

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of concerned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan with respect to 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, Mr. Speaker, are from Bangor, Melville, Waldron, Neudorf, Regina, and other small communities such as Atwater in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise as well on behalf of citizens concerned about the impending closure of the Plains Health Centre. The petition reads as follows:

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

Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Arcola, from Kisbey, from Carlyle, and Alameda, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present petitions of names from people 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.

The people that have signed this petition are all from Regina.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this decision is signed by many concerned citizens from the communities of Moose Jaw, Central Butte, Marquis, Tuxford, and Glenbain.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise . . . petitions of names of Saskatchewan people with respect to 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 communities such as Caronport, Mortlach, and the vast majority of them being from the city of Moose Jaw.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with my colleagues here today and the people of Saskatchewan of course to continue their efforts in saving the Plains Health Centre here in Regina. We're bringing forward petitions to try and highlight that, 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.

When I look through the pages, Mr. Speaker, the pages of people that have signed this petition, I believe each and every one of these people are from the community of Bengough represented by the member opposite. Thank you, and I so present, Mr. Speaker.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order, petitions regarding the closure of the Plains Health Centre have been reviewed, and under rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly three very special women in my life.

First of all in your gallery, I'd like to introduce my wife and best friend, Carole, and seated next to her is Chrissie Hughes from Melfort and her stepdaughter, Doreen Hughes from Regina.

I would like to particularly mention Chrissie Hughes, Mr. Speaker, who has become a very dear friend, and in keeping with the native traditions of respecting their elders, Chrissie is an elder in our community and in our church. And people in the Melfort area respect her a very great deal for her integrity and her compassion and most of all for her wisdom. And she is . . . it's not polite to tell people how old a lady is, but she is closer to 90 than to 80. We welcome her very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce some very special guests in the east gallery. They are 32 grade 8 students from Porcupine Plain Composite School, with their teachers, Allan Horlick and Grant Ziola. I'm looking forward to having my picture taken and having a chat with them, and we'll see you later.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And through you, to all members of the Assembly, I would like to join the

member from Kelvington-Wadena to welcome the grade 8 class from Porcupine Plain. Many of the students that go to the Porcupine Plain School, Mr. Speaker, live in the constituency of Carrot River Valley. And I'm sure that they're going to enjoy very much this summer, Mr. Speaker, the opening of their new swimming pool.

So I want everyone to welcome them. And please enjoy your visit, and have a safe trip home.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the other members of this House, 52 grade 11 and 12 students from Valley Christian Academy near Osler. It's an associate school with an excellent reputation, and they're always full to the rafters with students that want to come. And also their teachers, Mr. Henry Penner and Scott Dyck. And I must say, Mr. Henry Penner and I taught together in a different school at a different time.

So would you welcome them to this House and to this city today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to the Assembly 22 students from the SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) campus, 8th Avenue North, who are in your gallery. They are accompanied by their teacher, Nancy Jacoby. These are adult basic education students.

Mr. Speaker, Friday is often a spirited day. I can only express the hope that what they see and hear today does not set their education back too far.

With that, I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Parent Support Program

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A fundamental belief of our society is that every individual — each child, each adult — has intrinsic value and is entitled to equal opportunity and consideration. Sadly, as we know, the reality of our society does not always meet that expectation.

A case in point is the fact that children born into challenging situations are likely to suffer the consequences throughout their life, with subsequent increased costs to society. Children at risk are more likely to have chronic health problems, do poorly in school, and in general, be at risk of getting caught in the cycle of poverty.

It is a pleasure for me to report as a result, that the Midwest Health District, in order to reduce this risk has, with the help of a grant from the Saskatchewan action plan for children,

introduced a new parent support program.

The parent support program will work to address special challenges faced by parents in my constituency. A parent mentor coordinator will be assigned to provide services to at-risk families. And, Mr. Speaker, in the Saskatchewan way, this is a plan which will directly involve the community through the assistance of volunteers and the planning support of the clergy.

The parent mentor coordinator will match volunteers who are experienced parents with young, usually single parents. The experienced parent will provide support, parenting advice and information. This will allow at-risk, inexperienced, young parents to enhance their knowledge and skills, and in the process give their young children a better start in life.

This is a good program; an example of wellness at its best. I wish it well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Victims of Domestic Violence Legislation

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to draw to the Assembly's attention yet another example of how Saskatchewan is leading the way in Canada. We are proud of the victims of domestic violence legislation that has been in place in this province for more than a year now. When it was introduced in this House we were told that it was the first legislation of its kind in Canada, if not in North America.

We were also informed that because of its uniqueness it would likely serve as a model for other jurisdictions. Well this has happened. After a year of implementation, the results from this legislation have been nothing but positive. It is working extremely well in serving the purpose that it intended to. It is helping to prevent and reduce family violence. It is directing more people to the help they need, both the victims and the offenders.

We were proud of this legislation when it was introduced. We are proud of the positive impact that it is having on reducing domestic violence since being implemented. Now we can also be proud of how our legislation is helping other provinces.

This spring Prince Edward Island introduced a victim of domestic violence Act that is — you guessed it — modelled on our legislation. Saskatchewan Justice officials have assisted P.E.I. (Prince Edward Island) in preparing for the implementation of their Act.

Mr. Speaker, the problem of domestic violence has been of personal concern to me and many of the women in my constituency, and I am proud to be part of a government who is leading the way in Canada. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hearing and Speech Month and National Access Awareness Week

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Why is the member on her feet?

Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, with leave, to sign, and probably slowly with the members' indulgence, sign a brief portion of the statement.

The Speaker: — The hon. member for Wascana Plains has requested leave to sign simultaneously with the statement by the hon. member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

The Speaker: — I recognize the hon. member for Qu'Appelle Valley and Wascana Plains.

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm signing for support of Hearing Loss Awareness Month and National Access Awareness Week. I'm signing to let you know what it looks like when I'm signing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Murray: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Wascana Plains signed briefly today to let you know as well what it is like to not know what is being said.

Hearing loss is the fastest growing disability in North America today. Our population is ageing, and we are surrounded by noise. You wouldn't expect to see someone on an airport tarmac without ear protection, but did you know that a car stereo is just as loud as a jet engine or that a lawn mower is loud enough to cause damage? There are more than 100,000 people in Saskatchewan with a hearing loss, and it is always a profound loss when you can't hear what is going on around you.

Imagine doing your job without hearing instructions from supervisors or comments from co-workers, the information you would miss out on because you can't hear casual conversation or take part in an animated discussion.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan deaf and hard-of-hearing services can bridge the gap between deaf and hearing. We should be aware of this service and look for other opportunities to include people with hearing disabilities at work and in our communities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize the month of June's designation as Speech and Hearing Month.

There are thousands of people who overcome speech and hearing impairments every day. In this day and age when communication is so vitally important, it's extremely important that measures are taken to accommodate their needs.

Fortunately new technology is making communication somewhat easier for many people who have hearing and speech impairments. Each of us can also play a role by being more

considerate and aware of their needs.

I would like to commend all people who are working to increase the awareness about speech and hearing impairments. And I would like to commend the member opposite for her signing of the statement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Seniors Games

Ms. Murrell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Senior citizens in my constituency will be taking wellness to heart on June 4. That is when the Saskatchewan Seniors Fitness Association district 10 games are scheduled in Unity. The zone 7 play-offs will take place on that day, and a local committee has been busy for the past several weeks organizing the various activities.

Some of the events include tennis, track and field, swimming, bowling, walking, golf, and old-time dancing. There are table games scheduled as well, including card games, scrabble, and shuffleboard. Organizers have also planned two literary categories for poetry and short-story writing.

The winners of these zone play-offs will move on to the provincial play-offs in mid-July in Swift Current. There are over 12 communities that comprise district 10 who will have representatives competing in the 19 events.

I extend my best wishes to the organizers and participants who are involved in these worthwhile activities. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Swift Current Care Centre Rally

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Wednesday morning, I attended an important health care rally in Swift Current. A group of people marched, and some were even pushed in their wheelchairs, over to the district health board offices to protest the closure of the Swift Current Care Centre.

These people are extremely upset that a care centre which 70 elderly residents have made their home, is closing. When the closure was announced, many of these seniors and their families were appalled at the lack of consideration by the local health board and by this government.

They fully realize that this provincial government is renegeing on its responsibility to provide dependable, quality health care services for all Saskatchewan people. These protesters want the government and the health board to know that closing the centre is unacceptable, and would be and is extremely stressful on the elderly people who now live there.

I would like to commend all the people in Swift Current and area, and across Saskatchewan, who are attending meetings and rallies to challenge this government to live up to its health care commitments.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Punnichy Royal Canadian Mounted Police Receive Commendations

Mr. Flavel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago the member from Saskatoon South gave a statement recognizing Police Week. She pointed out that our police officers can be particularly proud of the fact that they are truly “peace” officers. The fact that we are not as violent a society as some others has a great deal to do with the reasonable manner in which they enforce the peace.

Three members of the Punnichy RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) detachment in my constituency were recently given commendations for an act of law enforcement heroism which vividly demonstrates the point the member from Saskatoon South made.

Constables Keith Jones and Tammy Patterson, and Auxiliary Constable Glen Brown, all received officers’ commendations for disarming an extremely dangerous individual without loss of life or injury to anyone involved.

Constables Jones and Patterson talked down a disturbed individual who was threatening both himself and his family with a rifle. Constable Patterson cleared the vicinity of anyone in danger — a coordinated effort which ended peacefully and happily.

Mr. Speaker, I join the Saskatchewan RCMP Commanding Officer and the Canadian RCMP Commissioner for commending these three officers who managed a dangerous situation with steady hands, cool heads, and holstered weapons.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, Hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Agreement with Rural Health Coalition

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on February 16, 1994 this government signed an agreement with the rural health care coalition. This deal was signed after the government, the NDP (New Democratic Party) government, came under enormous pressure which shut the doors — slammed the doors — of 52 rural hospitals under the guise of health care reform.

Rallies took place all across this province. People demanded safe and reliable health care, and threatened court action besides. And so the government did strike a deal guaranteeing that these communities would receive proper, safe, and reliable access to health care services.

Will the minister explain if his government is going to live up to each and every detail of this agreement that they reached?.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that the spirit and intent of the Rural Health Coalition Agreement has been met by the government, and that agreement of course has to be

considered in light of many pressures facing health districts and all communities within their boundaries.

The agreement was intended to ensure collaboration and cooperation in a process that promotes effective discussion, problem solving, and consensus building, Mr. Speaker. And what it requires is reasonable people, people of goodwill in the institutions in the districts, sitting down with their district health boards, and together trying to fashion solutions that will meet the health care needs of the people of the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker, what that mushy statement was, was an admission that they’re not living up to the agreement. Mr. Speaker, the NDP government has reduced health care funding to a dangerously low level. This has resulted in staff reductions, the elimination of acute care and long-term care beds, and the closure of a lot of long-term care facilities. And that, Mr. Speaker, means the needs of the sick and the elderly are not — they are not — being taken care of.

Will the minister and the Premier live up to their word, to their agreement, that Premier’s agreement, and properly fund this agreement so that the communities that they bargained with in good faith can provide those services that their citizens need?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I provided the members opposite with a document the other day that establishes that this year, for the health districts, this NDP government increased funding to the health districts by \$1.04 million. I also provided documentation which showed that if we had passed on the Liberal cut to health care, that the health districts, Mr. Speaker, would have incurred a loss of \$27.9 million, because we had to back-fill for the Liberals in health care, Mr. Speaker.

But the Liberals, who took the money out of health care, which we put back in, say spend more, spend more, spend more. And I say to that member that if he wants us to spend more instead of spending smarter, he should tell the House and tell the people what taxes he wants to increase. Or does he want to do what the member from Arm River said last week, which is to charge every family in the province probably a thousand dollars in medicare premiums? Is that the policy of the Liberal Party, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Health is admitting each and every time he stands on his feet that in fact they are not living up to this agreement. And the facts and the figures that he’s quoting from go contrary to what was in the *Leader-Post* not so many days ago about 19 districts that are severely under-funded. And I believe they were in the rural areas where these rural health care coalition agreements were taking place. So I would ask the minister to try and stick more to what people would believe to be the correct answer.

Mr. Speaker, the minister states that his government has lived up to every aspect of this agreement, yet it is clear in many of

our communities that the terms of this agreement are not . . . because of a lack of funding from that government.

We have brought to the attention of this House countless examples of where health care is failing the sick and the elderly as a result of this minister and this Premier. Will the Minister of Health explain how health districts can now continue to live up to the terms of the rural health care coalition agreement, given this government's continuous cuts in health care?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as the member well knows, this government has not cut health care spending. The member knows that. The member also knows that the only cuts to health care spending this year in the province of Saskatchewan have been Liberal cuts. And we have said to the counterparts of the members opposite in Ottawa, that we believe that we should have a national medicare system that the federal Liberals should support.

Now last week the member from Arm River was on his feet saying that we should not have a national medicare system, Mr. Speaker. They say we should not have national medicare; they say that we should have premiums for the people; they say that we should have user fees. And we reject that, Mr. Speaker, because we support medicare and we will continue to fund medicare, and we will build a better system.

The problem with these people, Mr. Speaker, is that while we're trying to change to build a better system, they want to change to go to an American-style medicare system, which is no system at all, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Whitespruce Youth Treatment Centre Closure

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, I just can't believe the continued arrogance of the NDP government. Just over a month ago the members opposite indicated that closing down the Whitespruce Youth Treatment Centre was not a problem. They said the facility was under-used and that the Calder Centre in Saskatoon could handle the treatment of the youths from Whitespruce.

Mr. Speaker, they said this even though a member of the citizens' steering committee said: Calder Centre has no classroom facilities, no way for clients to catch up or advance academically or get any hands-on computer skills; recreational facilities are non-existent.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess the government was wrong and the facilities can't handle Whitespruce clients, because in Wednesday's *Leader-Post* SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) advertised a tender for renovations of Calder place. Will the minister tell us why they would pour taxpayers' money into renovating Calder place and close down a facility in rural Saskatchewan that was perfectly capable of treating the needs of troubled youth?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, one of the things that the opposition has said which I agree with, when it comes to

meeting the addiction treatment services for youth, is that you need to have a segregated facility for youth. That is available in the Calder Centre, but I understand that the Calder Centre has to be renovated for that purpose at a cost of approximately, I believe, \$250,000.

But that is a one-time cost, Mr. Speaker, and I want to tell the member that the consolidation of Calder and Whitespruce is expected to save the taxpayers, I believe, in the order of a million dollars per year. A \$250,000 one-time expenditure to save a million dollars per year is not a bad thing to do in terms of saving the taxpayers some money, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier said that closing down Whitespruce would accomplish two things: one, meet the needs of the community in terms of providing service that is being provided at those centres now, and secondly, deal with it in a way that is good for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. Is this what the government considers good for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan? One less facility, 41 less jobs, and costly renovations driven even higher because of this government's ridiculous Crown tendering policies.

Mr. Speaker, will the Deputy Premier explain why they think this is a smart decision? And if employees, youth, and taxpayers are the losers, who exactly is the winner?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the difficulty here is that every time there's any change in society you can rest assured that the Liberal Party is going to oppose that change.

When the government has a plan to consolidate services and save the taxpayers money, the Liberals oppose that plan even though the Liberals are cutting down on health care spending with the support of the members opposite. They take \$50 million out of the system and create difficulty for people, not just in Saskatchewan but across the country, and then they tell us that we don't have to take steps to change the system, to spend smarter and spend more effectively.

And I say to the members opposite that this resistance to change, which is necessary when we're about to enter into a new century, Mr. Speaker, is the same resistance to change when medicare was introduced into this province in 1962, which these members opposed and which they now seek to destroy again by the introduction of medicare premiums, user fees, and the dismantling of the national medicare system.

That's where they stand. It's not where we stand, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Compensation for Hepatitis C Victims

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been two weeks since the Minister of Health met with Bonnie Soerensen, a Regina woman whose six-year-old son contracted hepatitis C through a blood transfusion. The minister indicated at the end of the meeting that they had that he would

study the issue and get back to her as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, time is of the essence for people like Bonnie Soerensen and her son. Will the Minister of Health indicate when she can expect a response from his office and when she can expect appropriate action on his behalf — her son's behalf — to address these concerns?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, Ms. Soerensen can expect a letter from me very shortly, which is consistent with what I said to Ms. Soerensen when I met with her a few weeks ago — that we would be looking into the matter and getting back to her.

But I want to say to the member that this is quite a complex situation. Because when the member says that somebody should be compensated, there are questions in terms of the amount of compensation. Because somebody in the position of Ms. Soerensen's son may not be assessed in such a way as to determine what the compensation should be. There are questions of who should pay the compensation. Is it the federal government, the provincial government, the Canadian Blood Committee? Is it the Red Cross? Those things have to be worked out, and they're complex.

But I want to say to the member, and the House, Mr. Speaker, that if there's a situation where liability is properly assessed with respect to the Government of Saskatchewan and where the amount of compensation is determined, we will meet the legal obligations that we have to Ms. Soerensen's son and any others that should properly be compensated by the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker, the fact is Bonnie Soerensen's meeting with the minister a couple of weeks ago was not the first dealing with the minister or that department. She contacted the minister's office some eight months ago. At that time she was told that somebody would contact her quickly. No response ever came. So as the minister might appreciate, Bonnie Soerensen is growing impatient because time is one thing her son may not have a lot of.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister make a commitment to take a leadership role and work with Bonnie Soerensen and the others who have contracted hepatitis C through no fault of their own, and provide the appropriate compensation immediately and quit the gamesmanship?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well speaking of gamesmanship, Mr. Speaker, this member is being absolutely absurd and ridiculous. To suggest that compensation would be paid immediately to people whose medical situation has not been assessed and when the question of who is legally liable has not been determined, Mr. Speaker, is simply absurd.

But I can tell the member that instead of playing politics, what this government will do is deal with the situation in a reasonable and compassionate manner, and what needs properly

to be done at the appropriate time will be done, notwithstanding the fact that this member just wants to play politics over what is a very unfortunate situation, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Christian Counselling Services Funding

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the minister, I believe it's Social Services.

Mr. Minister, I recently asked about your government's elimination of funding to Christian Counselling Services in Saskatoon.

Mr. Minister, it takes less time to adopt a child through Christian Counselling, less money, than through the Department of Social Services, and the birth mother can be as involved in the process as she wants to be. She can choose the family her child will be adopted by and remain in contact afterwards.

Christian Counselling, Mr. Minister, places 21 children each year with families at a cost of about \$150,000 annually. Mr. Minister, if you and your colleagues would give up your MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) bonus this year, you could fund Christian Counselling Services for the next two years.

Mr. Minister, why do you continue to fund programs and facilities like casinos that you know hurt Saskatchewan families while you cease funding organizations that help Saskatchewan families? Will you review your decision to eliminate this funding?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the members will well know that in the context of developing this year's budget, both for the government generally and for the Department of Social Services in particular, we faced some real challenges with withdrawal of funding from the federal government. In order to meet those challenges, we've had to look very carefully at everything that we do in Social Services. One area of importance is the services of adoption, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of looking at adoption, we know that we are trying to avoid duplication. We know that the adoption services being provided through the department are meeting needs. And in essence, while recognizing that Christian Counselling has done good work in this field, we believe that we simply cannot have a duplication of service and therefore have withdrawn the funding.

Mr. Speaker, if I may say, we've had a good working relation with Christian Counselling Services, both prior to the budget decision and since the budget decision, and we are working with them to this day.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the minister. Mr. Minister, I know you think that Social Services will take over when Christian Counselling funds run out and that

everything will be fine. In fact I think that's what you just said.

But, Mr. Minister, that's not the case. There are a number of young mothers who have given their babies up for adoption through Christian Counselling who say that if they had to go through the Department of Social Services, they would probably have opted for the abortion procedure instead. In fact, Mr. Minister, our office spoke to one of these mothers this morning, and that's exactly what she said.

Mr. Minister, we are talking about \$150,000 a year that saves the lives of Saskatchewan children. Mr. Minister, we're talking about a program that you acknowledged has done the job well. Mr. Minister, will you keep Christian Counselling Services open and operating? And if in fact, Mr. Minister, you feel that there's a duplication, will you not give totally the control of adoption over to the Christian Counselling Services?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — No, Mr. Speaker, we would not turn adoption services over to any private agency totally. That would, in my view, be irresponsible, Mr. Speaker.

The member perhaps does not understand that we've changed the adoption procedure significantly in the province, where now we operate fundamentally with open adoption processes. This has been welcomed by the community and by the province.

Mr. Speaker, I repeat again, in these very difficult times we have to be very sure, with the resources that we have, that we provide the most effective mechanism. We are not in a circumstance today where we can provide duplication of service.

What's happening here is a consolidation of adoption services, and we know that the system that has been developed in our province over the last number of years is a highly effective service and meets the needs of both those who seek to provide children for adoption and to parents who seek to adopt.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Crown Construction Tendering Agreement

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Labour or his designate for the day.

Now, Mr. Minister, on numerous occasions in this House you and the minister of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) have said that you were conducting an internal review of the Crown tendering policy. And that review would be released at the end of the month is the words that you've used.

Well it's the end of the month, I guess. It's Friday and the end of the month is here. So where is the review? Mr. Minister, will you release the results of your internal review today, just as you have promised as recently as May 21 of this very month?

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the member's question demonstrates better than anything else why they are no longer in government.

The fact is that a review was undertaken, and during the course of the review, agencies that want to establish a good relationship between the construction association, the construction industry, and the workers who are their bread and butter and doing the work for them, indicated they wanted to participate in an open and voluntary discussion to see what changes could be suggested between them.

I think the member opposite ought to be congratulating the parties who've come to the table — the Saskatchewan Construction Association, the construction labour relations council, and the building trades — for coming together and looking for solutions that will build this province, that will build our industry and build the opportunities for the workers of this province, and not play silly, little political games trying to find out whether a report is due yesterday or the day before.

I want to end my comments by congratulating the people who came to this meeting yesterday to have a congenial discussion about the future of their industry in Saskatchewan, who are looking for positive solutions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Mr. Speaker, my question, Mr. Speaker, is to the minister responsible for CIC because, quite frankly, we would like to talk to somebody who is prepared, not only to talk to the other folks, but to be honest and to keep his word.

So, Mr. Minister, on May 23 in this House, you said and I quote — and this is from the Minister of CIC:

... we have shared the information from the review ...
with the parties to the agreement.

Now I assume that that means the CLR (Construction Labour Relations Association) and the building trades council, as they were the other parties who signed this agreement.

Now, Mr. Minister, why have you shown these people the review but you're not willing to share it with anyone else? Now what is there in this whole process that you feel that you need to hide? Mr. Minister, will you release the review today, as you promised?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the review is not in a final, documented form. As I indicated twice already and on previous occasions, that the Saskatchewan Construction Association, to their credit, indicated a willingness to participate with the construction labour relations council and the building trades in a positive discussion about the future opportunities in the construction industry for positive relationships — the kind of relationships that were destroyed by the short-sighted and vicious legislation of the members opposite in 1982, that they should be ashamed of for the rest of their lives.

They've come to the table looking for positive solutions to build Saskatchewan construction opportunities and opportunities for workers in this province; and if those discussions are positive I can only say that it will not be

because of any efforts of the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is going to be to the Minister of CIC again, and it'll be a supplemental. I hope that we get somewhat better than what we've been hearing.

Mr. Minister, your new strategy of trying to act like an impartial facilitator between the construction association and the unions doesn't really make any sense. You have a direct interest in these negotiations because it's the government that ends up paying the bills, and they end up paying the bills using the taxpayers' money.

Now, Mr. Minister, you conducted the review. You know how much more money your union preference policy is going to cost, and has been costing. You have to know that. It's your tendering policy and it's time that you showed some leadership.

Mr. Minister, what position are you taking into these negotiations? What is your position? And based on your internal review, what changes to this process . . . and what changes do you want to see to the CCTA (Crown Construction Tendering Agreement)?

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the position I and this government are taking with respect to these negotiations is that the affairs of the building construction industry is a matter between the contractors and the workers that work for them. As a result of the inappropriate and destructive actions of the members opposite, that relationship was poisoned.

I can tell you that the members who sat together at the table yesterday shared looking for open, looking for open and real, opportunities for enhancing the opportunities for the Saskatchewan workers and for the Saskatchewan construction industry.

I want to say one more time that I'm proud of the leadership we've taken in bringing the parties to the table, and I'm proud that they are taking the opportunity to look for solutions. And I can say again that the members opposite are going to be a long time waiting for another opportunity to destroy this relationship, because the Saskatchewan people will not allow them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Highway Maintenance

Mr. McLane: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to bring to the attention of this House another example that demonstrates the disastrous state of our rural highway system.

Susan Measner was recently travelling north on Highway No. 2, north of the junction of 2 and 11, with her family. She approached a small, NDP-orange flag which indicated there may be a pothole. Instead, she found herself driving into what she describes as, and I quote: "a deep, gravelly crater," where she wrecked her car. When she called the Department of Highways she was told they would not honour her claim. When

we contacted the department, we were told that most of them aren't being honoured because most of the highways are in a terrible state anyway.

Will the minister explain what the government's policy is regarding damage claims that arise from your government's failure to provide safe highways?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Well I want to thank the member for his question. I am sure the member is very well aware of the weather situation this spring. He's very well aware of the spending by the Conservatives in the last 10 years of their administration, causing us \$851 million interest bills. He's very well aware of federal reductions to health care, education, and social programs, where Highways — where every department — has to share in the back-filling of those programs, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to say that the highways crews are out now. It's a lot like farming this year, Mr. Speaker. We had to wait for the highways to dry out, as the farmers had to wait for the drying of their fields in order to seed. The crews are out there now, Mr. Speaker. They're doing a very good job in handling the damage that has been caused on our highways.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to quote the last line from Mrs. Measner's letter. She wants to avoid what she is going through to happen to anyone else, and maybe if they would fix these roads and put a commitment in to rural Saskatchewan and the highways, we might actually save a life.

Mr. Speaker, obviously more and more claims are coming in because of this government's failure to properly maintain our highways. Susan Measner has now been told that she will have to pay her deductible; she will also have to pay a \$250 surcharge on her licence. Will the minister explain why people like Susan Measner are forced to pick up the tab because of this government's neglect of our highway system?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we can talk about neglect to our highways system, and when we have to back-fill for the federal government cuts in all kinds of programs, certainly we have to share in that. But I believe that the Highway department are doing a reasonable job.

The member knows very well, Mr. Speaker, that the weather has been bad this spring. We've had a long, cold winter. The farmers have not been able to get in their fields. Our highways crews have not been able to get on the roads neither. Last week our crews are on the roads. They're doing an exceptional job, and I'm very proud of the work they do.

What we are doing on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, is preparing our transportation system for the 21st century. We're not complaining. We'd like to complain but we can't complain. There's no great, huge amount of money at the end of the rainbow, and we have to look after federal decisions and

Conservative overspending.

But what we're doing, Mr. Speaker, to prepare for the 21st century, are partnerships, looking at new technologies. We're looking at planning the spending of our limited funds better, Mr. Speaker. We're looking at internal efficiencies, taking money from administration and putting it back into roads, Mr. Speaker. That's what we're doing on this side of the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Toth: — With leave, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just note that a group from Moosomin has just arrived in the Assembly, and they're here to observe the proceedings of the Assembly. And I'd like to ask the members to welcome 62 students and their teachers, Wendy Kindziarski, I hope I've got that right; Carolin St. Onge, and Kathleen Mohr to our proceedings this afternoon.

I trust they have an enjoyable time. I look forward to meeting with them later, so welcome, students. We'll see you later.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Before orders of the day, Mr. Speaker,

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

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — To ask for leave to move a motion to extend hours today. The text of the motion has been provided to both opposition parties.

Leave not granted.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Extended Hours

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I move, seconded by the member from Prince Albert Carlton:

That this Assembly, notwithstanding Rule 3(1) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, do observe a daily meeting time Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. until 10:30 p.m., with a recess from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. and from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., except on Fridays, when this Assembly shall meet from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., with a

recess from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., and ending upon prorogation of this session of the Legislative Assembly.

I so move.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I will ask all members to come to order when the Speaker is on . . . all members to come to order when the Speaker's on his feet. Order.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to raise a few questions about the motion that's been presented to this Assembly.

I think, Mr. Speaker, you would have to acknowledge that the opposition has played a solid and a sound role in addressing questions and Bills and legislation and estimates that have come before the Assembly. In fact I think we've been more than reasonable and more than accommodating.

I find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, that as of just last week the government just presented some 18 new Bills to the Assembly. And it would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that a government that is showing some responsibility and showing the willingness to work with all parties in the Assembly has all of a sudden decided that it isn't going to accept any more of the responsibility that it has contributed in the past and that it's going to change the rules. And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, they do have the ability because they outnumber the opposition members.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker — we've acknowledged it earlier on — that with the number of opposition members, the workload that is put on each member, with committees outside of the legislature session, the opposition members have been certainly doing their part in representing all the issues and representing the people across this province who voted for opposition members — somewhat more of the electorate than voted for the government in the last election.

Mr. Speaker, what I find challenging and what I find very interesting in this motion is the fact that the government is saying that the work hasn't proceeded well enough and that we haven't addressed the questions fairly; we haven't addressed estimates; we haven't addressed Bills. Mr. Speaker, take a look at the number of Bills that have been passed and where Royal Assent has been given. Take a look at the blues today. There isn't a lot on the blues left to discuss and debate in this Assembly, other than a number of private members' motions and Bills that are still sitting there waiting to be debated. And those could be brought up at any time.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, you will acknowledge, even at House leaders' meetings, that this party and the Liberal opposition have indicated we are more than willing to give at different sittings in the evening, or have additional sittings, to address some of the concerns and some of the debate.

Mr. Speaker, what I find interesting in this motion is that with the workload we have in front of us . . . and I think the Premier even showed that the other day. I'd indicated to the Government House Leader that there are two major pieces of legislation that would take the time of the Assembly. And the Government

House Leader I'm sure must have relayed that to his leader, because just yesterday the Premier of this province said that they would put the district services Act on hold, through consultation with SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association).

And I'm sure the Premier has already indicated, as he indicated yesterday, to the questions that we've raised over the past three weeks, that that piece of legislation, yes, maybe — as I believe I saw on the news last night — the Premier is saying maybe it is better to sit back and be more reasonable rather than just put a piece of legislation on the book that says we will demand . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — And so I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, there really is not a need for this motion. I believe the Premier has shown some leadership. I believe the Premier has shown leadership in this Assembly and has shown a willingness to cooperate and work along with the members in this Assembly.

Our caucus has indicated to the Government House Leader that we are willing to work to get the legislation through. We are willing to address the estimates. Unfortunately I believe the Premier is going to be away for a couple days. We have yet to have Executive Council brought before this Assembly, to debate Executive Council in this Assembly.

Now if that is a concern to the House Leader, why has the Premier and Executive Council not been brought forward in this Assembly to debate estimates in Executive Council before this time?

We've been discussing Finance. It's been a few minutes here and a few minutes there. Mr. Speaker, if you think back over the years and the discussion of estimates, the interesting thing, Mr. Speaker, on many occasions the minister of Finance might be here for 3, 4 hours at a time — not 15 to 20 minutes to an hour at a time. And then you may end up with maybe three full working days discussing Finance, when on occasions in other years we might have sat for two weeks discussing Finance or discussing Health issues or discussing Executive Council.

Mr. Speaker, our caucus has indicated we are more than willing to work around the parameters of this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, as well, if the government feels that all of a sudden it's important to adjourn the Assembly, why was the Assembly not called into session at February 1 instead of the end of February, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — And, Mr. Speaker, why was the budget presented at such a late date, Mr. Speaker — all of these things that opposition members have no control over. The government controls the agenda.

The government should know what they have for an agenda to bring to the Assembly. They should know how many Bills before they come to the Assembly — how many Bills, before they call the Assembly into session, they want to bring forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if I'm not mistaken, the government had indicated that they'd have about a hundred Bills that they would be bringing forward. As much as two weeks ago or three weeks ago at the most, it appeared that 70 to 80 Bills was going to be the maximum. And then as I indicated just the other day, we saw another 18 Bills laid on the order paper, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Government House Leader is being irresponsible in bringing an extended hours motion in when the opposition parties — our party and the Liberal Party — have already indicated that we are more than willing to work in extending hours to address the limited amount of Bills and government business before the Assembly that we have here.

Unless the government's afraid of the fact that there's going to be more questions in Highways than was anticipated, and maybe the minister is all of a sudden realizing that. Although he has a sound defence, Mr. Speaker, because of the fact that his department got cut back quite dramatically.

But, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the workload left in this Assembly, when you look at the effort that has been put forward by all opposition members and the line of questioning and the thought-provoking questions that have been brought forward, the fact that we've been more than willing to accommodate many pieces of legislation . . . we've also indicated to the government the areas of legislation that we feel are important, that would require some time to debate.

And the Premier's already pulled one of them or suggested that it's off the table, it's not up for debate any more, and they will work with the local governments to come to resolve, rather than putting forward the districts services Act. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that all the arguments are already out there for this Assembly to conduct itself in a proper . . . and a format that is conducive to all members, that allows members to not only do their job in the Assembly but also to do their job in their constituency.

And this extended hours motion, Mr. Speaker, is just an irresponsible move by a government that really didn't have a lot to work with and that hasn't offered a lot. Or are they afraid, Mr. Speaker, of the fact that the health issue is going to become a very contentious issue, and they want to adjourn the Assembly before people across this province finally realize the ramifications of the reductions in spending . . . or funding to district health boards. And when these boards begin to inform their constituency as to the cuts in services and beds and the other issues such as we've seen in Swift Current with regards to the Swift Current Care Home, or Kamsack with regards to the heavy care home, Mr. Speaker, is that the reasoning to try to extend the hours? So that this House is forced to adjourn before some of the other issues come to the forefront?

Mr. Speaker, I find it very offensive that a Government House Leader . . . and that the Premier of this province would even allow his House Leader to ram a motion through this Assembly when there has actually been a good working relationship between all members of the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I find it inappropriate that a Government House Leader should all of a sudden say to the opposition members, you've got to work

harder, because our members have already received their \$4,500 additional bonus, and the time was running out, and they don't want to sit a day longer now that they're going to have to pay for it out of their pocket.

(1100)

Mr. Speaker, we've worked for 28 days . . . The Conservative caucus has actually worked in this Assembly for 28 days without receiving \$1 in per diems. And the government members, who've accepted all of that funding, are saying, well we want to go on holidays now. We've got the money. We've got all that we can take out of it. Now it's time to go on holidays.

Mr. Speaker, I think our opposition has shown a responsibility that is not being exhibited today by the Government House Leader, by this Premier, and by the members across the floor. So I find it inappropriate that this motion is even introduced today when there has been, certainly, Mr. Speaker, there certainly has been an indication and an acknowledgement and a working agreement and relationship with our caucus and the government members, and I'm sure with the Liberal caucus as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I stand here today, and I cannot, I cannot, Mr. Speaker, vote in favour of this motion, in view of the fact, Mr. Speaker, I have already given my word that we will extend and are willing to work extra hours on days when there may not be . . . Our word is . . . and if my word doesn't mean anything, Mr. Speaker, then I'm sorry. I'm sorry that the Government House Leader can't accept the fact that my word doesn't mean anything. And I believe many members on this floor have indicated, they have given their word.

What we find, Mr. Speaker, is the Government House Leader's word really doesn't mean anything, and I find that very reprehensible, Mr. Speaker, so I will be voting against the motion.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join in with the Third Party House Leader, the member from Moosomin, and follow up on several of the comments and themes that he spoke on, the reason being the member from Moosomin is right on.

Let's look at what happened during this session, Mr. Speaker. Firstly, it was the official opposition who were asking for months that we have a shorter fall session so that we could get a certain amount of the government's business done late in the fall, when in fact many of the rural members of all caucuses were out of the field; they weren't putting their businesses and their livelihoods in any sort of a problem, risk, putting them at jeopardy. And it's really good to go with that fall sitting, Mr. Speaker . . . If you could just get these people to quit heckling for a moment so we could perhaps go on with the debate.

But, Mr. Speaker, when you take a look at the fall sitting, the benefits to the people of Saskatchewan — not to the New Democrats or the Conservatives or to the Liberals . . . but we are here as representatives. We're here representing the people of this province. And if in fact we can do their business,

because what we are is law makers, and if we can deal with the laws and the problems that affect our constituents and the people of Saskatchewan and if we can come together and deal with these laws and problems in a way and in a manner that in fact is efficient and well-working and brings out all the positive things for the people, that should be what we should be doing.

And that's what we were asking for, for a full year. In fact the party's been campaigning on it — let's have set sitting days; let's have fall sittings.

If they're afraid of a fall sitting, Mr. Speaker, what then is wrong with coming in immediately after the January 1 date, you know January 7. Do the government business. They know months in . . . and you and I both know, Mr. Speaker — you better than I; you've been in government for a long time — that in fact legislation is prepared months in advance. Issues comes through departments months in advance. It's . . . well hopefully it's well thought out; not of course all of it is. And that's why the rules of this House allow opposition parties to operate under the rules and have free-ranging debate. And you and I have had this discussion. I couldn't agree more with your view of how this legislature really and truly work.

The Speaker: — Order. I'm going to have to ask the hon. member for Wood River to not involve the Speaker in debate. It is highly inappropriate to involve the Speaker in debate and I'll simply ask that he observe that courtesy and continue his debate without involving the Speaker.

Mr. McPherson: — Yes of course, Mr. Speaker. I seem to have caught a bit of a cold here listening to the chill coming across the floor. However, Mr. Speaker, when we take a look at the benefits of the fall sitting, or in fact if they find this most inappropriate, for whatever reason a governing party would find it inappropriate, why not in early January?

When we take a look at the number of rural seats, of people that must have their farms and their occupations maintained, well kept, run efficiently, we're talking about mid-April, end of April, as a wrap-up. There would be absolutely nothing wrong with that time period, a set time period — January 1 to April 15, or whatever they so chose was the period of time to do this government business; there would be no problem. I think we could come in with a set budget day, a set throne speech, and a set ending date, and everything would work fine.

The question is, why doesn't it work fine? That's because this government, as the member from Moosomin, rightly so, spoke on, they've been bringing it up later and later. We have a budget that came in late. And I'll even help them out with one shot. I mean the Conservative governments of the past didn't even bring in a budget one year.

But in fact there has been some suggestions from the third party, our party, and even with the government, that in fact we should be looking at some of these things. Not to score political points; that's here nor there. At the end of the day it's for the people. That's why we do it. I mean that's why the members here do it. We're trying to represent the people of Saskatchewan. Now if they so choose to play politics, well that's, I guess, what we're dealing with right here today.

But the offer, the offer . . . being that we entered the session later than the opposition parties had hoped, there has been an offer. And it's been placed verbally by myself as the Official Opposition House Leader, and it's been in consultation with the MLA from Moosomin, the House Leader of the Third Party, and the Government House Leader, to make this place something different than what it was during the '80s. And we all know we don't want to get back to some of the tricks of two parties, the New Democrats and Tories, and the way that they used to go at loggerheads. Because the people didn't benefit.

So we're trying to say, well let's change this so that the bucks that the people are spending, the people that are supposed to matter in Saskatchewan, you know, are getting what they pay for. They don't want that sort of gamesmanship that we're seeing.

And so we were moving along and doing a very good job. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, and I don't want to involve you, but there's been a regularly scheduled meeting of House leaders once a week in which these kind of issues are raised. And as the House Leader of the Third Party has raised, this is catching us completely off guard.

Because when the government has said, listen, we've got this line-up of Bills that we've got to move through, Mr. Speaker, there's been time and time again when the MLA for Moosomin or myself says, well let's take a good look at this. And we'll see their list and say, you know, really what is the point of holding this up? Like let's not do politics. If there's a benefit to the people, then let's move this through.

And, Mr. Speaker, everyone in this House has seen on more than one occasion where quite a list of Bills have been gone through in a short time period. And what's surprising, what's surprising, is that I have been personally thanked by the Government House Leader for doing that.

So what's happening? This is the question that the MLA for Moosomin and myself as House leaders, are, you know, are pondering with today. What has transpired when we have said that yes, Mr. Government House Leader, we will do what is necessary to help you, you know, run this government efficiently?

Because I think by holding up some Bills or housekeeping Bills or things that are a benefit to Saskatchewan, those are things that people shouldn't be playing politics with — not a chance, not a chance. So we have no intent . . .

I'm going to speak for the third party because I'll have to say the MLA from Moosomin is being very easy to deal with, unlike now the Government House Leader.

But we have put these lists forward; we have helped move this process along and keep it speedy and keep it efficient. And you know what? Up until recently, things were just moving right along. It was really good.

But of course what this government made us believe, and I guess it was sometime late March, early April, that in fact we're working with 70 Bills this session. So as you know, what the

opposition parties must do and have to do is try and work a schedule out to what . . . how they're going to have the estimates come to the end, how we want to in fact work the Bills enough with the Government House Leader, with the government itself, with the Premier, so that we can ask some of the questions that don't become obvious through the media or through avenues that people of course should be concerned with, are concerned with, but don't have the answers readily available.

That would be, how many political patronage appointments does that man, the Premier, make, say in a given week? And who would they be to? And whose relatives are they? And how much are they paid? And what kind of benefit package do they have? And what are the severance packages? You know, and so it's through those sort of estimates that we find out some of this stuff.

And you know as politicians, and it has been this way for years, you have to decide what is and what isn't acceptable to even raise in the House, whether you have protection or not. Because there's always going to be an amount of patronage. There won't be the patronage that we saw in '80s under the Conservative government. We were promised that by the Premier. However, there was. There is no change. It's been raised time and time again — that in fact there's immense amounts of patronage.

So then what happens is that we have to determine what is an acceptable amount of things that they do and what isn't an acceptable amount to the public, to the people that paid that Premier's wages to try and run this province in the best way he can or should be.

And it's those sort of questions. And that's how we try and set up the schedule to arrive at a certain day. It's not that politicians should be looking and saying, no, she's day 61 and it's got to quit. That's what the . . . day 61 . . . that's what in fact . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . it's day 63, yes. It was day 61 just two days ago. That's what the Government House Leader told me would have to happen. When they hit day 61, they want to quit.

Well you know, I wasn't sure how to handle it, so I phoned out to some of the people out in my area, and I said, why would you elect a person who said, you know on a certain day, regardless of the business before you, I've reached what I think is the day to quit. Well you don't. Of course you don't.

I mean, Mr. Speaker, I remember, I remember in 1992 and I guess we only had one Bill left, the retroactive legislation against the good farmers, the farmers of this province, the people who helped build this province for years, the people who are in need of, not government aid, but government understanding, and they had a government program at the time — the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program — and yet that one program and that one piece of legislation, we sat on that one Bill, I guess it was the month of June, July, and I believe it was three weeks of August. On one piece of legislation.

And that happened, that happened, because the people of this province said, you know, it's just too important. It's just too

important to us not to have this dealt with. And that debate, I recall, was headed up by the then official opposition — the Conservative Party — they did a job whether . . . of course I don't agree with the Conservative Party. Of course I don't. And I don't believe in their philosophies. I believe in some of the things they try and do. And I believe in that one thing was a good thing because they were fighting for the people.

(1115)

And you know, when you take all the politics aside, at the end of the day as long as you're fighting for the people, you're fighting for the right causes, regardless of your philosophy, your ideology. You're fighting for the right causes when you're fighting for the people. So I gave them that credit.

But did we see this kind of legislation early on day 63? Well no we didn't. The member from Cypress Hills . . . it was much later than that, was it not. Sure it was. So it does make one wonder why in fact this is happening here today.

And the points that I made about this House being offered by the Official Opposition House Leader, and the Third Party House Leader, to be well run, well . . . efficient, moving Bills through, moving estimates through, and that has worked up until this date that the Government House Leader — I think it was the Premier — felt, no we've got to be cruel people now; the people of Saskatchewan don't matter any more; we're into politics. And being around here for whatever he's been around here . . . 40, 45 years, Mr. Premier, that you've been around here? Maybe not quite that long; it just seems that long though, Mr. Speaker. In fact I think he forced upon the Government House Leader, a certain date.

And it was unfairly . . . I think they are being . . . I think he's being unfair to the Government House Leader by handcuffing him that way; by being a Premier that so chooses to put an end to it all. Why? Is he embarrassed of something? Well he should be and I suspect he is.

However these kind of offers have been out there. This sort of well-run House has been happening. Things have been moving efficiently, fast, and with in mind that it was going to be a 70-Bill session. We are at Bill No. . . . what are we at for Bills today? Who would know this?

An Hon. Member: — I think it's 106.

Mr. McPherson: — One hundred and six Bills today.

An Hon. Member: — One hundred and sixteen.

Mr. McPherson: — One hundred and sixteen? We went from 70 Bills, where they're thinking of a 70-day session, to 116, and now they're saying 61 days is enough. Well that's quite a change. What does that tell you about a government?

That tells me that here's some people that think that it's maybe just time to be . . . what would be the answer, Mr. Premier? How would you have said it years and years ago when you were a young MLA? Cruel? Draconian?

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

Mr. Johnson: — With leave, to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Johnson: — Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery today is 31 grade 12 students from Shellbrook. They are accompanied this morning by their teacher, Colin Neudorf. They are here to observe what takes place in the legislature and tour the Legislative Building. I expect to meet with them for answering questions sometime around 12:15 or thereabouts. And I would like everyone in the legislature to welcome these guests to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Extended Hours

(continued)

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I do have to wonder . . . I'm trying to pick up where I left off and not pay attention to some of the heckling of some of the people that would just as soon ram the business of the people, the people's business, past us. Right. It was at 116 Bills instead of 70.

Let's talk about Bills just for a moment. Who's got *Votes and Proceedings*? Do we have a copy of this, what happened today? It doesn't matter because I know. I went through the whites, Mr. Speaker. I noticed. I noticed that this morning we still had one more Bill introduced. Now this is a government that is saying, you know, we have done enough work for the people of the . . . well I'm not going to search for it now. We've done enough work for the people of the province. Today's our cut-off.

We've went from 70 to 116 Bills, and they're saying we've got to have extended hours, that the business is all backed up. But you know what? They're still bringing in Bills. This doesn't make sense to anybody. It doesn't make sense to the public. It sure doesn't make sense to the MLAs that have been around and dealing with this kind of stuff for years.

I see the Premier shaking his head. You know, Mr. Premier, I hope you get up and tell us. I hope you get up so the cameras are on you and explain to the people of the province why you are playing such a rotten, silly game today because that is what . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Now I'm going to remind the hon. member that the rules of the Assembly require debate to be conducted through the Chair, and I will ask that he cooperate with that rule.

Mr. McPherson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will put it through the Chair, but of course the intent and the clear statement is the same. You . . . or I should say the government, has put forward a lot of gamesmanship here. They're still

bringing in Bills. They have started to ram the Bills at us, and why? They're trying to have people believe that there is this big Service Districts Act coming forward and that we would have to get a bunch of this work done because this Service Districts Act would take up too much of our time.

So I sat back and thought well, what would be in the Premier's mind. And you know what? What I come up with over a week ago . . . I guess I should have and could have drafted the news release for the Premier that he put out yesterday. As I said to my caucus and I think some of the members of the Conservative party and others who were phoning in wondering what was going on, I said The Service Districts Act is going to be pulled. This is very clear to everybody. Nobody should be surprised. It's going to get pulled because the government is trying to make an argument that this big workload is here, and you will want to do this little workload, but be very focused.

Mr. Premier, who do you think you're fooling. I mean nobody's buying those old political tricks. All we want to do is speak up for the people of this province on the issues that are very important to them. Now let's talk about what happened even . . . if you would just bring that Premier under control, I'd be able to think about what I'm trying to say here, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let's talk about what happened only a few days ago. A few days ago when I first found out that they were threatening to ram us and jam us with legislation, with extended hours, saying that you guys don't have enough people, the Conservatives don't have enough people, to carry the day and our huge majority will just overrule . . . Is that running a government?

We're going to ask you back to that open and accountable government that the Premier spoke of a while ago because I think this is what really we're dealing with. That doesn't sound open and accountable to me.

But you know, initially when it was posed to us that in fact we would have to have this severe gamesmanship placed upon us, I made an offer. It's best that it gets in public record. I made an offer to the Government House Leader and to the Premier, the man who's sitting over there laughing, looking foolish, when he should be dealing with people's business. I put an offer to them.

I said listen, I think what we want to do, I think what we want to do, is think about what Bills it is that you've brought forward in that last batch, that last big basket of Bills they dumped on the people of Saskatchewan . . . Because I mean, let's be honest; they're not placing that workload on us, they're placing it on the people of Saskatchewan. We do the work, we're the representatives to those people, but they're really doing it to the people; they're not doing it to us. I mean so be it. As the middle guy, we will carry the message forward yet.

But I met with the member from Moosomin and I told him some of the gamesmanship that was happening. So I said, I'm going to make a deal with the Government House Leader. And this might be of interest to some of the back-benchers, and perhaps that's why the Premier just won't quit his heckling and won't sit back and be quiet and listen. I don't think he wants his own government members to hear this. But I said listen, I'm going to put forward a plan to help you out, work something

out, but the Bills that are still of immense concern to the people aren't on the cards. But this supposed workload that has been handed to us, well we'll deal with that — we'll deal with that.

And we've had members sitting up through the night, and we've had staff working through the night, and we've got a lot of people that are helping us that aren't staff and aren't members, but people that we've asked to prepare things for us, look at things, all throughout this province, to deal with this gamesmanship, and they have done that.

And so out of that came a list of Bills that they are throwing at us, and I believe it was 23 Bills. And I told the Premier, right there, I told the Premier and the Government House Leader that in fact in my view I could perhaps talk to my colleagues, the critics of these areas, who I find out what is their view of the Bills and how are the people of Saskatchewan . . . what are they telling them about the Bills and the estimates in their critic areas.

So this offer was put to them. Twenty-three Bills, perhaps being able to be moved up to 25, 26 Bills, but they still . . . well no, no, no, no, no, no. It's not the Bills that are the problem. That's what the Government House Leader . . . the Bills aren't the problem. Oh really? What is the problem, I asked. Oh, it's the estimates; the estimates are the problem.

Well I said, I can take care of that also. Give me a few moments. I talked with some of my colleagues. I have talked to some of my colleagues. Listen, are you guys holding . . . I shouldn't say guys; I'm sorry about that. Are you members holding up the government business? Because I don't think that's right. And we've got a well-working arrangement between the three House leaders to not do that; to only do what's right for the people of this province.

And some of the members said, you know, I haven't been doing politics, but I've asked several questions in this department or several in that, and you know really if . . . in good conscience, I could say I could probably wrap this or that up.

And I thought that was great. I mean that's concerned people on this side of the House that are really and truly saying — that are really and truly saying — that we've done a respectable and a good amount of work for the people in these estimates.

And this in fact is where you find out certain things about what the government's intention is to do with the amount of money that they are asking the Legislative Assembly for, what they so chose to spend in certain departments, on what, on what programs, or the new programs.

And I said listen, I think we can come up . . . and we're talking about this week, right here, ending at 1:30 this afternoon, okay. This is the week where I said, all right, 23 Bills, maybe 25 to 26 on the outside for this week that will be voted off, along with four or five estimates.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have to ask anyone on the government side — that kind of offer would have never come in this Assembly before. I don't imagine that . . . No Opposition House Leader has ever made that offer to play ball, so to speak, to that extent.

I expected that they would thank me and really appreciate that somebody would want to move along the workings of the House. But instead, to my surprise, they got angry. Well why did they get angry?

An Hon. Member: — Well I'm not angry at all.

Mr. McPherson: — Well if you're not angry, Mr. Premier, why don't you just sit back and listen for a while and shut up.

The Speaker: — Order. Now all hon. members know that the language which is appropriate to use in the Assembly reflects respect and I think — order — and I think the hon. member for Wood River recognized that his last phrase was not parliamentary. And I'll ask him to withdraw the unparliamentary remark, and apologize to the House, and then proceed.

Mr. McPherson: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, it was unparliamentary. I'll withdraw that remark, and I will rely on the Speaker to control that behaviour.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Now the member for Wood River knows it is inappropriate to be commenting on the conduct of the Speaker, and the Speaker has asked him to withdraw the remark and to apologize to the House. I'll ask the hon. member for Wood River to do just that and then to proceed with his remarks.

Mr. McPherson: — I withdraw the remark and apologize to the House.

So, Mr. Speaker, where are we at with, in fact, this motion? It's one where we tried to arrange . . . have a workable arrangement, where the people's business would be well represented, that the business of the House wouldn't be held up. But they keep introducing Bills.

I mean you got, Mr. Speaker, you got to view the picture from the opposition's point of view, where the Bills just keep coming every day; they keep coming. And yet they're saying, you people are holding it up, and there's a workload.

So this, I guess from a House Leader's point, very rich and handsome package was offered up, but instead of being accepted, as I said, it was rejected — and rejected with anger. Makes everyone somewhat surprised. Why are they angry?

(1130)

The only reason that they could be angry . . . What would make the Premier angry on that offer? Could it be, could it be, Mr. Speaker — and then it showed up on the blues — that it's tough for a government to come in with a motion for extended hours to ram and to jam the Bills through this Assembly; to try and get 10 members and 5 Conservative members . . . they're hoping that they can wear us down so that we won't thoroughly check the details of each and every Bill. That's what the game is that's happening here right now. And that's why it was so hard for them to accept that package, because then they can't go to the media and say, you know why we had to have this motion come forward? Because they're being an unruly bunch. Well

there was nothing unruly about it and I think everyone in this Assembly here today knows that that wasn't the game. It had nothing to do with unruly. Did not at all.

The MLA from Moosomin hit it on the head. You see, we had to figure out what is the problem then. So they can't justify why they would ram legislation and ram hours at us and do dirty, cheap politics . . . is the way the people of the province view this. There must be an issue coming up. That's the only thing we can think of.

Well what issues would be coming up that would really be of a concern to this group? And they put forward an agenda to myself, they put forward an agenda to myself, with some time lines put to it. So let's talk about these time lines. And I want the people who are watching out there today on TV or somebody who may ever read the *Hansard* on today to know exactly what's happening — to know exactly what's happened.

They have decided that certain Bills only deserve a few hours of attention. And it's tough to give them only a few hours of attention, and I'll tell you why. It wasn't so many nights ago . . . how many nights ago were you at Central Butte, Mr. Member from Arm River?

An Hon. Member: — A week ago Wednesday.

Mr. McPherson: — A week ago Wednesday — health care rally, Central Butte.

An Hon. Member: — Over 600 people.

Mr. McPherson: — Over 600 people. The member from Arm River and the member from Thunder Creek who were both there on behalf of the official opposition and doing a fine, fine job and listening to what the concerns of the people had to say out there, they're saying 600 people.

Canora. There was what, 4 or 500 people in Canora? A lot. And what we're starting to see, and the reason why on a daily basis . . . let's take today for an example — how many health care issues were up? The full front block . . . our question period time dealing with health care issues that the people of this province are asking us to deal with — full front block; three different issues just today alone. That happens almost every day. We're on day 63 and it's just been one session of health care.

That's really what's happening, is that they are bringing forward some health care Bills that are so Draconian, and they know at this point that the people of this province are not fully aware of how backwards, of how detrimental, of how overpowering these Bills are. And they don't want them to find out.

Trouble is, the people do know. These people aren't in touch. They're not talking to anyone out there, especially in the rural areas. That's why they think that nobody knows. And if we only given them a few hours, then it's okay.

But that's not okay. You remember, Mr. Member that's heckling again — the member that is heckling severely again would remember that in the summer of 1992 one Bill lasted two

months and three weeks — one Bill.

Well what's happening here is that the offer made by the Government House Leader, the offer made by the Government House Leader, was to bring in four Bills dealing with . . . health-related Bills. They were to get, I think it was two hours and 30 minutes of time to do four Bills. That's what the offer was. Just so everyone's clear, just so it's publicly clear — the House Leader can wince all he wants. But if you want to play these kind of games, then we'll let the people know exactly what's happened up to this point. Two hours, 30 . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Now you've been listening to the hon. member for Wood River make his remarks, and I find it interruptive that there are one or two members who are making consistent and constant remarks, sometimes shouting from across the floor. And I will ask all hon. members to show respect to the institution and to allow the debate to continue in an orderly manner.

Mr. McPherson: — I thank you, Mr. Speaker. They're difficult.

Mr. Speaker, the deal that was put forward . . . their deal, not mine. My deal wasn't acceptable to them because they couldn't have that much movement. They couldn't have those number of Bills passing through because they couldn't then justify this kind of a game.

But two and a half hours, Mr. Speaker, to do four Bills that have such an effect on the people of this province? No one, no one over there that knows those were the kind of games being played . . . The back-benchers wouldn't accept that. I see a lot of back-benchers who are not aware of these kind of deals that were offered to us.

Now you tell me, is that what it's all about? How, Mr. Speaker, does that sound open and accountable? If it is, I wish somebody would make it very clear to the people that we represent that somehow it is open and accountable to allow 15, 20 minutes per Bill to move from second reading, where in fact we have an opportunity to get up and talk about the feelings of the people of the province, the situations that the sick and the elderly find themselves in, the situations that those people that can't receive health care and have to be brought up on the floor of the Assembly day after day . . .

Whether it's Mrs. Fitzpatrick of Eatonia receiving gangrene in her leg because she was moved out of the hospital before being taken care of; or Julie Walker was another one we raised — the lady who laid in the hospital in Saskatoon with a broken leg for a week; nobody to fix it. These are the kind of people that would be very concerned about what's happening with these sort of health Bills.

And to have 15 to 20 minutes for 10 and 5, 15 people, to speak on, to say what they're hearing in their constituencies and what they're hearing in their critic areas and what they're hearing all throughout this province about where health care is going, that is unacceptable. And everyone here knows that is unacceptable.

When I made that claim to the Government House Leader, he

said it doesn't matter what you find acceptable. You will accept what we say or we will bring in extended hours and we will force this upon you.

You see, Mr. Speaker, what made it worse was that not only did they say that in fact we couldn't give speeches on the severity of the health Bills that were coming forward — not only could we not do that — but then the Bill moves from second reading to Committee of the Whole stage.

We were then told, you have two shots at that, and that will happen on Wednesday and that will happen on Thursday. And you have, you have, I think it was two or three hours on Wednesday and maybe a couple on Thursday to have all of the amendments and all of the clauses and all of the concerns in Committee of the Whole where you're dealing with the fine details of a Bill dealt with.

And if you don't agree to that, same story — extended hours, ram this, ram that, gamesmanship, political gamesmanship. We can all play that. I just don't think it's the right way to go. I don't think it had to be the right way go — that way to go. That's what was offered.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there isn't one member over there that would have found that acceptable had they been in opposition and had they been to some of the health rallies such as the one that the member from Arm River and myself were at the other day in Swift Current, where yet another . . . Oh, and we can't forget about the personal care home that was shut down in Regina here. Martin Luther?

An Hon. Member: — Yes, the Martin Luther . . .

Mr. McPherson: — Yes, Martin Luther care home. This is happening all over the province. And I'm going to get back to that in a moment.

But this was happening all over the province. And in Swift Current — the member from Arm River and myself were out there — what did we see? I guess there was about 50 people, mostly the people that are in need of the service. Because there were several, several wheelchairs, elderly people in wheelchairs. They're closing down a 70-bed care home, and the reason is funding. It's not that the people out there want to . . .

An Hon. Member: — All very afraid, too.

Mr. McPherson: — Oh, as the member from Thunder Creek just mentioned — all very afraid. Yes, we got to talk about that. Because you know, I walked up to the line and here's a lot of elderly people and some of the care-givers, who really from their heart, are there for all the right reasons — I wish others were — all for the right reasons, carrying placards: where will we go; who will look after us? These are the kind of things that we were looking at.

And I had this elderly lady, I don't know, she'd be 80-or-so years old, come up and she asked the member from Arm River and myself if in fact we would carry placards because nobody from the government . . . The member way back there in the far

corner who was supposed to represent them wasn't at a rally only days before that; wasn't there to walk with the people that supposedly he represents. So she asked us, would we please, would we please carry these placards and try and impress upon the government, impress upon the Premier, why it is so important that they not close down any more care homes, that they not close down any more nursing home beds.

And by not playing political games but by actually trying to find a solution, the member from Arm River and I of course put the placards on and we marched with them for a while and we discussed . . . And as the member from Thunder Creek . . . and he's heard it time and time again in his own riding and in the community where his constituency office is — people are afraid. People are terribly afraid of what is happening.

And so we talked to every one of the people in that protest — every one. Nobody was missed.

An Hon. Member: — The news coverage was exceptional.

Mr. McPherson: — Oh, and yes, exactly, the news coverage was immense in that corner of the province. But what we were able to achieve — through a little bit of negotiation, the member from Arm River was able to get a process going. While I was out talking to people on the sidewalk, he took it upon himself to go in and have a chat with some of the people who the government often looks to blame. They're saying, well it's the district boards; you know how we operate — we can only fund so much . . . and the federal government, federal government, federal government, federal government. That's the song here.

And a meeting was arranged and we helped, the member from Arm River and myself, helped get some of the people in the wheelchairs actually down into a basement room — it wasn't a boardroom but it was some sort of a meeting room . . .

An Hon. Member: — Conference room.

(1145)

Mr. McPherson: — Conference room. And we got the two sides talking. But you know, what became clear right away was that they all wanted the same thing. They all want to not have waiting-lists. They all want to have safe and reliable health care for their sick and their elderly. They all wanted these things.

But they said, you know what? If the government doesn't give us the money, it's no go. You people, meaning the member from Arm River and myself . . . he's the deputy Health critic and that's why we were there, to discuss the seriousness of the health situation in this province. But they asked us both — and I'm talking board members and the people that need the care — asked us, would you please go back and try and impress upon the Premier in whatever fashion you can to please fund health care, to please fund senior care, to please take of the people of this province, the pioneers, the people that built this province. Please take care of them.

So of course we came back in. We came back in just to — that

day — to try and impress upon them the seriousness. When you actually look into the eyes of some of the elderly people and see the fear, I tell you it is serious . . .

An Hon. Member: — Some of us think it's a holocaust, a health care holocaust.

Mr. McPherson: — Well as the member from Thunder Creek mentioned and the term was used that day: health care should not have become a holocaust. It's just that severe and it's just that scary and it's sad. It is really sad. And that's where this is all going.

Mr. Speaker, they're just not being fair to the people. They can ram us with the hours and they can play all the games. This isn't fair. It isn't fair to those people.

Mr. Member, how many people were in wheelchairs the other day that we helped down those stairs?

An Hon. Member: — Ten or twelve.

Mr. McPherson: — Ten or twelve elderly people in wheelchairs? I want to ask the Premier — if he ever shows up — does he find that's fair? I don't know. He shouldn't. He surely shouldn't.

But when you take a look at what's happening and why this debate is becoming such a heated debate and why the government is now panicking . . . You know what this motion is? This is panic. And why are they panicking? Because the rallies are starting to build.

They had tried a little trick here. Back when health care reform was first introduced, they slammed the door shut, hard, on 52 hospitals. Of course there were rallies around the province. And I touched on this in question period so I won't dwell on it, but we all recall how heated the debate was. We all recall how heated the debate was.

And so they knew they had made a mistake in taking on so much of Saskatchewan, so much of rural Saskatchewan, with one blow. They thought it would be, you know, a little bit of anger, short lived, and closure put to it. Well the only closure was to the hospitals.

They of course tried to appease some of the people by . . . I recall a meeting I was at. In fact it was in the community of Mankota. The hall was completely filled. People . . . I just recall it now, Mr. Speaker, that all around, I don't think you could have squeezed a small child in that hall, and it was a big hall. And when they wanted me to come up to the front and speak . . .

On the way there that day I had stopped in the community of Ponteix, another community that had tried to get a safe and reliable health care system to remain, to be restored in their community, by taking the government to court. But I had stopped to look at their facility and see what their concern was. And their concern was that there was a SaskTel phone, coin-operated phone, bolted right near the front door of that hospital.

And if you recall that day, I had taken some pictures with one of these cameras that give you the picture right away. And I took them to Mankota. And you could have heard a pin drop when I held those pictures up and passed them around the hall and talked about the two-bit health care that Saskatchewan is getting.

And there was so much anger and frustration, and the government realized then that they had made such a mistake, such a mistake, that they didn't want to relive it. So what you've seen the government do, and try to do, then is take communities on one at a time . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Exactly.

As the member from Thunder Creek has spoke on different times in this Assembly, and rightfully so, as he's watched it, as many of us have, communities being pitted against one another, trying to have communities say, you know, if I do this for the government, or if I hush up, then things will be okay now. And so they were taking on communities one at a time. And while this was all happening, of course, they wanted to make sure the debate was not on whether or not people had a safe and reliable health care system. They want to talk about something else.

And that's how the member from . . . where was she from, Lakeview? — the Minister of Health at that time — tried to make the whole health district, the board elections, to be the issue, so that people weren't out there talking about well, do we have health care? Does my grandmother or my grandfather or aunts or uncles or whatever have a place to be in their senior years? No, she didn't want to talk about that because we know the answer. And that answer is pretty hard hitting on a government that chastised the Grant Devine Conservative government for so long for having no heart.

But in fact it was this government, it was this NDP government, that are playing the cruel and malicious games with the elderly and the sick. So she had to create a smokescreen. She created a smokescreen in health. She made sure it was always a health issue but not a do-you-have-health issue. It was smoke and mirrors. Who's going to run health? How are we going to fund health? Remember some of those arguments, government members, where in fact we moved from the union hospital district Act where communities could requisition, local governments could requisition, funds under that Act to support health care facilities within their union hospital district?

The government had to ensure that would come to an end. They could not have — they could not have — communities relive any fights. They could not allow communities to have access to funds so that they could demand health care in their communities. They had to put an end to it. And instead they brought in the — what was that Act? — hospital districts Act.

This Act, this all-encompassing Act, which that too is almost fully run by regulations which nobody gets to see until the . . . because it's done in cabinet. It's done by a small group of rank politicians in a room who are doing things for political reasons — right? — political reasons rather than for the reasons of the people of this province. That's the kind of games that were played: smokescreens; health board elections; who should be

on; how many should be on; how many should be elected; how do we get your guy on. It was a joke. It really and truly was a joke, if in fact you hold it up alongside the real issue of do you have health care. And they know what the feelings are of the people of this province. That's how we've moved now along to where we're at today, where this government is going to do what it feels it must do to take on one community at a time, and hopefully the . . .

And do you know, Mr. Speaker, if it weren't for opposition, they would . . . their little trick would work. Because what's happening, the people have to rally in Canora. The people up there do not know what's happening in Swift Current. And the people of Swift Current don't know what's happening in Eaton. And the people in Eaton don't know what's happening . . . pick a community.

And that's what's happening. They divide the communities in rural Saskatchewan and they conquer them one at a time. And the Finance minister, who has finally joined us, is able to call all the shots — able to call all the shots in health care.

And when I looked into the eyes of the people in the wheelchairs in Swift Current the other day, and I really thought, you know, is what the Finance minister trying to accomplish by looking good, is that more important, is that more important, than what that person needs in that wheelchair?

And as hard it is to say, you know it can't be a funding issue, because at the end of the day we have got to do something for those pioneers. These are the pioneers who for years, built this province. They started with nothing, Mr. Speaker. They started with no hospitals or nursing homes or programs or drug plans or highways or schools. They started with nothing. And these were supposedly the tougher times.

But they weren't doing politics, you see. What they were doing was trying to work as communities and trying to work as peoples for the betterment of society as a whole. With that attitude, with that attitude, they were able to build infrastructures. They were able to build a hospital system that was second to none.

And of course, of course your predecessors, and you use the name . . . You know what? I was going to say too often; that isn't what I want to say. I want to say, lightly. Because they throw out Tommy Douglas just like, if I say Tommy Douglas I'll be saved.

The fact of the matter is governments, regardless of political stripe, right across Canada, were putting together highway infrastructures because it was the people, the people, who decided that if we all worked together we will have something that is good for all of us.

So during those tougher years, the years that they thought that it couldn't be done, I'm sure that there was many meetings held in kitchens or out in some rural halls or schools or wherever they're held . . . that we just couldn't do it.

But as the member from Thunder Creek said, that is how dreams are built. And they were able to put it all together in those tough years. They were able to build a highway

infrastructure, they were able to build nursing homes and schools, and most importantly, I guess to everyone in the province, they were able to build a health care system. Because the people were second to none.

And they built integrity, honesty, and they built a dream. But now what we see is that dream coming to an end. When I look into the eyes, as the member from Arm River did, that dream's coming to an end for some people. They have no idea. When you lock the door, where do they go? And it's fine for the government to say oh, but you have to trust us — in question period — trust us. Nobody is going to be needing a bed.

But what he wants to say, and he did slip up some months ago and say, because attrition will take care of a lot of our concerns. Shameful, shameful. It's scandalous. It's rude. It's really disappointing is what it is, that a government would go to such lengths. And if they think that Tommy Douglas is not looking down upon them with a big frown, they are mistaken; and everyone else, not just Tommy Douglas — all the people of all political stripes that worked so hard to build a system that people could rely on in their later years — are looking down upon them and frowning; they're mistaken. So this is where and why we've come to this point in time.

We've got a government that got caught. They slipped up a few years ago when they brought in health care reform. They're ashamed; the fight was intense; they don't want to do it again; they know that they're going to deal with the wrath of the people of this province. And that's why you have deals where you've got 15 minutes per speech.

You got, I think it was another five and a half hours for four Bills with lots of clauses with almost everything in regulations to deal with in that time period.

Well you know, Mr. Speaker, if everyone in this province knew what had transpired in these last weeks, they would be more than wounded by this government. They would be ashamed to have said we were ever part of putting them into power. That's what's really going to happen. It'll be taken care of. You just go right ahead and you ram through legislation and you forget about the people that sent you here, and they will reel you in at the appropriate time.

So there is how we got to this stage. The offer was too good; couldn't be accepted because then they couldn't justify the dirty games that they were about to play.

When we look at some of the motions that . . . well look at the motion that come forward today — extended hours. I see nowhere in the motion does it say that the Bills are not going to keep coming in.

And they know full well when we get a Bill . . . and some of them are immense and the clauses are detailed, and you must have legal people view these things. You must have players in the industry, people in the industry, the people of Saskatchewan, view them to see how it's going to affect them and impact on their lives. That takes time to get that out and get that dealt with. And that's the role of opposition.

(1200)

But if in fact you're sitting in here for 10 hours or 12 hours or 16 hours a day, they know it can't be done. And is that good for the people of Saskatchewan? Is it? I would think not. I don't think that would be good at all.

I don't know why else they would be doing it if it weren't for solely political reasons. Once again they've made a mistake as they did in GRIP. GRIP debate, what else, Mr. Member from Cypress Hills? You've been around here for a term. There was judges; there was Co-op upgrader; there was . . . How long could the list go on for? Quite a while.

An Hon. Member: — An hour or two.

Mr. McPherson: — An hour or two according to him, and I suspect it will. I fully suspect it will. If I have the opportunity to sit down today without the House adjourning, it will.

Mr. Speaker, I think what has to happen — and this is not the way to resolve what has to happen — I think that the opposition . . . or the Government House Leader has perhaps got to find a solution to what he created. He created this little monster without the support of his own back-benchers, and I know that. And I know that not all of his cabinet knew what his little game was.

And I think he's got to try — and he's got a while to go ahead and do it; he's got an hour and a half — to arrive at a solution with his own government as to what would be a reasonable way to handle this for the people of this province.

And I put that challenge — he's sitting there listening — I put that challenge to him. Why doesn't he get up and go and tell these people how he messed up, and how he's now going to fix it up by, firstly, withdrawing such Draconian behaviour . . . motions. And secondly by doing what is right for the people — accepting an offer that was the most generous . . . There is no question it was the most generous offer put forward by an Opposition House Leader, I suspect, since 1907, and coming forward with a solution. He's got time right now to go and start to work on it, and I'll keep one eye on him as we're talking about this, Mr. Speaker.

One other problem that we're having, and this is why one has to wonder why they would bring in these extended hours . . . I think I've set out exactly where the health care problem is and why they are in such trouble, and why they are running like . . . well they're running scared.

I now have to look at a few other things that are of concern. And they're of concern because this is a government . . . And you know very well that I could do this, Mr. Speaker. I could go back and get all the 1991 election campaign promise and everything that was said from 1986 to 1991 about how great thou are, but the fact of the matter is, what they said and what they're doing completely goes in different directions.

But the one I want to talk about today with them is whether or not they truly are open and accountable. Because open and accountable, to me, tells me that things are going to be upfront.

We'll know what's coming and what . . . you know, basically to cut to the chase, it's to do things for all the right reasons, for the people. And that's what I . . . I just touched on it earlier about whether or not we're getting our answers.

Now something of interest happened here the other evening and it had to do with the Finance minister when she was giving her answers to the Finance critic of the official opposition, the MLA for Thunder Creek. He was trying to get answers out of her, and she has done what I have watched her do since she was elected in October 1991, is refuse to answer anything.

In fact what she does do is try and be insulting and rude and vicious, and it seems to be getting her nowhere. She's finding that she doesn't have a lot of support for her actions, and we would rather she not do that.

I recall even in the last session when they jammed it right at the end, where in fact the last order of the day was that Finance minister and myself in a discussion about some of her finance tactics in a Bill. And as everyone would recall, how vicious and rude she was. I don't think it did any good for the people of the province. Certainly didn't do anything for me, I'll tell you that.

But it's still happening. Her officials, from my point of view when I'm sitting and watching her to receive the question from my colleagues, her officials lean forward and they want to give her an answer. And she's sitting there and she's doing nothing. She waits till the question is put, she waits till the question is put, and she stands up and she says something that's very hurtful and vicious, and that's her response to what people in the province have asked us to put forward to her.

And I don't think, I don't think, that that's fair. I don't think that that's what this is all about. I don't think that's what it's all about.

So because of this mean and vicious . . .

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

Mr. Goohsen: — Mr. Speaker, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like very much to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly today, a group of 18 young people who have come from the Alameda School to visit with us here in the Assembly this afternoon — I guess it's still this morning. No, it's 5 minutes after 12; you're in the afternoon.

Well welcome to the Assembly. We want to have you enjoy your stay here today and watch the debate and the proceedings. We hope that along with all of the other school children that have come into the Assembly over the past few weeks with the Assembly sitting into late May and early June, an awful lot of good opportunity arises for young people to come in from all over the province. And we're certainly glad that you folks have come in from out your direction in the south-east part of the

province.

So on behalf of your member, who has to be out at another meeting just now, I'm very happy to take the time today to welcome you here. And I'm going to ask that Reed Gibson and Penny Baldwin take a bow. I guess they're the chaperons that are with the group today. We're glad that you took time from your lives to do this for your students and your community. I think you will go home more enriched about how our province works.

We certainly hope that you enjoy the debate and I'll ask all members to please join with me as we welcome you here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Extended Hours (continued)

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So to pick up where I left off in discussing the behaviour of the Finance minister and the problem it puts, firstly, the official opposition and the third party in, is whether or not, Mr. Speaker, we're getting the answers to the questions that the people of this province are spending a good chunk of money to have us in here and put forward. And we say not.

To speed this process up, not my speech of course, but to speed the legislative process up a few years ago, there was arrangements made back then that in fact to sort of take the politics out of this place, we would then put forward, we would then put forward some — and it was the official opposition of the day, the Conservative Party, and I think it was a great idea and that's why this tradition has continued — put forward a package of questions, with the more political hard-hitting questions in it. So that if in fact we wanted to put a better light on what happens in this House, ask the things that a lot of people would find perhaps more distasteful, ask them in a written form. And we would receive the answer in a written form and make that judgement, as I had said earlier today, as to whether or not politics need to play out; whether or not there is an unacceptable limit, wherever that be.

I guess in each of our own hearts and minds we would set that — a line where patronage politics and gamesmanship by that guy, the Government House Leader, would be acceptable or unacceptable.

But now when the questions get put each and every year, they don't change. And they have known for what, Mr. Third Party House Leader — how long have they had the global questions? Three years they've been doing this? — three, four years?

An Hon. Member: — About five years.

Mr. McPherson: — Five years? Oh, five years. So now, what I saw the other day . . . Five years we've been doing this.

An Hon. Member: — It's the traditional Conservative way of

getting the business done.

Mr. McPherson: — Oh, I don't even mind that kind of heckling, because it's funny.

But what happened here the other day, we have had five years of these questions, and the departments . . . Let's be serious. These things are set up in a computer. It's a fill-in-the-blank. They know when the minister from . . . the Economic Development minister from Elphinstone takes one of his several, many trips around the world to benefit, well some businesses, and especially his friends.

An Hon. Member: — I think you call them junkets.

Mr. McPherson: — Junkets.

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — With leave, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Cline: — I can't tell you how much I regret having to interrupt the member from Wood River, Mr. Speaker, but I want to introduce to you and through you to other members here in the Assembly, a group of 66 students from Henry Kelsey School in my constituency in Saskatoon. This is a French immersion school.

The students are accompanied by their teachers, Mme. McCrea and M. Cloutier, as well as several parents from Henry Kelsey School which has a very good community association too, I might add, Mr. Speaker. And they recently opened a very nice park in our community right beside the school. And some of the people here have done a lot of work in that regard.

I met with the students recently at the school and they had some questions for me which I answered. And we will be getting together after the students leave here, to have some drinks and maybe even a bit of ice cream, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — And he's paying.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — But no ice cream for the members, Mr. Speaker.

I want all members to join with me in welcoming the students and the teachers and the parents to the legislature today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Heppner: — With leave, to welcome guests.

Leave granted.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the third party I too would like to welcome those students — and I hadn't realized there were that many of them — from the Henry Kelsey School. I hope that your time here in Regina . . . and you're going to have some interesting things to see, and that as you meet with your representative that he'll explain what's happening in the House right now. I think that'll be rather interesting as well.

It was good to hear of your community involvement. And being the Minister of Health, I'm sure that all the food that he's going to give you will be very tasty; also be very healthy. On a good day he might even take you out for a hamburger, especially if it has a lot of lean meat in them. So be sure you ask him that.

Have a good time in Regina and welcome here. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Extended Hours

(continued)

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join in with welcoming the visitors here in the galleries today, and for taking and viewing what is happening here today. Because it is rather interesting, I think, from a public point of view.

Mr. Speaker, in continuing with the debate, and I'm sure as the people will enjoy what is happening here today, is why a government has chose to ram and jam legislation and the workings of the people of Saskatchewan down the throats of those people that are trying to represent them. That's what's happening here today.

(1215)

So getting on with it, why are we having this problem? Well as I was talking about these global answers to the global questions that have been a consistent, consistent question for five years, one has to ask, why aren't they prepared?

We're going to get back now to an agreement, the agreements between House leaders months ago. Now the government — the government that claims to be open and accountable — the government, the NDP government, is getting rather sloppy in the amount of time it takes to get things back to us. First of all it tells us it's not all that open and it's not all that accountable.

The House leaders had discussions in regards to how quickly could we have the process here work to wrap up this House in a timely fashion. And it all would hinge around the global questions and global answers to those questions.

There is no way that . . . there is no way that an opposition party — official opposition or the third party — in fact can say, we're going to vote off estimates and not have the government accountable for these certain years. You can't do that unless you know that these answers are coming. You have to have time to view them, because what this is is the real tough politics of what we do in here. That's what we do in here.

We want to know, is the Premier getting carried away on patronage? Well if those packages say no, it's just a limit that somehow we'd all find acceptable, so be it. Okay? But we need the package to be able to find that out.

During question period, has any minister answered a question in this session? I don't think so. I have asked a lot of questions in this session, Mr. Speaker, and the answer is usually the same — that if they would talk to their federal cousins.

Well it almost has people who are watching us on TV wondering, why do we need a provincial government? Obviously one government is controlling everything. I don't know, it just makes no sense.

But in these global answers that we are waiting for, and that the Government House Leader promised — promised, gave his word — I only hope that he will not break that word. I only hope that the Government House Leader won't break his word to myself or to the Third Party House Leader in having those globals, global answers here in a timely fashion. And that timely fashion was to happen in April. And do you know, Mr. Speaker, we only have one or two departments that have responded in the last few days.

And the same . . . let's talk about Crown corporations for a moment. The official opposition members of the Crown Corporations Committee have put forward much the same global questions for global answers so we can sort of take the politics out of this place. Don't have those either. But what are they saying? I sat in Crown Corporations Committee the other day with our member from Arm River. And they're saying well, no, no, no, no, we'll vote these things off and we'll send them this summer.

What good are they in the summer because they're not going to let us revisit . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order! Order! Now members know that you're not allowed to do from your benches what you're not allowed to do on the floor. And I will ask the hon. member from Saskatoon Southeast to stand and withdraw that remark and apologize to the House.

Ms. Lorje: — I withdraw it.

The Speaker: — I have asked the hon. member to withdraw the remark and apologize to the House.

Ms. Lorje: — I withdraw the remark and I apologize to the House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McPherson: — But that is what's happening in Crown Corporations Committee, that in fact we're not getting the answers. Sure, they've got officials coming in. There's always a slide projector there; we get to see charts and we get to see colours and figures and facts and all this stuff; and they try and make it as detailed and technical. So I can almost go out there with a pick and shovel and at the end of the day have technology somehow to produce a gas well and have it on market within a week.

But a lot of the stuff that happens in here isn't just about the very detailed stuff that the bureaucrats are paid to look after on behalf of the people in this province also; it is to see how public policy set by the politicians is affecting what those bureaucrats are to be taking care of. And that's what we're trying to get to the nub of.

We're supposed to vote off Crown corporations. We're voting off Crown corporations without dealing with the public policy end of the Crowns.

And it's really then the same thing that's happening here with the ministers. A lot of the time the ministers just are not in the House. And I'm not referring to anyone specific today, but it is tough, and rightfully so. I mean you can't have members . . . members don't just represent people by being in the legislature; it's a much bigger picture than that, and we all know it. There are times that you must be gone. But when you are gone . . . and the opposition, official opposition, and the third party find an amount of that acceptable and we don't pose certain questions, and we do delay and we help move Bills along.

And that happens. In fact I recall one . . . just within minutes notice a few weeks back when the Justice minister said, you know, next week isn't working well and I could get the officials here. Well I said, let's get at it then. Get your people. If you need those Bills through, let's do it.

We did it; it was working well. There again, I was thanked by the Government House Leader. He seems to have forgotten those well-working relationships.

So these global answers to our questions, what we need them for, firstly — and I was talking about the Economic Development minister and the junkets that he has taken all around the world — we need to know if in fact the ski trip in Chile was being charged to the people of this province. Well hopefully not. I can only assume it wouldn't be and I expect it wouldn't be. But we don't know that, you see. And that's sort of what we'd like to find out on the people's behalf. So that is just one example.

We also want to know, is there a particular minister that likes to use the government aircraft a little more than the rest? I mean, are they opposed to driving? Do they not have a driver's licence? Are they a danger . . . Well I guess if you drive on Saskatchewan's highways, I can see why anyone would want to take an airplane.

But we need to know these sort of things. How many vehicles are being leased by the government? To whom? And you know it's not just because it's curious for us. We want to know if people are still getting Lexus cars as Mr. Messer and Carole Bryant did when they took over the reins at a very handsome salary of SaskPower.

And of course the Premier phoned Jack up and said, you've got to give the car back. I don't care if you have one of equal value but you mustn't have a Lexus because they appear to be more expensive than others, and that they were pricey. And I guess Mr. Messer did the right thing at the time. I don't know what he's got now. I expect it's something better than most of us do have.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's what we're trying to find out is in fact some of the answers to whether or not the Economic Development minister, who has now joined us, if in fact everything that goes on in his department of a political nature, of a handsomely amount of money that they spend, I guess, at their discretion, if it's being done for all the right reasons and being done within acceptable guidelines. This is where the problem is.

Now let me tell you from a House Leader's perspective, dealing with globals, how this affected us and what we're prepared to do. And the offer has been put on several occasions in the last few days and the last hours. It was on . . . I believe it . . . Was it day 61 or a couple of days ago when SaskEnergy was in, in estimates? Yes I think it was the day that I was first threatened severely with this action, Mr. Speaker.

And I then said to the Government House Leader that, you know, we can help move this thing along. Let's adjust, let's adjust the daily schedule because I think there's a few departments that could actually go quicker, that could actually go quicker than others. And if in fact you would bring in Energy and Mines — see, they had them once before, the Energy and Mines department, up in estimates — we ask our questions.

I put it to them at that point. If you would have brought the globals I would be prepared to not have to have officials here so that we wouldn't ask detailed technological questions, but in fact the minister could do the wrap-up in estimates, because it's the global answers which are a more political nature and he's not going to rely on his officials to do his politics anyways.

So I put that offer to him: that why don't they go out and get the Energy and Mines officials, or whoever they feel they should have if they'd just given us the globals. I had minutes to look through. I saw a few concerns. I saw a few people that, you know, clearly were from sort of a blast from the past so to speak, receiving some funds. And it's only fair that the people of this province find out who they are, how much, and what for and all of those answers.

But I thought, you know, for the sake of time and to have a well-run House, well then let's be prepared, let's be prepared to move this quickly through. So I put that then to the minister in charge of Energy and Mines who thought that was a great idea and ran out to get his officials, but the Government House Leader, having felt that maybe he's getting duped for some reason because things are going to move too quickly through — that's not allowing him to justify this to the media — had to put the brakes on it. He got angry. He wasn't going to deal with us. He was going to ram and jam us.

So that's how we get to these stages when you have people that perhaps aren't as competent at their role and their job as they should be if things don't work.

Later that evening we had Health . . . or Education department estimates here. We had Bill No. 5, The Education Act, and to not have to have a long line-up of officials sitting out here getting paid, getting paid, then it was my suggestion that we

bring those in . . . give leave of the House to in fact deal with Education. I talked to the Minister of Education and told her that if it is satisfactory to our critic and to the member from . . . well the Education critic of the third party, the member from Rosthern, if they would find it acceptable, then of course they would let those both vote off that evening.

And do you know what I found out was that our critic . . . Where are you from? I should know that. Canora? Pelly? Our critic of Education from Canora-Pelly said yes, you know, I think from my perspective, he said, the work of the people of Saskatchewan, insofar as the legislative sitting goes, has been quite well taken care of up to this point and is well worked.

And hats off to the member from Rosthern who said also to make this place a better working place, then he too would get right to the nub of his questions, deal with it. And that really and truly was opposed by the Government House Leader.

But being that that offer was put to the Minister of Education, who had more concern as to why her officials . . . the expensive costs of having those officials here, we agreed, and I think to the dismay of the Government House Leader, that that would happen. And it did and they got voted off.

Don't you find that peculiar, Mr. Speaker, when in fact it's the Official Opposition House Leader that is making . . . that is forcing the Government House Leader to be efficient and effective and move the business of the people along. We thought it was, we thought it was quite interesting.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's sort of where we're at getting along in some of these departments.

An Hon. Member: — We're bored too.

Mr. McPherson: — Are you bored, Mr. Member from Elphinstone? Well it would be much more boring if in fact — for you — if in fact you were around to debate such issues for these kind of hours. Then you would find it not only boring, but you would find it, as we do, very frustrating when people, the sick and the elderly, are saying, please, if that's all you can do to get us health care, is to take the Premier to task in that House, if that's the way I personally have to receive my services, can you keep the House going just a little bit longer so we can have it. And I've assured those people in Swift Current that I would do that.

Not to extend the hours, but I had a better plan — just to move the House into a mode of efficiency and yet at the end deal with their concerns. I could only hope that that would have worked on behalf of those people, like the member from Arm River had mentioned, the 10 people in the wheelchairs that I made that promise to the other day.

So when we take a look at . . . and as you noticed, Mr. Speaker, as I was up speaking and we have been told on several occasions that in fact we didn't get the globals, I noticed that I just received five packages. Now this is from a government that is making the statement that they're not prepared.

So now they're, as we speak, as I speak and you listen, they are

playing a bit of a game. They are trying to prove that they're being fair and square with the people of the . . .

(1230)

The Speaker: — The hon. member knows very clearly that he's using the material he has as an exhibit and I will simply ask that the pages remove it from the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The hon. member has used it as an exhibit. The hon. member has used it as an exhibit.

I will ask that the . . . Order. The hon. member has used it as an exhibit. He understands very clearly the rules of the Assembly related to exhibits and that the Speaker has requested that items that are used in exhibit are removed from the Chamber. I will ask that the exhibit be given to the page to be removed from the Chamber.

Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Toth: — Point of order.

The Speaker: — The member may state his point of order.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I think on numerous occasions, whether it's government members, whether its cabinet ministers or all members, all members tend to have information in front of them and tend to be flipping through pages as they're perusing their notes and the information that they're making, their points . . . bringing their points forward.

And I find that, Mr. Speaker, I'm not exactly sure in my observations here this morning, I haven't really acknowledged or observed whether the member has deliberately been holding up information in his speaking notes to be used as an exhibit.

I haven't seen anything that — headlines or whatever that could be construed as being an exhibit. And, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that your acknowledgements or your suggestions in the Assembly this morning will indeed be impeding the process or the ability of members to represent . . .

The Speaker: — Now I ask the hon. member: are you questioning the ruling of the Chair? Is that what the hon. member is doing?

The Chair has made a ruling . . . Order! The Chair has made a ruling. It is permissible for the hon. member to put a point of order, and I have asked him to put his point of order, but it is sounding to me as though he is questioning the ruling that the Chair has made.

If the hon. member is putting a point of order, I'll ask him to put his point of order very clearly. But that does not include questioning the ruling the Chair has made.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess . . . I'm sorry. The understanding I have in the whole process . . . I'm just suggesting that as members it's appropriate for members to have an ability to address and have the information available, and I'm just trying to get an understanding. Otherwise, I see the process in this Assembly being disrupted in the inability of the

members to represent their views.

The Speaker: — As I understand it, the hon. member, as his point of order, has asked whether it is possible for members to have material that they wish to use, and the answer is clearly yes, and the point of order is well taken.

Mr. McPherson: — Well then I'm first going to rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair has ruled on the point of order. The Chair has ruled on the point of order. The point of order that was asked was whether members can use material that they refer to, that they wish to refer to in their debate. The Chair has ruled that members may do that.

The hon. member has not challenged the decision of the Speaker. And I have ruled on the point of order and if the . . . Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Mr. McPherson: — Well thank you then, Mr. Speaker. And if I could ask the page to bring me some globals . . .

The Speaker: — No! The Chair has ruled. You shall not challenge the decision of the Chair. You will not direct the pages to return the material to you that they withdrew from the Chamber. The member can have material which he wishes to use for his debate but will not challenge the decision of the Chair.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker, the globals that are one of the hang-ups today . . . the problem with moving ahead and doing as the government has requested, and that being to vote off any global or any estimates without being allowed to have the information available, especially in front of you while you're up asking the questions, is the difficult part. It is why this Assembly is coming to a point where it's unworkable. We can't make this thing work if in fact we have to live by the rules of the government in this manner.

An Hon. Member: — They're rewriting the rules.

Mr. McPherson: — Well as the member from Cypress Hills is saying, that the rules are being rewritten as the day is proceeding. It sure is disappointing that people would have those . . . harbour those feelings and why must they have those feelings.

Getting back to the globals and in particular getting back to the behaviour of the Finance minister two nights ago, giving answers to our opposition Finance critic, the member from Thunder Creek, and the sharpness and the viciousness of her responses. It just leads one to wonder why aren't they bringing this stuff forward and what are they hiding.

But I enjoyed, in fact, listening to some of the answers she was not giving publicly but heckling back. And those were: I don't have them, this is something new, I've never seen them. But as the member from Moosomin said, this is five years — and I thought it was three, he says it's five . . . she's been Finance minister for a few years. I know she's dealt with them before.

And yet she was answering the member from Thunder Creek, trying to let on to this House, as she often does — she'll hold up . . . I won't use an exhibit. She'll hold up the budget book, the budget address, the *Supplementary Estimates*, and she'll say, but if, but if the member would read, it's right here. And you know what, it had nothing to do with the . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Now the hon. member for Saskatoon Southeast knows — Order — that she is not permitted to do from her seat what she is not permitted to do from the floor. And I have previously today required her to . . . Order. I have previously today required her to withdraw an unparliamentary remark and apologize to the House. And I ask her to do so now without hesitation.

Ms. Lorje: — Without hesitation, I withdraw the remark, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — And I also required the hon. member to apologize for the remark.

Ms. Lorje: — I apologize for calling the hon. member the name I did.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for making sure that there is decorum that remains in this House.

The Speaker: — Now the hon. member knows that it is inappropriate to comment on the rulings of the Chair, and I will simply ask him, if he wishes to continue his debate, to do so directly.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll just get all the exhibits away from me here. Mr. Speaker, the problem that we have, the problem that we have, is the rules, I guess, that we are being told we must live by. And I'm not questioning your rules. I'm talking about the government. The two members that are sitting there cackling and laughing as we speak — the Government House Leader and the former government house leader, the member from Elphinstone and the member from . . . who cares? He won't be here next time anyways. Those are the kind of antics that people are finding unacceptable.

So if in fact we're not supposed to get the answers to the written questions . . . and it was all done just to make this a better place for everyone, to help the people of this province move their business along — move their business, not our business; it's theirs. We've got to be straight on this. Who are we here for?

An Hon. Member: — You are not straight on anything.

Mr. McPherson: — I am getting sick and tired of being called a liar in this House.

Now the problem is if we can't have these kind of answers; it puts us in a position where in fact the government is going to ram through something in this Legislative Assembly which is not in the best interests of the people of the province. They're going to ram through something that can't be revisited.

And that, we have to ask why? Why would you want to do something — and the Government House Leader, you know, I would love you to answer this question — why would you do something that you know isn't in the best interests of the people that elected you, or any of us? Why would that happen?

Is it because for the longest time you accused the former Conservative government of being the worst government on record? And I'm not going to dispute that. That's not for me to argue about, whether they were or they weren't, here nor there. I will have to stick up for them and say that I know some of the most good friends and honourable people in this Legislative Assembly today don't follow in the guidelines that you try to paint them as. All right.

But I'm not so sure about some of these guys across there. I don't know about that. I think that there's some serious problems over there. There must be. There must be, because you see it's not the member from Rosthern or the member from Cypress Hills trying to hide what's happening in this House; it's you, you're the one. You're the one who's instructing.

Because as you recall, it was you that I sent the letter to — sorry, I'm going to address this through the Chair; I think it's more appropriate. It is the Government House Leader that I sent the letter to, to ask for the globals. We arrived at the agreement. And it was his word that I accepted and it was his word that the member from Moosomin accepted, that we would have these sort of answers well in advance.

And this is not an exhibit, Mr. Speaker; this is the *Votes and Proceedings* of the House. The problem that we're having here is that the government . . . The government are not only not providing answers in a political fashion, but when they are ramming Bills . . . I think I've covered the estimates problem that we're having, of not getting the proper answers, instead of getting the vicious attacks by people like the Minister of Finance.

But when they want to ram through some of the Bills, and look at pages . . . I think it was 116, 117. Is that including the one this morning? Or the ones that they probably intend on bringing in Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, while they're jamming the hours and still bringing in Bills?

I don't know what all it includes. But you know, when I look at some of the Bills that had been brought forward . . . And you add to that, Mr. Speaker, you add to that six, seven Bills — 15 — that the third party have brought through. Something like that; 15, 20 Bills that the official opposition has brought forward that we hear are important for the people of this province to debate. You add all those Bills up, and you tell me if 61 days is enough time for anybody to properly address them.

(1245)

And we take a look at some of the Bills. And the way the legislature has worked for years, you know better than I that some of the Bills that are of a more controversial nature tend to come up in the first session so that . . . Well especially that's how it has been working when I think back in the last term and

perhaps the term just before that. They're of a more controversial nature, so that they bring in all their . . . do their tougher stuff. And then they sit there like, with their fingers crossed for like three years, thinking, I hope the people forget.

And that's why we had a government that did not have the courage and did not have the public onside when they decided to, first of all, bring in this all-encompassing health back, I think four years ago, five years ago, whatever. It seems like a lifetime. And it was a lifetime for some people. It was the end of a lifetime for some people.

To now bring in four Draconian health Bills — I shouldn't say four, maybe only three of them are, two definitely are — and say that in totality you have about nine hours to speak on them and if you don't do that, then we will force it upon you, and that's not right, especially at the same time.

And let's not forget this is also — they were going to be bringing in The Service Districts Act which completely changed the face of rural Saskatchewan as we've known it for years. To completely change the way local governments operate, to completely change the way local governments are funded in the services they provide, and who they are answerable to, and who they're not answerable to, and who their people that are out in those areas . . .

An Hon. Member: — Changing stories with the Premier and the minister. One day it was off . . .

Mr. McPherson: — Well right, right. This is some of the problem, as the member from Arm River has raised. We have a government . . . And looking at The Service Districts Act which in fact has of yesterday been pulled because the SUMA and SARM representatives pulled the Premier into reality, so the Bill was also pulled.

But for us as opposition members, official opposition members, to try and figure out what is happening in this session and how are we going to do what's right and what's best for the people of this province, when you have the minister in charge of The Service Districts Act overseeing this Act not in agreement with the Premier . . . And somehow we were to sit back and say, you know what — we already see they're fighting in their own caucus; they're having problems; cabinet isn't getting along.

Do we want to play into that? Ah, somebody else must be working on those problems. Let them have at it.

Well, if it wasn't for the member, if it wasn't for our critic . . . Where is he from?

An Hon. Member: — Saltcoats.

Mr. McPherson: — If it wasn't for the member from Saltcoats, if it wasn't for the member from Saltcoats bringing forward, bringing forward . . .

An Hon. Member: — Don't use up all your good material, Glen. You got all day Monday to go on this and all day Tuesday and all day Wednesday. Don't use up all this good material now, Glen.

Mr. McPherson: — . . . when the Government House Leader's saying his two-bits worth. If it wasn't for the member from Saltcoats also bringing the issues forward on behalf of the rural municipal governments of the province and embarrassing the minister, who of course as we all know — and we might as well have it on public record too — so thoroughly embarrassed by his hard work and his knowledge of rural Saskatchewan, thoroughly embarrassed. A minister who was so out of touch that she finally caved in to SARM and SUMA and should have, because you shouldn't, as a lone representative of the people, say that I know better than other representatives of the people.

I mean that's why we negotiate; that's why we get things on the go. Right? Well as the Premier said, less fighting. Why fight? Shelve something; let's negotiate. So she caved in. The Premier said no way. No. You must go for it.

You see, because I'm an urban lawyer, he said. I'm an urban lawyer, as is my urban Health minister . . . lawyer Health minister, my urban lawyer, lawyer, lawyer, lawyer, lawyer . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . urban lawyer House Leader. Good point. Is there a trend that's perhaps happening here that isn't as healthy as it could be? Well perhaps, perhaps.

But now The Service Districts Act, because of the severity of the pressure put on from the member from Saltcoats — just to close on this — putting extreme pressure to the minister so she caved in, having the Premier having to take over the ball of the day, and finally he caved in. Well, we have it pulled.

Now that it's pulled . . . and it was going to be a very time-consuming Bill at the end of this session, so the Government House Leader told me himself and I can only assume I was able to take his word — surely his word is good. We can only assume that he wouldn't be not telling the truth. I assumed he was. I can only assume that of other members of this Legislative Assembly.

But in fact it got pulled. So that should have really shortened up the time period that we're dealing with. That should have made things a lot easier. That should have allowed us more time to deal with some of the other Bills that were of a great importance, great importance, Mr. Speaker.

Well let me use an example. I think it was Bill No. 44, and that would have been — the member from Thunder Creek will help me out here — The Crown Corporations Act, Bill No. 44. That's correct. Well that Bill, that Bill had some immense, what we viewed and the public viewed as problems with it. But it was also a Bill that the government, that our Finance critic, the official opposition Finance critic from Thunder Creek wanted to just put down the road for a few days.

Had that message sent across to Government House Leader, to the Government House Leader, to say please, would you just put that on hold for a few days so we can ensure that we have time to talk to the people that are going to be affected by this Bill, and then bring it in and we will make our points on behalf of the people. If they're good points, we can only assume you would accept them. If they're not, if you haven't went and done your homework, if in fact all you're doing is ramming and

jamming and never talking to the people, then you deserve a lot rougher ride on a Bill like that. You deserve a tough time in bringing forward legislation which is forced upon people.

And when we look at . . . as the member from Arm River pointed out in the Friday, May 31, 1996 — this is the *Leader-Post* — the headline reads . . . you'll have to excuse me, I think I'm losing my voice here, Mr. Speaker. Obviously they aren't, by the heckling. But, "Bill, loathed by local gov'ts, pulled." That says it all.

We're getting to the end of a session — a very noisy session — and still we're having legislation that the government isn't sure of. Mr. Speaker, it wouldn't be proper for the official opposition to cave in to the . . . I don't want to say Naziism, but I do want to make a point . . . the socialist Naziist ways or whatever . . . I don't know what they're trying to achieve here.

But to actually do this sort of stuff where the people don't have a say, it's only when they're trying to run away. It's only when they're trying to run away from the people, and the people themselves find a way to reach out and grab one of these people by the collar and reel them back in a little bit. That's what happened here — the Premier got grabbed by the collar. And that's why things happen. That's why they impressed upon him the significance of his defeat in the next election — next election.

Well you know, the Arm River MLA has just made a very good point. If in fact, and it is, and it is so — a Bill that was so loathed by the people, why did they decide to ram it through in the first place? I'll have to say that in a few years we'll be in government I suspect; I fully suspect that. But the way we intend on operating our style of government would be to go out and consult with people, find out what is it that we can do for you to make this a better place for all of us. What is it that we can do for you, with you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . yes, be servants of the people.

Yes, the member from Melfort's right on. To be servants of the people, to do their work. Not to come in here and say, you know, ideologically — ideologically I must follow this highway. Well you'd rather follow that highway than the ones that we have out there today with all those holes — those "18 holes at the golf course" highways that the Premier joked about.

But wouldn't it be better to get back on track? Wouldn't it be better to in fact have the people on side before you did this? I could only think it would be. That's how we would do it. Right? Everyone's agreeing. You want the people with us, right? How about over there? Oh everyone got busy reading.

You see, it's best if you have the people on side. Then you don't have to have, you don't have to have the kind of problems that we see at the end of this session. That's what's wrong here, Mr. Government House Leader, that's what's wrong.

You're not better than, you're not smarter than, and you shouldn't be overruling the people that elected you. That's how we view it. You should be representing them. You should be at their level, with an understanding of their needs, their wants, and how to put that whole package together. If you can't do

that, there is a replacement in the wings.

And I can talk about your replacements in a few years. In fact we will, in the near future, start introducing some of them in the gallery as they come to visit and look at the seats that they will be holding in the very near future.

And what makes us so sure of that, Mr. Speaker, is the very fact that if you run government in a fashion that . . . if you run government in a fashion that is dictatorial, if you run government in a fashion that has no room for the people, you're going to get dealt with . . . (inaudible) . . . And that's what's happening here.

The people that you have to deal with are going to tell you what they loathe about you, what they loathe about your ideologies or your antics, or your ways of doing business. And you know, ideologies aside, you know parties of course are getting a little closer to the same as a rule . . . Well, not all the time. There's some that go out there on a limb once in a while.

But it's the way they do business. It's the way they do business and the things that they are prepared or not prepared to do to their people that they represent.

An Hon. Member: — Show contempt.

Mr. McPherson: — Good point. Who are they not opposed to show contempt to? Who are they willing to do what to, to achieve a goal.

And what's often confusing not to just the official opposition and to third party and to the people we represent, but it's why? — why would you do it? Power and manipulation. Is that it? It's got to be more than that. Surely a government has more depth than that. Somebody help out here. There's got to be more depth to that, isn't there? Wouldn't you run government for better reasons than patronage and power? Otherwise, otherwise we're all in trouble, big trouble.

You know, I do hear that we have members that are just itching to get into the debate because they're giving speeches over there as we speak, and noisy speeches at that. And you know, when we look at how this could so easily . . .

The Speaker: — Now why is the member on her feet?

Ms. Draude: — With leave, to introduce a guest.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce Mr. Zach Douglas from Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation. Welcome to the House, Mr. Douglas.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Extended Hours

(continued)

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to welcome Zach Douglas. I've known Zach for a number of years and Zach has been an employee of this province for . . . well I guess since the 1991 election. And I shouldn't get in . . . Zach's an old friend. I won't get into that, whether he was hired in October 1991 or not. It's probably more coincidence, Zach, than not. So we'll move on . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And it must be a good employer; you bet.

And, Mr. Speaker, when we see the problem of having a government that has chosen to forget the needs and the wishes of the people of this province bring forward a motion that would have us sit from early morning till late at night . . . and we don't mind that work. But we've got to ensure . . . And do you know, Mr. Speaker, that in fact many of our caucus colleagues have breakfast at 6 in the morning? And we do. And we're proud to be doing that because immediately thereafter we can start to work for the people of this province.

And I'm sure that a few hours after that time period, when these people across who are ramming the legislation before us, start to wake up and call that morning, well they would be better served if they would just be a little perkier in the morning, pick up the phone, and phone out to places like Eatonia, phone out to the RM (rural municipality) of Coronach.

Oh if you want to have a conversation, phone out to the RM of Coronach and say, I just have a short question for you; how is health care? Well, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order. It now being 1 o'clock, this House will stand adjourned. And before we leave, I wish all members an enjoyable and peaceful weekend in your constituency with your families and your constituents.

This House now stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 1 p.m.