. I notice that for the Department of Social Services the one-twelfth supply will be \$43.693 million. I have received on my desk a statement of an order in council; section 8 of The Department of Social Services Act provides that the Minister of Social Services may make grants of up to \$10,000, and I guess it's in excess of \$10,000 where he would need the Lieutenant Governor's approval, and has gotten it.

So these grants go to any agency, organization, association, or institution providing programs and services for the benefit of people in Saskatchewan. My question, Madam Minister, does this grant . . . is that incorporated within this \$43 million, or is this above and beyond the \$43 million?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, I, of course, cannot see the order in council that the member has. My guess would be it's a 1995-96 order in council, which will mean it would not be part of this one-twelfth. It would be included in the 1995-96 budget.

But you know, not seeing the OC (order in council) and not seeing the date and not seeing all the details, I'm just assuming that that's probably what it is.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, welcome to your officials.

I just have a couple of clarifications. With respect to the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, I see that there is a request for some \$337,000 for the next 30 days. I just would like to ask if you could clarify what that money will be going towards — whether there is an intergovernmental meeting in the offing or some other major event?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, I would say to the member opposite, that will be for the ongoing work of the

Departmental of Intergovernmental Affairs. So that probably, for example, they will be continuing to monitor the situation across Canada with respect to issues like interprovincial trade, NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), Quebec — those sorts of activities.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I take it then, it's merely for the administration of that department and salaries and everything that goes with it. Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

In the area of the Justice department, if I could just get some clarifications. The amounts being requested for the next 30 days — over and above, on occasion, for some special event, such as the investigation or at least the review of the Justice department that will be in the offing — is any of that money targeted for the payment of the attorneys from Alberta to initiate that overview of the Justice department?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite. What happens across the government is we give them one-twelfth of their total appropriation for the year. We do not go into details as to what the money is being spent for. So I honestly couldn't tell you if the money is being spent for that particular purpose.

My guess, again, is that that will be an ongoing issue, so I would be very . . . I would suspect that it is not included in this particular appropriation, But again, all we do is we say to the departments, we will give you the equivalent — it's one-twelfth because it's one month spending, to ensure that you can carry on the essential activities of your department.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Madam Minister. That's just to again clarify and reaffirm that in the event of any upfront payments for special investigations such as what will be in the offing, this is not included in the event that there may need to be some monies for something separate.

Again, I guess our concern is that there's enough money, that there will be enough money to handle anything that might be, at this point in time, not expected. And I appreciate that the rest will be for the continuing and ongoing administration of the Justice department. Thank you.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll ask the minister, you know, to bear with me. It's my first crack at this interim supply stuff.

Of the \$2 million that I can recollect from my notes being spent on Indian and Metis departments . . . In relations to cuts, I'm not really in favour of holding up this part of the business. I realize people are waiting for their allocation. Just a question of what's being spent in relation to Indian allocation versus Metis allocation in this interim supply.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Again, Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite, we don't have the details here about how the department is spending that. You have to look for that when the department comes here. At some point in the future the Department of Indian and Metis Affairs will be here. They will . . . you will then have a chance to go through in detail how

much is being spent on Indian, how much is being spent on Metis.

But I can say to the member opposite, I honestly can't give you that answer because we don't have the details. And all we do is we give them basically one month's spending so that they can continue to provide the ongoing operations of their departments and of their programs for a month.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you. And thank you, Madam Minister, and welcome to your staff. I too have some questions. And I guess first of all, I'd like to tell you that my concerns are dealing with . . . this budget are dealing with the fact that the main things that I see are going to hurt rural Saskatchewan.

All the departments that I see are going to be taking their big cut-backs are things that are going to hurt the people in my area very badly. And I'm talking about the Agriculture budget; I'm talking about the Highways budget, the Municipal Government budget, and even the Sask Water budget. They're all things that are down and they're all going to be hurting rural Saskatchewan.

My concern with representing my area and a lot of people in rural Saskatchewan is, by passing . . . when we pass this we have taken the first step towards saying yes, it's okay to further decimate our area and our way of life.

That isn't what we want to have done, and that isn't the message we want to send to our people. It's very important for them to know that in order to retain the type of . . . the lifestyle that they have out there, we need to not only keep this funding, we have to actually increase it.

Rural Saskatchewan's . . . the way of life out there, is what you as members living in the cities want. And by doing things like cutting the Highways budget, we're going back to a way of . . . going backwards. We're not going forwards. I want to . . . looking specifically at Economic Development, I see that this is downsizing from last year, and I don't agree with grants to businesses but I do see that by doing this, we're cutting back on some of the small programs that have been helping to keep rural Saskatchewan alive.

I wonder if the minister will tell me, in this budget, what economic . . . the downsizing for Economic Development, can you tell me how you see it's going to hurt or will it help rural Saskatchewan?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make some general comments in response to what the member says. I in no sense believe that rural Saskatchewan is taking a hit from this budget. In fact I think there are many things in this budget that are going to help rural Saskatchewan. One of the things that farmers need is they need some assistance in developing new crops, developing new uses for their crops, and promoting value added processing.

What this budget commits to, is over the next four years we're going to spend more than a quarter of a billion dollars in promoting exactly that. So what we're concerned about there is the long-term future of farmers, that they have as much

assistance as the government can provide to diversify, to develop new crops, and to develop new uses for all of those crops.

Now with respect to highways, in fact the money being spent on the roads in this province is increasing. We're spending more on roads than we traditionally have spent. And we're doing that by cutting back on administrative costs. The Department of Highways has done an excellent job of saying we don't need all of this infrastructure to provide the services. And therefore we're going to get rid of some of the administrative costs and put that money into highways, which is exactly what people in rural Saskatchewan are telling us to do.

And I would say to the member opposite, my pre-budget tour this year was probably the most extensive I've ever done, almost all of it in rural Saskatchewan. And I find people there . . . first of all, I found farmers prouder of themselves than they have been in years. They actually feel they have made the kinds of changes they require to make their operations viable into the next century. I found them very, very open to change and believing that change is required.

And you talk about municipal government. Do we believe that there have to be changes in municipal government? Yes. Did people at our meetings believe there had to be changes — meetings in rural Saskatchewan — do they believe that there have to be changes in municipal government? Yes.

I would say with respect to Economic Development that one of the reasons the money for Economic Development is dropping is people also told us that they do not believe in direct grants to business. And so we have phased out direct grants to business. This government will no longer be providing direct grants to business.

But what we are providing funding for are things like REDAs, regional economic development authorities, which again help smaller communities, because a whole region of the province can come together, take the best advantage of all the pluses they have going for them and then use that to sell their advantages beyond their region to other parts of the province and other parts of Canada.

So I would say to the member opposite, when the Department of Economic Development is here, you can go into some of this in greater detail.

But in terms of the general policy of the government, there are two reasons why the grant for Economic Development is down. One, grants for business are being phased out; and administrative savings — we have consolidated a number of different branches and saved that way as well.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, I notice that the grant for things like Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation has actually gone up by over a million dollars. And when I try and look at these, I see that it is basically in the administration part, and that again is something that isn't going to help rural Saskatchewan, and it basically doesn't help small businesses as a whole. Because that's actually helping individual businesses and allows the government to pick and choose again. I'm very . . . I guess I'll wait for your comment on that.

(1130)

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Well again the member opposite needs to not do what the member from Thunder Creek seems to do: jump to conclusions on a very narrow, little piece of information. You'll have . . . the department will be here and you can ask in more detail about SOCO (Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation).

But I will say as the general principle, what the government funds from SOCO is a loan-loss provision. So as it becomes more active and actually begins to loan money out there, the government — not wanting to be like we were in '80s where you lend money and you didn't set aside extra funds in case some of those loans were not repaid — has on the advice of the auditor put aside loan-loss provisions.

So that one of the reasons why SOCO's grant goes up is because it's actually beginning to do what it was mandated to do. And because we are fiscally responsible and do as the auditor says, every time you make a loan, you set aside a loan-loss provision to ensure that you are protected and the taxpayers are protected.

(1130)

So again, what I would say to the member opposite, because it becomes a problem; it becomes a credibility problem. And I don't want to get into this in great detail, but I do mean it in a friendly way.

When you have within a very few months of a new legislature coming together, you have companies, like major companies in this province employing over a thousand people saying the opposition is making reckless comments which are a problem for the company, that's a serious issue. So I would just ask you to be a little bit more careful in jumping to a conclusion because when you get SOCO here, you're going to find that the answer is not as you've portrayed it.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, I'm lucky to live in the part of Saskatchewan where we have more manufacturing businesses and industry per capita than any other place in this province. The Schultes and the Bourgaults and the Dyna-Fabs and the Westlands and the Doepkers create lots and lots of jobs.

And every one of those people, I can say I call them my personal friends, the owners and managers of these businesses, and they are telling me that the policies that are directed and the direct impact of this budget on their business, is going to be bad; it's not going to be good.

I want to know, things like the highways problem, with the fact that they're not going to be building them up, so that it costs people like Bourgault thousands of extra dollars just to have to have their equipment repainted before they can get it to their customer. I'm asking you, if you actually believe that the number one priority of your government is job creation, then I don't see why there isn't more emphasis put on the details that are needed so that we can actually have some job creation.

I'm sorry I'm losing my voice, Ms. Minister. But I need to understand how you think that we should be able to pass this when I think it's going to be a detriment to not only rural Saskatchewan, but to business people. I'll ask for your comment.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — I would say two things to the member opposite. First of all, the manufacturing and processing tax credit which we introduced in the last budget was developed in consultation with exactly those industries. We sat down with them . . . in fact Kirk McGregor sat down with them and said, now what kind of tax break would be affordable to the province, wouldn't cost 80 or \$90 million, and would work for your industry? And they were very receptive to the result.

I would also say, on roads, we haven't reduced our spending on roads. The spending that is going to occur, building highways . . . And again it's what I'm warning the members about because credibility, once you've lost it, you can't get it back. When you have people making reckless comments that you're not reliable — I'm not mentioning you in particular — I'm just saying you can't get it back.

We are spending more money than we have in our base budgets in the past, on fixing people's roads. We are spending less money on administering the roads, which is what people want us to do. People in your constituency don't want us to be spending money on administration in government. They don't want us to keep something operating out there just because it provides a job for somebody but it doesn't really help with their road. They want us to cut our administrative costs and to put as much as we can into roads.

And I would say to the member opposite, you're not being asked to pass the budget here. We've had the budget debate and you'll be going through the estimates and at some point we'll have another vote. What you're being asked to do here is to agree to give third parties enough money so they can continue operating and to give the government departments enough money so they can continue to operate.

Ms. Draude: — I'm concerned about companies like . . . or corporations like the Sask Water Corporation. I'm wondering, when I look at the press release that came out yesterday and they talk about the second highest run-off ever, if this is taken into consideration that there's going to be major problems like we had at Englefeld last year. We had to actually cut No. 5 Highway.

I'm wondering if the highways' crews that are no longer in Wadena there to help our people out in a hurry . . . Wadena and Humboldt. Last year when we had to cut the highway at Englefeld, we had to find somebody who knew the minister personally and knew his home phone number so we knew how to cut the highway at Englefeld. I'm just wondering if this isn't the kind of thing that happens when we don't have hands on to people that are actually affecting our lives.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — I'm not sure what the member opposite is asking me. Is she saying that we think that the Minister of Highways' telephone number should be available all across the . . . Oh, okay. Maybe I should ask the member

opposite to ask me that question again.

Ms. Draude: — These cut-backs to places — to the Highways department, for example, does it cause closures at Wadena, that depot is going to be closed down there? There's further closures in Humboldt. And what happens when we have a problem specifically. I don't need to talk to the Minister of Highways because he's not probably going to go fix the . . . allow us to cut the highway off at that time.

Who are we going to get a hold of and where are these people going to come from? We were in Englefeld the last year when the water was running over the highways, and there was major chances for terrible accidents. Where do crews come from? Who has the responsibility at the last moment there when there's nobody left, unless I go to Saskatoon or Regina? I need somebody closer. Our people need somebody closer so we can actually have some hands on, somebody to talk to.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — I'm sure the Minister of Highways, when he's here, will tell you exactly what's going to happen in your area. As you can imagine, I can't tell what is going to happen in your particular area. But I can tell you this. I can say that the Department of Highways has assured us that the changes being made will not affect the service that people will get with respect to their roads. In fact they're saying that these changes are required in order to ensure that you do have adequate funds for roads.

And again, I don't want to sound harsh with the members opposite, but they only look at part of the equation here. If we have a problem, I don't know if . . . there was a report today on roads. If there is a major, major problem with respect to roads, the main factor right now is the Crow benefit and the fact that the federal Liberal government cancelled the Crow benefit and what that is going to do with our highways.

Those are the sorts of things that really do loom as big and important issues. And what I'm saying to the member opposite is, you need to be balanced. If you're concerned about roads, and that's fine, we're saying we're spending more on roads.

I think you also need though to join with us and to say to your federal counterparts, you cancelled the Crow benefit; you took hundreds of millions of dollars each and every year out of this province. You now have an obligation as a national government to not give up on transportation, to not just throw out a little bit of money one time, but an ongoing commitment to help us provide an adequate transportation system in this province.

So I mean that's also a big part of the equation. The major threat to our roads is the cancellation of the Crow benefit and what strains and stresses that's going to be putting on our road system. And that simply cannot be ignored.

Ms. Draude: — I'm pleased to know that it's okay that I don't have a problem with the highways in my area, because I do have a big problem with them. And the concerns that are happening with the condition of our highways isn't something that's going to be either fixed or happened in the last two years. It was a great big . . . it was a big problem.

My problem is that right now, tomorrow morning if there's a problem with these depots being closed, there's nobody there. Now it doesn't matter how philosophizing you want to get, if there's nobody there to call on, that's not going to help the people out in rural Saskatchewan.

The other question I have, I see on that third line down, Economic Development has an estimate of 36,559, and down further there's also another Economic Development for 4,600 — I guess that's in thousands of dollars. Could you explain to me why there's two different lines on Economic Development?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — What I would say to the member opposite is one is spending and the other is loans.

But I really cannot let the record show that there is simply nobody going to be there for your highways. The member opposite knows that that will not be true. The member opposite knows that there may be some changes as to where the particular truck is located or whatever, but there will be somebody there for the highways of this province.

And again I'm saying to the member opposite, she needs then, if she doesn't agree with what happened, to give us an answer. Should we have across this government say, it's okay, administrative costs don't bother us. I know you can find savings in administration in Department of Highways; don't do it, because people really care about administrative staff and costs being in place, not about their highways.

When they say to us, we can provide the service better by changing the way we provide the service, surely it's our obligation . . . people out in exactly the areas you're talking about in rural Saskatchewan said, cut administrative costs, put more money into front-line services, which is what is happening in Highways.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, I don't know if you're aware out in rural . . . even in my constituency it can take me three and a half hours just to get from one end of the constituency to another. And the way that the depots are set up right now, that's how long it would take a truck to get to places that have various problems.

Also, I don't know if you're aware that in my constituency there is 11 different rural telephone exchanges. We don't know everybody in the backyard. We don't know the people that are in charge of things. I think that before there should be any more of these major cuts, people have to have an opportunity to be educated and to know what's happening and not to make the same mistakes that were made in the health districts.

I guess that's my comments to the minister.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Well again I would say to the member opposite, you really don't want to become associated with, everything's got to stay the same. The current maintenance system that exists right now was put in place in the 1960s. So it's been in place for over 30 years.

The Department of Highways didn't just sort of wake up one day and say, well I think we're just going to change it. They did

an extensive review of what would happen if it was changed and how the level of service would be affected.

And they concluded, after an extensive review, that in fact it needed to be changed. It was over 30 years old. It no longer applied to the conditions as they exist. And by making these changes, they could in fact provide more money for actually preserving the roads that exist, which is what the people of the province would like them to do.

People may not like change. They might very well like everything to remain the same. I don't, by the way, believe that's true, people in rural Saskatchewan. I think they are quite prepared to accept change. So as I say, this was something that was done after a lot of work, a lot of study. The equipment has changed. The equipment that we had in the '60s is not the same equipment we have today. And it is our view that the service will be maintained. It will be delivered in a different way.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister is promising me that the service will be maintained or even upgraded, and of course that's what the people out in rural Saskatchewan want to hear.

I guess I understood from maybe speaking to the Chair, that I can't ask specific questions on specific programs. Am I correct in that assumption?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — The member's correct.

Mr. Belanger: — I promise you I'll be the last guy up here on this side. Oh sorry, there might be one guy closing off.

Just two quick questions, Madam Minister. I want to also welcome your officials here today. But in the interim supply that you're now giving to the third-party organizations, the cuts to the budget will be reflected in these third-party grants, is that correct?

Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite, it's one-twelfth of all the spending of the government, so whatever was going to be spent over the 12 months, it just takes one-twelfth of it and allows the departments to spend that. So it reflects everything that is in the budget.

Mr. Belanger: — So just in the cash flow perspective on this interim supply deal — of course we don't want to tie matters up any — but just for the question. Does one-twelfth of the funding pose any particular hardship for any group out there that does receive funding? By hardship, I mean interest on overdraft charges, outstanding account interest, and so on and so forth. Is there any particular group that might be adversely affected by this one-twelfth scenario?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — To our knowledge, it doesn't. But that's why we want to get this interim supply passed as quickly as possible, so that third parties are not having to go out and borrow money or extend lines of credit and pay interest because the government is not in a position to provide them with funding.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you.

(1145)

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just think it's important here, when the government is requesting interim supply, that we do just take a moment just to talk again about what's fair and responsible and accountable in terms of spending. Last year the government chose not to take millions of dollars that were left in the liquor and the gaming fund, as well as they avoided taking \$60 million that was offered as a dividend from the Crown corporations. Instead this government chose to take \$188 million that it originally had planned to use in the gross revenue insurance program. And obviously the VLTs (video lottery terminal) and the Crown corporations are more important than our families.

Mr. Chair, the taxpayers of the province are the shareholders of these Crown corporations. While the government insists upon being terribly aggressive with our farmers in sending out bills, it's not nearly as aggressive with its Crown corporations.

I would say to the members opposite that I think we've found another example of their contradictory ways. The members opposite feel it's okay for the government not to collect dividends from the Crowns even though they rightfully are the property of the Saskatchewan taxpayer. At the same time the Minister of Agriculture tells us how unfair it is for us to suggest that he keep his promise with reference to the GRIP bills.

Mr. Chair, there's a double standard here. This government wants to make sure its family of Crowns keep all the money they need, but it has a different standard for the rest of our families.

Mr. Chair, the motion before us today asks for certain sums of money. This government wants money out of the taxpayers for taxes while it isn't willing to take the same from its Crown corporations. While the government doesn't get the taxpayers the sums that rightfully belong to it, they continue to let the Crowns waste our money.

However, Mr. Chair, at this point, we do feel it appropriate that we would end this debate unless the members of the third party, the members of the Tories, or the independent member, have anything further to add to the debate. We are at this time prepared to end. Thank you.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, I certainly cannot let this stand on the record. Mr. Member, your comments reflect the problem I'm trying to alert your caucus colleagues to, I mean, and I'm saying this in a friendly way.

When you've been in politics for a few months, and you have major corporations saying your comments are reckless, not properly founded, and you have similar comments coming in from the press, you need to think carefully about the statements you're making.

Now I don't know if it's the member from Wood River who puts you into this mindset. I mean this was all rhetorical nonsense that you just came out with there. Absolute nonsense. And as I say, I wouldn't know why you would do that sort of thing. I don't even know how to go back and start to correct

what you said here.

Let's start with the money from GRIP. That was taxpayers' dollars from taxpayers across the province. Let's go back to the Crown corporation dividends. Why have the . . . well you know, if the members would listen maybe they would find out what the answer was. I don't think it's reasonable to ask a question as you're doing and then when I'm trying to give you the answer, as you do all the time, you just keep talking.

Why have the Crown corporations not been able in the past to pay dividends? It's because in that whole Crown sector are the megaprojects which we inherited from the previous administration. And things like SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation) have been there in the past. So we've been having to write-off bad debts from the '80s — not your responsibility; not our responsibility.

But please don't try to use this rhetoric that we don't like families therefore we take GRIP money, and we do like Crowns therefore we don't. This is past. This is Grant Devine rhetoric. This is the stuff that Grant Devine said in 1982.

Please try to focus on some basic facts. If the Crowns have been unable to provide dividends in the past it's because of the megaprojects and the need to write off debts there. With respect to the Liquor Board, we were very upfront with the press in the previous year. We said look, we've had a very, very, very good year — '94-95 — we're reserving this money for unexpected circumstances.

And they expected us to spend the money during the election. They said, well that's your election kitty. We said, you just watch; we won't spend it. And we didn't. And in fact the unexpected circumstances was losing over \$400 million in equalization, in which we then use that extra money to ensure we can continue to balance the books.

You know your own person in Ottawa, the one you speak for all the time, Paul Martin, has established a contingency fund to do exactly that — to say in case there's an unexpected emergency, here's money we set aside for that so we can continue to balance the books.

But I would really, honestly say to the member opposite: we should have good debates in this House, but they should be elevated debates. They shouldn't be at an old-fashioned 1982 rhetorical level that the member from Wood River seems to like. The public is tired of that. Let's lay some honest facts on the table and let's debate them. And let's elevate them.

And I really, really wish — because it reflects on all politicians — that the members opposite would begin to act like Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and elevate the debate to the level that the public would like to see it at.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — I hereby move resolution 2:

That towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public

service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1997 the sum \$339,045,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

Motion agreed to.

The committee reported progress.

FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS

The Speaker: — When shall the resolutions be read the first time?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Right now, sir.

Motion agreed to and the resolutions read a first and second time.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — By leave of the Assembly, I move:

That Bill No. 66, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service and for the Fiscal Year ending on March 31, 1997, be now introduced and read the first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill read a first time.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — By leave of the Assembly and under rule 55-2, I move that the Bill be now read a second and third time.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill read a second and third time and passed under its title.

(1200)

MOTIONS

Hours of Sitting

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. I shall at the conclusion of my comments move a motion with respect to the adjournment of the House.

Let me just make a couple of comments first, one of which is I gather that the proceedings were completed somewhat in advance of what, on my instructions, the staff of the Assembly had advised His Honour. I think we had told him 12:30 at the earliest, and I think that's probably the earliest he's going to get here. And to the extent that there's a delay, I would take responsibility for it, but there may be a delay.

Perhaps while there's a demand for a speech, I do recall a couple of old speeches on potash expropriation we could bring up. The other alternative, Mr. Speaker, would be to take an informal adjournment, just an informal recess. Before doing so, however, I think I will deal with the motion for adjournment. I just ask members to think, and your honour, to think about it.

I want to begin by wishing everybody a happy Easter. I think during this session we've made a good deal of progress. We have introduced most of the Bills — not entirely all of them — but most of them are introduced. The budget debate is over.

And I think members now have the opportunity to go back to their constituents and make good use of the three or four days in consulting with their constituents and getting a read on where the public sit on the issues which are I think now almost completely before the session.

I want therefore to wish all members of the Assembly a happy Easter weekend, and their families.

And with that I will move, by leave of the Assembly, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture:

By leave of this Assembly and notwithstanding rule 3(4) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, that when this Assembly adjourns on April 4, 1996, it do stand adjourned until Wednesday, April 10 at 1:30 p.m.

Leave granted.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, before I agree to leave, I would just like to make a comment regarding the special weekend and certainly reiterate the sentiments expressed by the Government House Leader, that I extend to each and every one of the members in this Assembly, a very happy Easter. And trust that they will certainly enjoy this time, this special season, with their family, as I'm sure many of them are going to gather with family members, and appreciate the significance of the season, and extend to you and yours and the members of this Assembly a very happy and a pleasant Easter.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the Government House Leader and House Leader of the third party, best wishes from our caucus for the upcoming holiday and hope you enjoy the break with your families, and the fact that it was the official opposition ensured the House worked in a very smooth and quick fashion to deal with the business at hand and so that this break would be enjoyed by all.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm going to suggest that we — I think I need leave for this — with leave, that we recess until called by the Speaker. And you could perhaps sound the bell for a 5-minute warning; we'll return. Perhaps that's the best way to do it is to . . . I move we recess. With leave, I move we recess until summoned by the Speaker with the bell.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly recessed for a period of time.

ROYAL ASSENT

At 12:32 p.m. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent

to the following Bills:

- Bill No. 7 - An Act to repeal The Industrial Incentive Program Act
- Bill No. 25 - An Act to amend The Legal Profession Act, 1990
- Bill No. 26 - An Act to amend the Statute Law
- Bill No. 30 - An Act to amend The Hotel Keepers Act
- Bill No. 16 - An Act to amend The Highway Traffic Act
- Bill No. 28 - An Act to provide for the Establishment, Development and Maintenance of Public Libraries
- Bill No. 29 - An Act to enable Co-operation among all Types of Autonomous Libraries for the Provision of Library Services
- Bill No. 23 - An Act to amend The Archives Act
- Bill No. 9 - An Act to amend The Direct Sellers Act
- Bill No. 10 - An Act respecting Marketplace Practices, Consumer Products Warranties and Unsolicited Goods and Credit Cards
- Bill No. 31 - An Act to amend The Municipal Hail Insurance Act

His Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these Bills.

- Bill No. 66 - An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Year ending on March 31, 1997

His Honour: — In the name of Her Majesty, I thank the Legislative Assembly, accept their benevolence, and assent to this Bill.

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 12:35 p.m.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I move this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — Before adjourning the House, I want to wish to each of you that over this weekend and from now until we return on Wednesday, that the joy of the Easter season is something that you will know in your hearts, and in your families, in your homes, and your home communities. Have yourself a very happy Easter.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

