

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
June 24, 1986

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

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

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

Clerk Assistant: — Mr. Hopfner from the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the seventh report of the said committee, which is as follows:

Your committee has completed its consideration of the reports of the following Crown corporations since May 28, 1986: Saskatchewan Power Corporation, 1984; Saskatchewan Power Corporation, 1985; Saskatchewan Telecommunications, 1985; Saskatchewan Government Insurance, 1985; Saskatchewan Transportation Company, 1985; and Saskatchewan Water Corporation, 1985.

Your committee has held six meetings since its last report to the legislature, and has an agenda consisting of the following Crown corporations' annual reports for 1985 yet to be considered: Saskatchewan Government Printing, Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation, Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, Saskatchewan Expo '86, Advanced Technology, Agricultural Credit Corporation, Agricultural Development Corporation, Crown Investment Corporation, Municipal Financing Corporation, the New Careers Corporation, Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Crop Insurance, Saskatchewan Development Fund, Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation, and the Saskatchewan Forest Products.

On May 16, 1985, your committee agreed to review the annual report and financial statements of the Saskatchewan Crown Corporations Pension Funds. Though there is no legislative requirement for the tabling of the annual report and financial statements, the 1983 and 1984 documents have been tabled and therefore become automatically referred to the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations for consideration pursuant to a motion adopted by this Assembly on March 18, 1986.

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Athabasca:

That the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations be now concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to the Assembly some special guests from West Germany. Dr. Carl-Ludwig Wagner is the Minister of

Finance and chairman of the supervisory board of the Landsbank in the state of Rheinland-Pfalz, West Germany; Dr. Guenter Storch is the member of the board of managing directors; and Mr. Max Lurz, who is a director.

I will be meeting with the gentlemen at approximately 3 o'clock, along with officials from the Department of Finance, Mr. Speaker. I ask all hon. members to welcome the special guests in the usual manner.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I take pleasure in welcoming to the Legislative Assembly 12 adults who are from the Cancer Patient Lodge in Regina in the riding of the Leader of the Opposition. He's unable to be here today, and it's my distinct honour to welcome these people to the Chamber. I know that you'll enjoy the proceedings, and I look forward to meeting with you afterwards for drinks and a word about what you've seen here.

I invite all members to join me in welcoming these people.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Terms of Agreement for Sale of PAPCO

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the minister responsible for the Prince Albert pulp-mill. It deals with an issue we have raised a number of times in the Assembly, namely the sale of the P.A. pulp-mill and all the related assets to the Weyerhaeuser corporation whereby the company gets a sweetheart deal: 30 years to repay the \$248 million debenture put up by the people of the province, and if there are any losses incurred in the first three years, they write down the debt owing, and even at that, no payments have to be made unless there's more than 13 per cent profits made in the corporation.

Mr. Minister, yesterday you promised the Assembly that you would table certain documents, and I quote to you from page 2209 of Hansard where you say:

... we'll file the financial statements of PAPCO, and we'll file as many documents as we can file as it relates to the Weyerhaeuser deal ...

I wonder, Mr. Minister, at this time, have you got those documents, and can you table them here in the Assembly?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, I will be providing the financial statements of the Prince Albert Pulp Company from the period of time that the company became a wholly owned subsidiary and, might I say, a burden upon the public of Saskatchewan, and I will be tabling them after question period. I think the hon. member knows that I can't table them during question period, but I will be tabling them

after question period.

And what they will show, Mr. Speaker, is the following: they will show a loss in the year 1981 of \$11,931,731; a loss in the year 1982 of \$39,061,942; in 1983 a loss of \$49,246,603; in 1984, a loss of \$15,759,673; and in 1985, a loss of \$51,649,102. Mr. Speaker, those losses, the total losses to the public of Saskatchewan on those annualized basis that I just have mentioned, those will be shown when we bring these statements forward, and I'm sure the hon. member will be very interested in seeing that.

And for that hon. member from that New Democratic Party who would say, Mr. Speaker that anything — it would not matter what the terms of any agreement of any sale of their precious family of Crown corporations, it would not matter what the terms were for any sale or any deal that anyone might put together, to the NDP that will always be a sweetheart deal. They talk about sweetheart deals, but they don't talk about the kinds of deals that they made when they purchased these things, when that party opposite was in government and purchased — borrowed \$162 million to purchase 70 per cent of the assets of Prince Albert Pulp company.

Mr. Speaker, I would submit to you, and to all members of the House and to the public of Saskatchewan, that it was a bad deal at that time. They should not be sitting here now in a sanctimonious way and saying that it was a good deal. It was not a good deal, and the public of Saskatchewan will know that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — A supplement to the minister, and as the minister well knows, we will await to read the documents to see if they have any relevance to what the minister has said, and I have here the schedule B of the agreement of principles, dated March 24th.

By way of background, the members of the Assembly will well know that the minister, in talking about this agreement and this schedule B, indicated that the terms were 20 years. When we got the document it said 30 years.

Now my question to the minister is if, with leave of the Assembly, you will table the documents now, because obviously we can decide when to table documents, and we will give you leave to table the documents so we can ask questions on this and other matters at this time.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the member well knows, and I have said that I will table these at the conclusion of question period, and they will be tabled. They'll be tabled at the conclusion of question period today.

The member opposite, once again, Mr. speaker — the member opposite wants to continue on the NDP line that they are against the building of a paper-mill in Saskatchewan. That's what they're saying. Because the only possible way that a pulp-mill in Saskatchewan can make any money or can become viable over the long-term is by integration with a paper-mill. Anyone

who understands the forest industry knows that; everybody who understands. And many people in northern Saskatchewan understand the forest industry, and they know that the integration of that industry from sawmill to pulp-mill to paper-mill is the way in which you ensure viability over the long term.

Mr. Speaker, that's what this deal is doing, ensuring that viability of the industry and of the jobs in that industry, and those people opposite, Mr. Speaker, are against that.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, final supplement to the minister. I want to ask you, in the debate the other evening when we were talking about the documents that we wanted tabled, we had asked for schedule A and C which are either implied or referred to in schedule B, as well as the agreement. Do you have those very relevant parts to this major agreement ready to be tabled at the same time as the history of the pulp-mill, which is less relevant than the terms of the present agreement?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — I cannot believe my ears, Mr. Speaker. The member of the New Democratic Party says the history of the pulp-mill is not relevant to what we're discussing here today. What I'll say is relevant, Mr. Speaker, is the following: we would not be in this House discussing the pulp-mill; we would not be in this House in the position we are; no legislator in Saskatchewan would be in a position of discussing this pulp-mill; no legislator would be in a position of discussing the assets of this pulp-mill had your party not decided to purchase it, to add it to your famous family of Crown corporations, because of your penchant for owning everything and every asset in every industry that was possible.

that was the direction you wanted to go — that, Mr. Speaker, is the direction they can continue to want to go. That was the direction of the past, and that is a party from the past, Mr. Speaker, and the people of Saskatchewan will know that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — A new question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister in charge of the Prince Albert Pulp Company. In addition to the Prince Albert pulp-mill, the Saskatoon chemical plant, the Big River sawmill, the assets to be sold to Weyerhaeuser include the exclusive timber rights to millions of acres of Saskatchewan's forests for a period of at least 30 years. Since the minister was unclear on the figures last week in the Assembly, can he tell the Saskatchewan taxpayers today exactly how many acres of forest land will be turned over to the Weyerhaeuser corporation under the terms of this sale, and is the figure approximately 7 million acres of prime forest land, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — I believe I said in the debate, Mr. Speaker, and I don't have the exact number, but it's 7 million and some-odd acres of productive forest land. The member here . . . The member will suggest that there shouldn't be a forest management agreement to go along with the licence to operate in a forest, which includes royalty payments to the Government of Saskatchewan and to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. It's the same type of agreement that will be in place for Simpson Timber

which has been a long-time operator at Hudson Bay; the same type of agreement that will be in place for MacMillan Bloedel; the same type of agreement in place for L & M, a much smaller operation in Glaslyn. The member knows that. But he'll stand here and try to mislead the public of Saskatchewan as, oh, there's this — to use their word again — some big give-away, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, what the forest management arrangements are, are just that — arrangements for the management of the forest. And that is extremely important to the public of Saskatchewan who own the forest; to the public of Saskatchewan who will be getting the benefits from the royalties which will be paid by the company, whether it be Weyerhaeuser Canada or Simpson Timber or MacMillan Bloedel or L & M Wood Products, for that matter.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — New question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. I most certainly am not trying to mislead this House in any way, shape, or form. But we're dealing with \$248 million of the taxpayers' money that you are giving to Weyerhaeuser, and they are not putting up one cent.

Is the minister aware that this means that Weyerhaeuser corporation will have exclusive rights to over 7 million acres of prime commercial forest area in this province — over 7 million acres of prime forest acres? Saskatchewan's total commercial forest is about 35 million acres, or 55,000 square miles. This deal give Weyerhaeuser complete control over close to eight million acres of that, or approximately 11,000 square miles.

Will you confirm that under this deal Weyerhaeuser corporation of Tacoma, Washington will have exclusive cutting rights and control over one-fifth of the commercial timber in Saskatchewan for a period of at least 30 years?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Speaker, what I will confirm is, as I said in my last answer, what I will confirm is that there will be forest management licence agreements for this company, for MacMillan Bloedel, for Simpson Timber, for everyone else who operates, including the Crown-owned Sask Forest Products. That will be the case, and that must be the case. If you're going to manage the forest, you must have agreements to manage the forests — forest management agreements. Those agreements will be in place.

One of the stated reasons, Mr. Speaker — even though the member from Shaunavon says that the history of the pulp-mill is not relevant, let me give him this little bit of history — one of the stated reasons of that government when they were in government, that group opposite, that small group, when they were in government, here's what they said. They said, we will buy the remaining assets of the pulp-mill because we are going to rationalize the forest management agreements so that we can solve the many long-standing problems of forest management in Saskatchewan. And everybody in northern Saskatchewan knows that those were long-standing problems.

We agreed with it in opposition. We agreed with that aspect, because they said forest management agreements need to be rationalized, and we agreed with that. There was not one shred of evidence when we took over government — not one shred of evidence that they attempted at all to do that, to rationalize those forest management agreements. And yet that member will stand here and talk about some large number of acres that are going to a corporation. Of course the proper acreage for the operation of an integrated facility must be under the control of the company that's operating the integrated operation.

Mr. Thompson: — Supplement, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Does this give Weyerhaeuser Canada complete control over approximately 8 million acres of Saskatchewan's prime forest area?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, it gives Weyerhaeuser corporation a forest management lease arrangement which they will arrange, which they will negotiate with my colleague, the Minister of Parks and Resources, which they will negotiate, and they will control it only in the sense, the same sense that Simpson Timber controls their area in the east side, in what we call the Hudson Bay block.

They'll control it only in the same sense that MacMillan Bloedel will control their area. They'll control it only in the same sense as L & M Wood Products will control this much smaller area that they deal with for their wood products operation at Glaslyn. They'll control it only in the same sense that the Meadow Lake Sawmill Ltd., which will continue to be a Crown operation, will control the area in which their forest management lease arrangement is done.

So the member is throwing a red herring in here, Mr. Speaker, which means absolutely nothing to the negotiations.

Mr. Thompson: — can the minister give us any documents which make it clear that northern commercial fishermen, trappers, and others who depend on the forest for their income will not have their access to those 8 million acres of northern forest restricted? Can you point to, or table, any documents which guarantee that there will be no restrictions on access to commercial fishing areas or to trap lines, or any infringement upon treaty rights by Weyerhaeuser.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday in answer to almost exactly the same question, my colleague, the Minister of Parks and Resources, said that integrated resource management will be in place, and that includes access for hunters and fishermen and the kinds of deal that you've been talking about. Mr. Speaker, that integrated resource management situation will be in place . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — The short answer, Mr. Speaker, is that my colleague, the Minister of Parks and Resources, answered that question yesterday.

The member from Athabasca, although he received his answer yesterday, comes back with exactly the same question today.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order.

Use of Executive Aircraft

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — — Mr. Speaker, about a week ago, in responding to the annual ritual of defending the use of executive aircraft, I took notice of a couple of questions from the member from Shaunavon regarding the co-ordination of flights, and I'd like to provide him that information at this time.

I think the first date that he was concerned about was June 27th
...

Mr. Speaker: — Order.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — — The first day under question, Mr. Speaker, was June 27th on which there were four flights from Saskatoon to Regina. And the information on those flights is that the first one at 9:30 brought a minister back from Saskatoon to Regina; a flight at 10:30 took an official to Saskatoon. In the afternoon there were two more flights; one at 1:25 returning at 5:05 with two cabinet ministers, another flight in the afternoon that left at 11:40 a.m. with a minister and four officials and returned at 5:30.

The question of co-ordination on that particular day, the afternoon, of course it was impossible to put the two flights together because the one flight was at capacity with five passengers and the second one, of course, had to travel. The morning events, the cabinet minister had to return, and the official was on business and was not able to co-ordinate.

The second date that was asked by the member from Shaunavon was February 7th, a flight from Maple Creek which brought a minister to Regina in the morning at 8:40, and a second flight in the afternoon at 2:25 that took a minister to Swift Current. And obviously those two flights and their duties would not allow them to be co-ordinated.

Mr. Speaker, I think there are a couple of additional points that should be made. The members opposite made a great deal in asking the question about the fact that there had been 980 exec air flights in the fiscal year under review. It should be pointed out that the last year of the Blakeney administration there were 910 executive air flights, which is roughly the same number, and that from a government that had admittedly lost touch with the people. So I think that that is justifiable.

Mr. Premier, the second point that I think . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — — The second point that should be made, and this is relevant to the question . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. The members asked the question. The minister has the right to give the reply, and the member is giving that reply.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — — Once again, Mr. Speaker, the question . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Now this is the last time I'm calling order.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — — The question was asked by the member from Shaunavon, and I think it will be interesting to the members of the Assembly that it was this particular member that chose to ask these questions. It demonstrates again very clearly the difference in which they say and what they do.

In 1981-82 the member from Shaunavon authorized 58 flights on exec air, which is more than the previous Highways minister . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order.

Mr. Koskie: — Is he finished, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order.

Access to Roads in Prince Albert Forest Area

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to get back to the important question that we were on before in respect to the major proposition of this government which the people of Saskatchewan are concerned with. And I want to direct a question to the Minister of Highways, and I ask you, Mr. Minister, can you file or point to a document which in fact will prevent Weyerhaeuser from setting up toll booths on highways or logging roads within the 7 million acres, the 8 million acres that they will now control? I ask you what will prevent them from restricting the access of the roads to the people of the North? Can you in fact table any documents which would assure the residents of northern Saskatchewan access to these roads will not be restricted in any way? If you have the documents, can you file them?

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In response to the hon. member's question I can assure the hon. member, and I can assure the general public of Saskatchewan, that there is no agreement that will allow any toll bridges or toll roads in this province. And as long as this administration is in power I can assure you that there never will be a toll road respecting Weyerhaeuser or any other corporation that invests in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Koskie: — A further question, supplement to the minister. Can the minister confirm that PAPCO has road construction crews which today maintain about 1,000 miles of logging roads and other roads within the forest management area? And can you confirm, Mr. Minister, that following the sale the cost of maintaining these roadways will revert to the Saskatchewan taxpayers through the Department of Highways? Your colleague, the Minister of Parks, was very evasive on this particular point yesterday, and I ask you: who will pay for the maintenance of these roads after the sale, or let's say the give-away?

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In response to the hon. member's question, certainly there

will be a road maintenance agreement, and there will be an agreement that will cover a number of miles of road. But I want to inform the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that the insinuation made by the hon. member here today, and the insinuations made yesterday, I believe it was, respecting 1,000 miles of road is very, very representative of the exaggeration, the overstatement and the misleading of the general public that these members opposite perpetrate in this legislature every day. In no way is there 1,000 miles of roads. That is an absolute exaggeration, and it represents the misleading statements that those people make every day.

Yes, certainly there will be a road maintenance agreement, but here today I am not going to . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, order! Will the member for Regina North West contain himself long enough to listen to what I have to say. The Assembly is just buzzing. There's so much noise that the minister cannot be heard, and when the questioner is standing to ask his question, he cannot be heard. I'm asking for order on both sides of the House.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Yes, if I could finish responding, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, yes, if I may be permitted to finish my answer, there will be an agreement with the Weyerhaeuser corporation respecting roads, and I think that's only fair and reasonable. Any other timber company that deals with the government has an agreement with the government, but I'm not about to release the details of that agreement. The agreement has not been signed as of yet, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think it fair that they even ask the questions. What these people want to know . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — What these people want to know, Mr. Speaker, is the results of a ball game before the ball game is even over. We are in the process of negotiating with the Weyerhaeuser corporation. Our negotiations have taken many, many hours, and we will continue to negotiate with these people.

I am not about to provide the members today with information about an agreement that has not yet been signed, but I can give the members my greatest assurance — my greatest assurance — that the agreement that we will sign will be very, very similar to agreements that have been signed with PAPCO, MacMillan Bloedel, and many other timber corporations within the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, I want to remind you of the comments of your colleague, the minister of Parks, yesterday in this Assembly. And he said, and I quote:

... we've been taking a look at these roads as it relates to the Weyerhaeuser agreement, and as it relates to the current situation, and also as it (as it

also) pertains to the current maintenance, and we think we've come up with something that's satisfactory to all (of) the players in the game.

Mr. Minister, what is this arrangement? What is this agreement? And what will it mean in respect to the maintenance and control of the roads of the 7 million acres that you're assigning over to Weyerhaeuser? The minister, your colleague, has indicated you've come up with a satisfactory agreement. What are the terms of it, and will you file it?

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the minister in charge of Parks and Renewable Resources, did not say that there was an agreement. He said that we are in the final . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. You have asked a question. It's impossible to hear the answer. I would ask for order.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — The minister had said that we are very close to having an arrangement that is satisfactory to both parties, but the agreement has not been signed. Negotiations are still under way. And when that arrangement, when that agreement is signed, we'll be more than happy to provide you with the information, and that would only be fair and reasonable. But at this time, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it fair to even ask what are the details of that agreement until the agreement has been signed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the questions put by members, items number 406 through 532 inclusive be converted to orders for return, debatable.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION UNDER RULE 16

Creation of Saskatchewan Pension Plan

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I shall at the conclusion of my remarks move a motion under Rule 16:

That this Assembly congratulate the Government of Saskatchewan for its initiative in creating the Saskatchewan Pension Plan and making Saskatchewan the first province with a pension plan to which all its residents can contribute.

I am pleased that our government has again demonstrated its ability to respond with a piece of legislation and a program of this nature. We are again demonstrating our ability to provide a vehicle of protection and opportunity for the residents of Saskatchewan. This government places the wishes of the people of Saskatchewan as a priority, and this pension plan places that opportunity into action.

I am glad to be able to speak to you about a piece of a

landmark legislation. All of us have a common goal of guaranteeing an adequate retirement income for ourselves and for our families. As the throne speech and budget speech stated, our government is committed to offering additional retirement security to the people of Saskatchewan. In particular, the government has set the objective of offering additional protection to those members of society such as home-makers, small-business employees, part-time and self-employed workers who are making a valuable contribution to society but who have not been given an opportunity to adequately save for their retirement.

Once again, Saskatchewan will be a national leader in the development of social programs that protect and enhance the security of the individual. The Saskatchewan Pension Plan is an important milestone towards this government's goal that all Saskatchewan residents will be able to retire with incomes above the poverty line. The Saskatchewan Pension Plan is unique in this way. The Saskatchewan Pension Plan is that kind of legislation. For the first time in Canada a government will be recognizing the contributions made by home-makers and acknowledging their right to a pension of their own.

It establishes an opportunity for home-makers to be a part of a society — a society that begins to recognize the value of those women who choose for themselves the role of an exclusive home-maker will benefit by better environment for children and their families to grow up in. We as a government have chosen to recognize that contribution through a pension plan. The Saskatchewan Pension Plan also will recognize and enable part-time workers, self-employed persons and small-business employees to establish pension savings plans for their retirement. Clearly this is a need for new pension opportunities when you consider that home-makers are not covered at all by the Canada Pension Plan and have no access to private pension plans.

Even among those women who have chosen to enter the work-force, almost 64 per cent are unable to avail themselves of a private pension plan. And as a result of this, Saskatchewan home-makers who have chosen to raise families or who are in and out of the work-force had very few opportunities to save for retirement. The result of these inequities are all too predictable. As of 1984, more than half of those unattached single women aged 65 and over were living below the poverty line. Further, women live longer than men on average and as a consequence, three-quarters of our single seniors are women. These inadequacies spread into the labour force because 55 per cent of working people are not covered by employee-sponsored pension plan.

While the Canada Pension Plan covers the entire work force, contributions and benefits are based on an individual's earnings, meaning low-income earners receive the lowest benefits. The maximum Canada Pension Plan retirement benefit is \$486 per month. However, the average Canada pension benefit in Saskatchewan is \$215 per month — only 44 per cent of the maximum benefit. As a result, federal support for seniors through old age security and the guaranteed income supplement amount for 15 per cent of total program expenditures by the federal government.

Governments have been discussing pension reform for years. The federal government and the provinces have agreed on some important changes to the Canada Pension Plan. These changes are certainly worthwhile, Mr. Speaker, but no action has been taken to include home-makers in the Canada Pension Plan.

In December, 1983, the report of the parliamentary task force on pension reform recommended that home-makers be covered by the Canada Pension Plan. All members of the task force endorsed the recommendation with the exemption of one NDP member of parliament. Other groups and individuals have indicated in principle, their support for home-makers' pensions, including the National Action Committee on the Status of Women; the Canada Pension Plan advisory committee; the governments of Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick; the Hon. Jake Epp, Minister of Health and Welfare; and the Prime Minister of the country of Canada, Mr. Mulroney.

Despite this widespread support for home-makers' pension, the provincial and federal governments have not been able to arrive at an agreeable formula. Sometimes it takes one government with foresight and determination to get the ball rolling. The Government of Saskatchewan has decided it is time for Saskatchewan to again take the lead by introducing the first pension plan in Canada which embraces the contribution of home-makers.

In the months to come we will be encouraging the federal government, through the government here in Saskatchewan and other provinces, to follow our lead to develop a national home-makers' pension based on our model.

I won't go into detail about the technical aspects of the Saskatchewan pension plan; however, let me outline a few of the most important points. The Saskatchewan pension plan will be a voluntary plan open to all residents of Saskatchewan between the ages of 18 and 65. In addition, approximately 450,000 people could be eligible to benefit from a government-matching contribution. The plan will allow Saskatchewan residents to supplement their contributions to the Canada Pension Plan with contributions to the new Saskatchewan pension plan.

The Government of Saskatchewan will match contributions made by individuals with less than 25,800 in annual Canada Pension Plan insurable earnings and income from other sources. Participants eligible for the full government match of \$300 per year will be entitled to a guaranteed minimum pension of \$15 per month for each year the eligible participants contribute the matchable amount. For example, contributors who receive the maximum 300 government match each year who reach age 65 two years after the Saskatchewan pension begins operation, would receive a pension of \$30 per month. Without the minimum pension province a benefit of only \$11 per month would be paid.

The government has also responded to the situation of Saskatchewan seniors who have already retired and cannot benefit from the Saskatchewan pension plan. The

Minister of Social Services has announced increased payments for low-income seniors through the Saskatchewan income plan.

Shortly after taking office, this government doubled the monthly Saskatchewan income plan payments for single seniors, and increased payments to senior couples by two-thirds. In the seven years previous to 1982, those payments had gone up only \$5 a month, and I don't believe that that was a very striking kind of a situation. We knew that that was not enough for seniors in need, and we responded with help for our seniors.

Now we are acting again to move toward our objective that no one should have to retire in poverty in Saskatchewan — not those retirement women, I noted earlier, not those home-makers or part-time workers who have been left out of pension plans in the past; not the self-employed or the employees of small business.

I am confident that the future generations will view the Saskatchewan pension plan as another milestone in Saskatchewan's record of innovative social legislation, and therefore, Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to move, seconded by the member from Battleford:

That this Assembly congratulates the Government of Saskatchewan for its initiatives in creating the Saskatchewan pension plan and making Saskatchewan the first province with a pension plan to which all its residents can contribute.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the legislature, 38 grade 3 and grade 4 students from the Pleasantdale Elementary School in Estevan, Saskatchewan. They are accompanied by teachers and chaperons and bus drivers. The teachers are Jane Moriarity and Michelle Ward; the chaperon is Doreen Rieger; and the bus driver is Rick Rohatyn.

I would like all members of the legislature to welcome them in the normal way. I'll be meeting with them at 3:30 for a picture, and I want to welcome them here, and I hope they have a safe trip home and a really nice summer. Welcome to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MOTION UNDER RULE 16

Creation of Saskatchewan Pension Plan (continued)

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to join in speaking on the motion introduced by my colleague, the member from Morse, today.

In my opinion, the Saskatchewan pension program is one of the most innovative pieces of social legislation ever looked at in the entire continent of North America, and I

say that for a number of reasons. What we've seen happen over a number of years, Mr. Speaker, is certainly that many, many people have not found themselves at retirement in a position that they would like to be in at that time. They have not had the financial ability or the assets that could turn their retirement years into pleasant years. Certainly we see the ads on TV with people flying all over to exotic places, and we would all like to think that that's what our retirement would be like and that that is the kind of lifestyle that we would be able to enjoy.

(1445)

The reality is something quite different, Mr. Speaker, and we know that well. The federal government undertook to do a green paper on pensions and pension reform in, I believe, 1980. And the findings of that green paper were very, very disappointing. What they showed was that many, many of our senior citizens live in poverty, and in spite of those kind of actions, governments prior to this have not made a concerted and conscious effort to address that poverty.

Mr. Speaker, to compound the problem, we find that if you target in on where the largest problem lies in pension in the elderly poor, we find that problem lies with women. And it lies with those people for no fault of their own, but because the historical development of our country has virtually dictated that women would not be out in the labour force; that they would not be wage earners, and as such they were reliant on their husband in a family situation to provide them in their elder years.

Now in an example where, for example, there was some problem and the family was not able to amass pension assets, or they weren't able to amass real property which at retirement they could sell and use as a pension plan, then that family . . . and because women generally tend to live longer than men, particularly those women went into their elder years in a very, very difficult state.

Many of us will remember possibly our grandmothers and other elder women who not so long ago were cashing a pension cheque from the Government of Canada that was maybe \$70, and eventually it did go up a bit. But even to this day, Mr. Speaker, if you have to live on old age security or Canada Pension Plan, you do not live well.

What the Saskatchewan pension program does is to provide a vehicle whereby people, and primarily women, will be given an opportunity to develop a pension benefit for their later years. It does this in the best Saskatchewan tradition, a tradition of looking after yourself and building your own future and not particularly looking at someone for a hand-out.

The Saskatchewan pension program allows that for a minimum, or a relatively small monthly contribution or an annual contribution, that in most cases can be matched by treasury dollars from the provincial government — that an individual can over time accumulate a fairly comfortable pension.

I don't think that anyone would argue that people will retire in the lap of luxury based on the Saskatchewan pension program. I'm not sure that that's what the

program ought to be designed to do, but certainly what it does is it provides an opportunity for our future elderly people to look after their retirement to a level where it will be reasonable.

Certainly if over the course of a lifetime an individual is able to pay for their family home, and that should be a reasonable thing to expect in most cases, and if an individual is able to put away \$25 a month and that is matched by \$25 a month from the government, that would give that individual a pension at about age 65 of \$1,000 or a little better. So if they're looking at meeting their daily needs, their food and shelter and the electricity bill, those types of standard everyday needs, they will be able to do that without a great deal of difficulty. Top that up with anything else that they may accumulate as a family or a family unit and, Mr. Speaker, it's fairly clear that coming generations that will retire in a considerable degree of more luxury, or a considerably better situation than the previous generation of our province have enjoyed.

In fact it's been said, and the numbers show, that in the future no one in the province of Saskatchewan need retire below the poverty line, and that is a laudable goal. It's a tremendous thing to think that in our province we are now at a point where we will be able to guarantee that people will be able to live in their retirement years above the poverty line. That has not been the case here. All too often families, even if they accumulated assets during their life, wanted — for example in an agricultural province like Saskatchewan — wanted to pass the farm to the next generation they sacrificed in their later years to help out their children in succeeding generations. Programs like the Saskatchewan pension program will ensure that they will still be able to do that, to maintain the family assets and the family way of life, but also to live in relative comfort and security in their declining years.

As I've indicated, this is a very, very important program, particularly for Saskatchewan women. And if there is any doubt about that by members of this Assembly, I would encourage them to just take a walk up and down Main Street, Saskatchewan, and they will find that this program is incredibly well received, and particularly well received by farm women, we're finding.

The reason for that of course is that in the past, women on the farm, who work shoulder to shoulder with their husband, have been able to say, well now, as we approach our retirement, we'll have the farm to sell, and that is our pension plan. With uncertain times in agriculture, these people are now able to say, we need something else. And whether it's agriculture, small business, or any other area where there's not a typically built-in pension plan, such as in teaching, for example, or government service or any of those areas where you're an employee and part of your compensation package is the pension program, people out of those types of occupations now have a measure of security that they can buy into, and I believe that they're certainly entitled to it.

Now I know that there has been some criticism from the opposition about this program. And they've said, well why would you match dollar for dollar a pension for someone who may have a reasonable income? They may

make 30 or \$35,000 a year, but their wife is at home, and that wife can put money into this plan and be matched by government dollars. Well, I would suggest, why wouldn't we?

We match pensions for government employees, and they are among the best paid people in our society. We match pensions for teachers, and the teachers' pension plan in Saskatchewan, I believe, is the most lucrative pension plan in Canada. It is a very, very attractive pension plan. I have a colleague who is a school teacher who would like me to explain it to him. I'd be happy to, because as someone with an education degree who has an interest in pensions, I believe firmly that any teacher can retire very, very comfortably by taking the pension opportunities that are available to them and developing them to the limit, because they are very attractive.

And consequently, I believe that it's only fair and reasonable in a caring and compassionate society that we should now take that next step to extend pension benefits, security in elder years, to people who have previously not had those benefits.

So, Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleague, the member from Morse, in commanding the government for this very brace action and the show of initiative that they've taken to introduce the Saskatchewan pension program to the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I want to add a few words to the debate on this resolution. There obviously will be some people who will benefit from the government's pension plan, Mr. Speaker, but I think it's important to note that there will be many, many thousands of others who will never benefit at all. And that's one of the points that the members opposite fail to recognize when they speak on this resolution and when they speak on this Bill.

When you call any piece of legislation good social legislation, Mr. Speaker, you have to first of all consider how it benefits those who are most in need, while those who are most in need for a pension plan benefit nothing under this proposal, and that's where its shortcoming are, to the largest degree, Mr. Speaker.

The member from Morse said that the national home-makers' pension plan ought to be modelled on this proposal which is here before us in this Chamber. I disagree with him. I would hope that a national pension plan, a home-makers' pension plan, will do a better job than what this one will be to provide pensions for people who will not be provided pensions under the kind of thing that resolution speaks of.

No one should have to retire in poverty in Saskatchewan. I agree with the member, and I forget which one it was who said that, but once again this Bill does not deal with that question. There still will be many people in Saskatchewan retiring in poverty unless steps are taken to provide a full pension program that covers everyone.

There are people who are not retiring before the age of 65,

Mr. Speaker, people between the ages of 60 and 65. Many of them indeed are women; in fact, most of them are women. Most of them are widows. Many of them, whether they are men or women, Mr. Speaker, are handicapped in one form or another or suffer from ill health.

Those people are not addressed in this Bill, nor are they addressed by this resolution, and I think that that is indeed unfortunate and unnecessary. There could be a provision to provide some form of guaranteed income to a certain level — let's say, the level of the OAS (old age security) and the GIS (guaranteed income supplement) — for these people between 60 and 65 who now have the only option, and that is to go and receive welfare.

The New Democratic Party has a proposal, Mr. Speaker, to help those people. We have a proposal which would provide a guaranteed income to the level of at least a GIS and the OAS for those people between 60 and 65 who now have the only option, and that is to go and receive welfare.

The New Democratic Party has a proposal, Mr. Speaker, to help those people. We have a proposal which would provide a guaranteed income to the level of at least a GIS and the OAS for those people between 60 and 65 who can no longer work for various reasons. I am sorry that the government has chosen to ignore those people in this proposal, in this budget, and in any kind of proposals that they have.

Now at first glance no one can be against pensions; everybody's in favour of pensions. I think we can agree to take that at its face value. And at first glance this government's pension plan seems like a good idea. But when you look at some of the specifics in it, Mr. Speaker, here's what you find. I think it's been very well articulated in "Readers' Viewpoints" in the *Regina Leader-Post*, dated on June 24th. I'm going to use the figures that are quoted there because I think that they are accurate. It talks about:

... a women whose income is between zero and \$9,133 and who has an employed husband willing to make contributions on her behalf.

Well that particular women, Mr. Speaker, will benefit because the husband's income will be able to ... (inaudible interjection) ... Well the members make light of this article written by Mrs. Palma Anderson, a noted person in this province, and they laugh. And they laugh, Mr. Speaker, because they know that what's written here is right and correct.

But any women with an income of up to \$9,133 whose husband might happen to be the Premier or a cabinet minister or a politician and therefore can afford to make contributions — such a person will be able to benefit under the plan, and that's fine and good.

But a woman who earns up to \$9,133 and is a single mother, or is alone, is living below the poverty line.

Statistics Canada and the National Council of Welfare both estimate that approximately \$9,700 a year affords a single person a mere poverty-level existence. A single-parent woman with one child requires approximately \$12,800 to reach that poverty line.

Even members opposite, Mr. Speaker, couldn't stand up and in good conscience argue that anyone earning

incomes of that level or less are going to be able to afford to contribute to this pension plan that the government has put in. They will continue to remain poor, and they will continue to retire poor. And that is one of the injustices that the approach of this type of government continues to perpetuate in society.

But these people whose incomes only go up to that level or less will pay the subsidy or the matching amount that higher income people get from the public purse, because they will pay sales tax and they will pay income tax. They won't be able to afford to make contributions to a pension plan. But their taxes will go towards the \$300 that the wife of the wealthy family income situation will be able to get from the government.

And I think that that's unfair. I'm not going to vote against it, Mr. Speaker, because any kind of benefit of a pension plan, I think, is something worth considering. I'm pointing out that this government, in its approach, never, never considers the needs of people who are particularly in need. And once again they have proved that in this legislation. They take from low and middle-income people continuously so that they can benefit those who are more and better off.

(1500)

Now I'm going to quote another part of this article, Mr. Speaker. It goes on to say that:

Only the most blindly optimistic would claim that a single woman earning less than \$9,133 per year, living below the poverty line, could afford to contribute one cent to this plan. Just as they live, at best, a poverty-level existence before retirement, so after age 65 these women will no doubt continue to live below the poverty line. And this government once again has assured that to be the case.

For those who do manage to contribute to the plan and thereby obtain a pension, the 600 to \$1,000 a month the government estimates a home-maker contributing \$300 per year for 30 years will obtain, may not represent a significant net gain in pension income, given that she will likely no longer be eligible for the guaranteed income supplement.

So people now will contribute to this plan. They will lose their guaranteed income supplement. The federal government will once again be bailed out by the Saskatchewan taxpayer, as seems to be the approach of the government opposite, and the net gain will be negligible, if any at all.

And so the member from The Battlefords described this as "an innovative social legislation" — I quote from what he said. Well because it does not address these very serious problems and the needs of a large number of people, I do not want anyone to mistake this for innovative social legislation. It is not in any way innovative.

Now not only has this government inadequately dealt with the pension situation, but it has made sure that those

people who are poor, remain poor. Example: people who are working on minimum wage, and many of them are single women with families — that is a large number of the minimum wage earners in this province — have had a 25 per cent increase to the minimum wage in the last four years.

Can the member from Maple Creek in any way argue that those people are going to be able to afford to contribute to a pension plan?

An Hon. Member: — Yes, they are.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Oh, she says, yes, they are. Well that shows the kind of world she must come from, Mr. Speaker. She obviously lives in some kind of a fish bowl that doesn't understand what the problems of lower income people in society are. And I, once again . . . It just clearly identifies the philosophy of this government and how insensitive they are to the concerns that people have.

Another point, Mr. Speaker, is: there are voluntary plans of this nature in other parts of the world, and I wish that the government opposite had taken the time to study those plans. Because if you look at the experiences that exist in other places, you can learn something from them and make sure you don't make the same mistakes here. But the experience of these voluntary plans in other places of the world where they exist has shown that very few people in fact take part in them. And people of low income, almost to a total amount, do not take part in them . . .(inaudible interjection) . . .

Well the member from Morse talks about compulsory. It's not a question of compulsory; it's a question, Mr. Speaker, of making pensions available for everyone, not just a few.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. It's my duty to inform the member that his time has elapsed.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to say a few words on this pension Bill. I thought the Bill was neatly summed up in an article by Leonard Schiffrian of the Toronto Star when he said with respect to the pension Bill, the Devine government had tried to reinvent the wheel and got it wrong. That about sums up this government's effort with respect to a pension Bill.

The pension Bill, in and by itself, Mr. Speaker — there are some problems with the Bill in and by itself, and I'm going to get to those in a moment. The most serious problem, however, is not what it does do, but what it doesn't do. It does not provide a pension or a living allowance for older people, for those people who need it most. This pension plan is, both by logic and by experience with other similar pension plans, likely to be utilized by those who need the assistance least.

The maximum income beyond which one cannot qualify is a person income. That is irrational when one thinks about it. A family income, such as is used for old age pension and for the guaranteed income supplement, would be a great deal more rational. It is possible for families, both men and women indeed, to arrange to have all of the income in the spouse's hands and take

advantage of this.

Indeed in many cases, with the changes in The Income Tax Act now, the income will be in the hands of one spouse. With the new amendments to The Income Tax Act, a good deal of professional people, where one of the two marriage partners are professional, will have all of the income — the spouse will have none; the spouse will then qualify for this. And I think that's wrong.

This, Mr. Speaker . . .(inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Melville will no doubt have a lot of illuminating comments to make on the Bill with respect to taxing back the benefits.

Mr. Speaker, this is another form of investment. It is an investment pure and simple. It is a specialized kind of investment intended to accomplish a specialized purpose, but it is an investment. It is a very good investment because your contributions — not only do you get the interest and so on that is earned on the income, but you get a similar amount from the government, plus the interest earned on that money. So this is a very good investment.

That's fine if this is being made available to people in their retirement years who haven't sufficient income. That is not, I think, a wise social policy if the pension is being made available to spouses of high income earners who, as I say, are often professional people, sometimes business people.

So I say, Mr. Speaker, that as a matter of social policy, this which is . . .(inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the members no doubt are having difficulty following a relatively simple, logical statement. I don't think the public will have as much trouble as members opposite will.

Mr. Speaker, there may well be women and spouses, I suppose, who have a legitimate need for this. There will no doubt be some spouses in lower income families who will make use of it who will use this as a savings vehicle. The most serious problem with this pension plan, as I say, is not what it does. It provides a pension scheme for a group of people, by and large home-makers, who don't otherwise have a pension scheme. There are, Mr. Speaker, large numbers of home-makers who live their final years in poverty. A pension scheme for home-makers is something that is needed. But, Mr. Speaker, this will not assist those who are neediest.

There are two courses of action which would have been more rational. One, Mr. Speaker, would have been for the government to have pursued the federal government's Canada Pension Plan and a broadening of that. There have been some efforts to provide a national scheme which would assist everyone. That hasn't been done, and it has not proved to be an easy goal for those who have tried to accomplish it, but it would have been a great deal more rational. A provincial scheme which would have been of more assistance to lower income people might have met a more immediate need than this.

So I say, Mr. Speaker, that this, I suspect, will be an investment, but will by and large be an investment

vehicle for upper income people. It will no doubt meet some legitimate needs, will no doubt meet the needs of some home-makers who don't otherwise have a pension and can't get one and will need one; but I expect that it will be the subject of a good deal of abuse. By that I mean it will be purchased by people who simply see it as an investment. If they wouldn't have put money into this, they would have put money into a registered retirement saving or any one of a number of other investment vehicles. As I say, I think the most serious shortcoming in this plan is that it considers personal income and not family income.

Other schemes in this country which have been adopted, guaranteed income supplement and the Canada Pension Plan, to a lesser extent the Canada Pension Plan, but the guaranteed income supplement does deal with family income; so should this. If this had used as a ceiling a family income, a goodly number of the potential abuses would have been avoided.

Mr. Speaker, there are some other problems with this as well. There is very little in the way of restrictions on the government in terms of what they use to invest the funds. I think that is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker. There is no particular reason, given this government's track record, why we would want to trust this government with pension schemes. There is the SaskPen which shows every indicia of being a vehicle to use pension schemes to assist, often, Conservative supporters in development projects. They're not particularly good investments, Mr. Speaker, and the SaskPen investments are unfortunate in that they are not the normal type of conservative investments that pension schemes are usually invested in.

I was interested to note, Mr. Speaker, that the Harwood Hotel in Moose Jaw was one of the investments of SaskPen. I gathered that from the discussion the other evening. If that's the kind of thing that SaskPen is investing pension funds in, then all I can say is that this ought to have some very tight restrictions on it to keep this government out of pension funds. Pension funds should not be viewed as a source of risk capital for friends of the Conservative government. Pension funds should be invested in conservative investments which will give the fund some income and very little risk.

Mr. Speaker, there are any number of incidents where this government has mismanaged funds available to it. I suppose one might mention as a fact that the government came into the office with a balanced budget — with a series of 11 balanced budgets. This government . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Well I'm going to get to the teachers' superannuation in a minute. The member from Wadena will no doubt be waiting with bated breath.

The government came into office with a balanced budget; now has a \$2 billion deficit which shows every sign of running away with it. The government as well chopped up another success story in terms of management with Pioneer Trust.

Teachers' superannuation fund — the member from Wadena was expressing interest in the teachers'

superannuation fund. Teachers' superannuation . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. It's my duty to inform the member his time has elapsed.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was going to be with great pleasure that I was going to speak on the Saskatchewan pension plan, but the pleasure has gone out of my speech when I've heard the members opposite tell me that my wife doesn't deserve a pension plan. And I'm sure there are other women out there like my wife who take exception to the fact that the NDP are trying to deny them a pension plan.

They were the government for 11 years and they denied them a pension plan. They wouldn't do anything. Now they criticize what we've done and they say, oh, it's not good enough. It's third rate; it's fourth rate. Well it is a lot better than the nothing that they did in 11 years, and I can tell you it's a lot better than the nothing the CCF did in the other 20 years they were in government. Thirty-one years of rhetoric and no action, and now when we do something for women, they're trying to tell me that my wife doesn't deserve a pension plan.

(1515)

That reminds me of Sir John A. MacDonald, the first Prime Minister of this country, who had a propensity to drink a little. And once while speaking, he felt a bit ill, so he had to go behind the platform and vomit. And when he came back, he thought this might be a bit embarrassing, so he being a man of his wit indicated that, he apologized, but he had thought of those grits and that's how they made him feel.

Well what I heard from the members opposite here reminded me of that story, and that's how they made me feel when they told me and my wife, and all the women in my constituency, that they are not entitled to a pension plan because their husbands may have an income over \$25,000 a year. What they're saying is that every wife of every CN railroader in Melville — there being 510 of them — that none of those wives are entitled to a pension, that only their husbands are entitled to a pension. Well then I know how Sir John A. felt, and I feel the same way today when I hear that kind of information in this Assembly.

In addition the Leader of the Opposition, the man who wouldn't recognize women's rights in the constitution of Canada when he negotiated it, had the audacity to say the same thing, that his wife doesn't serve a pension. Now I don't know why . . . Did he include his daughter as well? Well it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that he has more respect for his family of Crown corporations than he does for his own family. And those are the kind of things that scare me about the thought of that party opposite ever becoming government again.

To go into the details of our plan, you have to look at the eligibility that everyone over the age of 18 is eligible, except if you are already on old age security or collecting from the Saskatchewan pension plan. And what the members opposite don't understand is that we are trying to encourage some degree of saving. And while this plan

will be aimed primarily at women — I don't apologize — it will be primarily conservative women who will take up this plan and save a little money, because it's conservative-thinking women who look ahead, who save up a little bit of money, even if it's not \$25 a month, but they will put away 5 or a little bit to take care themselves.

But the socialist women that they say they represent, and fortunately aren't many of them, and it's been suggested that they won't let the women of their party represent themselves. They want to speak for them and deny them a pension. Maybe they don't have to deny the socialist women a pension because their attitude will be: oh well, the government will take care of me; all those hard-saving, conservative women will save money, earn income, and they will take care of me; so why should I save? — just have the government give me some money when I retire. That is their attitude. It's not an attitude of building. And while men and women have been building this country, we are now encouraging women to join in in building the country, in working and in saving, and we recognize the value of taking care of children.

My wife is a mother, and initially when she gave up teaching to stay home with our children, to tutor two boys, two very special students — and she did teach special education, and she's doing it again; she now has two students — our sons. Initially, the attitude of the member's opposite — and they were the government then — had instilled even in the women of our neighbourhood an attitude that there was no value to taking care of children, there was no value in teaching these people, these two sons of mine, into becoming valuable citizens.

So other women would say, well, how can you stay home? You're not working. What a farce for anyone to say that my wife is not working. It has to be the greatest insult to mothers that exist. And, therefore, my wife has come to learn that when somebody says, what do you do? she says, I'm a mother, and I tell you, that is the oldest profession. You may think that you want to set up co-operatives of what you call the oldest profession, but I'm telling you that being a mother is the oldest profession, and there is no doubt or dispute about that whatsoever.

And what thanks does a mother get for practising her profession? Well first of all she gets no pay, and now you insist that she gets no pension plan. That is the supreme insult. And the people of my constituency, the mothers of constituency, the lower-income earners of my constituency will be very, very pleased about this plan.

And as a matter of fact, I've been in my constituency, and I've had nothing but good comments from not only mothers, but fathers — fathers saying that I will help put money into my wife's pension plan because I think this is a good thing. So this is a plan that will benefit the people who need it the most.

I want to give you some examples, Mr. Speaker, of how our population and our income figures break down in this province and who will benefit. First of all, if you divide the income of the population into quarters, one-quarter of the population has an income of under \$4,000, another

quarter has an income of under \$13,000. So half of all the people — that's population, not people working, but population of working age — have incomes under \$13,000. One-quarter of incomes are between \$13,000 and \$26,000, and the top 25 per cent earn more than \$26,000 per year. But when you break that down by sex, you find that in the bottom quarter of income, the zero to 4,000, women make up 70 per cent of the bottom quarter; and in the next quarter, the 4,000 to 13,000, women make up 60 per cent. And so the bottom half of income of population has a great preponderance of women in the bottom half, in the bottom two quadrants of the income of our population.

When you look at them, this is in direct contradiction of what the former minister of Finance, the member for Regina North East, knows about Saskatchewan. And when he says the rich will benefit, the top 25 per cent of income earners in this province will receive, from the provincial government under the Saskatchewan pension plan, zero dollars, and zero per cent of them will benefit. So the top 25 per cent theoretically, the richest people in Saskatchewan, will benefit to the extent of zero. The bottom 50 per cent, by income, will receive 70 per cent of the benefits of the Saskatchewan pension plan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that is providing a pension plan for people who need it most; for mothers, for grandmothers, for low-income earners, for farmers; for people employed in small business, where they cannot control their wages, where their employers cannot arbitrarily increase prices so as to increase wages. This bottom 50 per cent of the income bracket will get 70 per cent of the benefit.

And then the Leader of the Opposition and the members opposite say, well there might be a few high-income men whose wives will be able to save and develop their own pension plan. And as a cabinet minister it's no secret — I read my income in the Leader-Post from time to time — it is \$63,013 per annum. So therefore I am a high-income earner.

However, it seems to me that a woman like my wife, who is a professional mother, who receives no pay for her long days, who receives no overtime and no benefits whatsoever, and in addition who performs a service to society by educating and training two sons that one day will be income earners and not a drain on the society, that she should be entitled to a pension plan. In addition, because of our single-income family, we pay approximately \$1,000 a year . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. It's my duty to inform the member that his time has elapsed.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I conclude my remarks today, Mr. Speaker, I will be moving an amendment to this main motion. I want to, first of all, Mr. Speaker, discuss the pension plan that's before us, and also I would like to give a few personal views that I have of my own regarding pension plans in the province.

But I think that one should be very cautious when you see a pension plan put forward by the Conservative Government of Saskatchewan. I think that one would

only have to take a look at the mishandling of the pension funds that they are in charge of right now . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I've hit a sore spot over there. I will get down to the handling of the teachers' superannuation fund. But I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the members who are chattering from their seat over there, that I think that one has to be very careful when you put your pension funds in the hand of this government.

Let's just take a look at the teachers' fund, the superannuation fund for the teachers, who always had 7 per cent of their funds put into the superannuation fund and anything over that was also added — and it was also added by the Conservative government for the first three years. But now we take a look at the fourth and fifth years of this administration and we see that \$30 million of the teachers' superannuation fund, or the \$30 million that is over the 7 per cent, has now been put into general revenue to retire the type of a debt that this government has accumulated over the last five years, or the last four years and some months — a deficit, I might add, of over \$2 billion in operating debt. That \$30 million that they took out of the teachers' superannuation fund that was over the 7 per cent and added to general revenue, I think, is mishandling of that fund and should not have taken place.

I also want to touch a little bit on how the government handles funds. When we take a look at the Pioneer Trust affair, Mr. Speaker, and the letter that was written by the minister of Finance at that time who is in charge of the pension funds in this province, at that time the ill-fated letter that was written by the then minister of Finance, the hon. member from Kindersley, indicating in writing his support and then a few weeks later renegeing on that commitment to Pioneer Trust — and you see what has now happened.

We can also take a look at the flat tax that has been put on and that hits pensioners in this province. The member from Regina Lakeview feels that this is unfair that I should suggest that. But let me give him a little example of what this does to a person who is paying into a pension fund and where their funds are coming from. You say that you want everybody to get into this pension plan, or you want mainly women to get into it. I'm going to discuss this a little later, because I feel that a pension plan — we should have a pension plan in this province for everyone, and I think it's high time. I'm speaking personally when I get to that, and I will allude to what I'm going to say.

But let's take an individual who is paying into a pension plan and who is earning \$30,000 a year and your government, Mr. Member from Regina Lakeview, adds that flat tax. So before you have any deductions, if he's making \$30,000 a year, you take the flat tax off of the \$30,000 right off the bat which could be going into a pension fund. Then you go down the line and you take off all the deductions and you end up with a net income of \$20,000; then you take the normal tax off. So can you trust the Minister of Finance who will put on a tax on your complete earnings and then take off your deductions and tax you again. And that's the double taxation. But I think, and I'm speaking from my personal opinion, that I think that everybody in this province should have a pension

plan.

(1530)

I don't know, I think it may cost a lot of money, and it may be a lot of bureaucracy. But I think that anybody that goes out in the busy and is sawing logs, or if anybody is working on a farm and picking rocks, or if an individual is working in a cafe or wherever they work — if they're a teacher, or if they're a bank manager, or if they're a bank clerk, I think that they should all have to pay into a pension plan, and that pension plan, I feel, Mr. Speaker, should be portable.

I think that if a teacher wants to teach for five years and then decides that they want to go and work in a bank, or if they want to go and work for Sask Forest Products for a couple of years, I think they should be able to take that pension with them. Now you're implementing a pension program that's going to be geared at the farm wives and the mothers in the province, and I think that's good. But there are a lot of mothers who work in cafes, who work in Sask Forest Products, who work all over. I think if you had a portable pension plan, Mr. Speaker, that the teacher who has taught for 10 years and wants to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . If the member from Weyburn, Mr. Speaker, wants to get into this debate, then he will have his opportunity. But if he wants to continue to chatter from his seat, then I can't get my point across. But I'm saying that if a teacher wants to teach for 10 years and then wants to go out and work on a farm or in the bush or wherever it be for another five years, I think they should be able to take that pension plan with them. It becomes portable, and it should apply to everybody in the province. I don't care if you're picking rocks on a farm for two months and then you're going to go and do something else for three months, and you could take that pension and it would be portable. And I think that it would eliminate a lot of the burn-outs that we have in the professions.

And the member from Meadow Lake knows that, teaching for 25, 30 years, if he was able to go out and become a conservation officer for five years and take that pension with him, if it was completely portable, and then he could go back to his own profession. Or if you were a doctor or a farmer, or if you were a carpenter, if you were a plumber, whatever the case may be, I think we should take a look at a pension plan that covers everybody in the province and a pension plan that is portable, Mr. Speaker. And I say that in all sincerity.

I know that it would probably cost a lot of money. There may be a large bureaucracy involved, but I think that down the road when you take a look at the individuals who become 60 years of age and 65 years of age, the percentage of those individuals, men and women who do not have a pension plan, I think we have to work on that; we have to solve that problem. And maybe the only way that we can solve that is by not implementing a program that covers one segment of society, but I think we should take a look at a program that is completely portable to everybody that works in this province. And I think that that would make a lot of sense.

If the member from Weyburn, who is a doctor by trade — I don't know what kind of a doctor he is, but I believe that he is a veterinarian — but if he would quit chattering from his seat, I think he's starting to burn out already. If he had a portable pension plan, maybe he could go out and work in the busy for a couple of years and, you know, get your body back in shape. And when you have a healthy body, you have a healthy mind. So maybe . . . Or you could go out and commercial fish for a few months, and let me tell you, you'd have a strong back.

I think that, Mr. Speaker, we should take a serious look, and I would ask this government not to isolate one segment of society but take a look at a pension plan that would be totally portable and cover everybody. Down the road, 20, 30 years, let me tell you, it would pay off. The initial money that it would cost now, Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. The member's time has elapsed.

Mr. Petersen: — Well I'm quite happy to join this debate today, Mr. Speaker, but I'm quite saddened by some of the comments that members of the NDP opposition have made.

I believe it was the member for Regina Centre who stood up and said, well he thought the plan was a good one except it shouldn't apply in a case where a woman was married. If she's married, she's part of a family, and the family should be the part that pays the pension. He wants to make women a chattel. He wants to make them a slave. He wants to make them under the ownership of their husband. He wants to make them a part of the husband's income, not a person in their own right. He wants to take us back 40 years in history, Mr. Speaker. And I'm quite upset about that, and I'm sure most of the women listening today are as well. And if you don't believe that, go back and check the records.

Some of the members from the opposition are sitting here making very, very snide comments from their seats about mothers — about professional mothers. The member for Quill Lakes yells from his seat, when the member for Melville was speaking, who's a professional mother? The moose bellowed again, what's a professional mother? It's one of the oldest and most honoured professions there is in this world, Mr. Speaker — absolutely. I am really upset with that. I'm proud of the fact that we have moved this Bill, Mr. Speaker, to recognize women in society.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Petersen: — The NDP for the last 11 years that they were in power had rhetoric, Mr. Speaker. They spoke about women and the rights of women, individuality. How many women did they ever elect? None. How many women did they have in their cabinet? None. What did they ever do for women as far as pension plans are concerned? Nothing.

But they talked a lot, Mr. Speaker. They talked a lot and they're still talking. As a matter of fact, I've heard NDPism likened to that of a religion, and their hymn is: too little too late for too few. Well, Mr. speaker, 450,000 people in Saskatchewan will be eligible for this pension plan. And

the members of the opposition sit there and say: too little, too late, too few; and if you're married, you shouldn't qualify; and Lord help you if you should happen to be married to a man who happens to make a few dollars.

They want to try to tie women into being chattel again, and I disagree with that, Mr. Speaker. When they're talking about how many dollars it's going to cost, and they say someone can't afford to do this; someone can't afford this exorbitant pension plan. Well, Mr. Speaker, \$25 a month may be a bit difficult for some people to come up with. You're allowed to contribute 15 or 20.

If you put 50 cents a day away for your pension for your old age, Mr. Speaker, the price of a lousy cup of coffee every day, you're going to be able to reap the benefits 30 years later of up to \$1,000 a month. And they say that doesn't make sense. They say the average person can't afford it. I disagree with that, Mr. Speaker. If you take a look at the cost of a bottle of whisky — \$25, let's say — if the members of the opposition would give up just one bottle a month, they'd be able to supply themselves in their old age as well.

But, Mr. Speaker, pension funds have been a real contentious issue in this House. When we took office in 1982 we came upon \$3.7 billion in unfunded liability and pension funds that the NDP government, when they were in power, had siphoned off from teachers, from the public of Saskatchewan who had put their money into those pension funds in good faith. And now we're sitting with a \$3.7 billion unfunded liability. And that, Mr. Speaker, is how they balanced their budgets, on the back of pension plans.

Mr. Speaker, when you talk about providing for the people of Saskatchewan who can least provide for themselves, let's take a look at the seniors. Let's take a look at this group of people the NDP tell us that they're so concerned about. They were so concerned about them that under the Saskatchewan income plan they increased it by \$5 in seven years, Mr. Speaker — a whole \$5. Can you imagine that, Mr. Speaker? Can you imagine how happy those people were to get that extra \$5? I imagine you can, Mr. Speaker. It was an insult to those people. We took office and we doubled the Saskatchewan income plan. And just previously this year we increased it again.

Mr. Speaker, this is a Conservative government, a Conservative government that's supposed to be, according to the NDP, hard-hearted, vicious, cruel, uncaring. But, Mr. Speaker, the record speaks for itself. Who was unkind? Who was uncaring? Who was cruel? Who did nothing but talk? The NDP. They'd throw a little bit of a hand-out every once in a while — \$5. Big, hairy deal — five bucks. And they stand there in their sanctimonious way and say, we're the guys that look after the seniors; we're the guys who look after the underprivileged.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes, as the member from Melville said, it makes me ill just to listen to them — too little, too late, doom and gloom; nothing but empty rhetoric, again and again and again. And whenever, Mr. Speaker, someone comes up with a plan — someone comes up with an innovative idea like the Saskatchewan pension

plan — the members opposite try to run it down instead of providing constructive criticism and trying to help with it in trying to make it happen, and in hopes of maybe in future years making it better. Everything can stand improvement, Mr. Speaker. I'm not saying that the Saskatchewan pension plan is 100 per cent, but it's 100 per cent better than what we've got. We had nothing under the NDP. Now you have a Saskatchewan pension plan of which 450,000 Saskatchewan people are eligible to participate in.

Mr. Speaker, I think that's quite good. If you take a look at the group of people that we are trying to reach with this plan, home-makers, ordinary people, people who are working, self-employed; people who don't have access to the regular pension plans that RCMP officers have, that teachers have, that government employees have — common, ordinary people, Mr. Speaker, who are just trying to make a living and often have a rough time trying to provide for their future security. Many of them put money into their homes; many of them put money into their cars, their accessories for their house. Some of us try to buy farms and try to provide for our declining years by having a bit of a nest egg built up. But as it was pointed out, those things tend to change in value. Times can change, the economy can change. We're trying, Mr. Speaker. This will be one more way that some of us common, ordinary people can provide for our future years and not — I repeat — not be a drain on future generations.

That, Mr. Speaker, is something that the NDP could never understand. They would mortgage their children's futures from now until doomsday if they thought it would win them a vote, Mr. Speaker. They went out and bought potash mines, Mr. Speaker, and uranium mines. Do you know what \$600 million for the uranium mine that we have in the North could do for this Saskatchewan pension plan if we had it right now?

Mr. Speaker, we wouldn't have to be sitting here arguing about it. Instead of buying that potash mine . . . pardon me, or that uranium mine, they could have set up a Saskatchewan pension plan and used those dollars for that if they're so wild and so interested about a pension plan.

But oh no, Mr. Speaker. They were more interested in their family of Crown corporations, ever increasing, ever getting larger, taking over more and more, Mr. Speaker. And they left the common, ordinary family to fend for himself, and then made people feel better with empty rhetoric and \$5 handouts once in a while, and promises of gas rebates to farmers which they promptly took off after the election was over. That is the type of government we saw for 11 years, Mr. Speaker.

Let's compare that to the record of the province of Saskatchewan under the Conservative government. If you look at our programs that we've brought in in tough economic times for small business, Mr. Speaker, and farmers, many of whom will be eligible for the Saskatchewan pension plan, we will show you, Mr. Speaker, that when we say we're going to do something, we do it and we come through with it.

Eight per cent money for young farmers, Mr. Speaker, will help people get onto the farm. If they can access this Saskatchewan pension plan, Mr. Speaker, in future years, they will be able to retire from that farm in dignity and in some comfort no matter what happens in the farm economy.

Mr. Speaker, if you take a look at some of the programs that we have for small business — 8 per cent operating money for our small businesses — many of those small businesses, Mr. Speaker, are having difficult times, difficult times. And none of those small businesses have the access to a pension plan that teachers have, that RCMP officers have, that government employees have in general. Those small businesses will be able to access this plan. Employees in many of those small businesses will be able to access this plan.

A lot of those small businesses, Mr. Speaker, are having it tough, as I've said earlier. But with our 8 per cent money they'll be able to keep more staff on, perhaps create a little bit of a raise in their wages of the staff, and the staff will have access to a pension plan now, Mr. Speaker. And that pension plan . . .

Mr. Speaker: — I inform the member that his time has elapsed.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On the conclusion of my remarks, I will be moving an amendment in the following, which I will read:

That all the words following the word "Assembly" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

regrets that the Saskatchewan pension plan proposed by the government will be of little practical benefit to those most in need of the improved old age security.

(1545)

So we want to draw to the attention some of the pitfalls in respect to the pension. One of the things that this government promised when it assumed office is that it would have consultation with the people of Saskatchewan. And I'll tell you, with the women groups across this province, they're indicating that there has not in fact been consultation.

And in fact they're pretending to be so concerned about the women of Saskatchewan. And you know what they did when they entered office? We had in place a dental program which would help to take care of the teeth of young people, young children. And do you know what they did? They cut back on the improvements to the dental program. It's such an ironic thing that Tories would have the audacity to stand up and pretend that they are social conscience, that they are in fact originators of social programs.

And when it comes to looking at benefits to the women — and if you listen to what the women are indicating, one of the aspects that they have been pushing for for some time is equal pay for work of equal value. And this government has not addressed that, but I'll tell you that in Manitoba

under New Democratic Party government that issue has been addressed.

I look at what's happening in respect to the women in respect to government here in Saskatchewan. And while we were government we had a number of people, women that were deputy minister level; and I'll tell you, they don't have a single woman that is a deputy minister throughout their government. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, people of Saskatchewan will find it very, very hard to believe that Tories are in fact working towards social programs, when with the callousness that they have used in respect to the dental program.

And to raise the issue that New Democrats are not socially minded is a farce, and none of the public will believe it. Only in Saskatchewan and Manitoba did we have a family income program to help the lower paid people of Saskatchewan with families. We provided a family income program, the only two, and under New Democratic governments. No other Tory government in Canada instituted a family income program — only New Democrats. And in respect to dental programs, they reduced the expansion of the dental program.

And when you look at this here particular proposal, Mr. Speaker, you will find that those on very low incomes, from zero to \$9,133, those women — if they are a single parent, for instance, maybe with a child — I'll tell you that they are not able to be able to put aside a contribution to a pension. It will be next to impossible because they're below the poverty line, and there is no provision where people to participate in this pension, who are in fact earning below the poverty line.

And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, you know what — this is another headline seeker; this is a pretence that they're going to do something for the women of Saskatchewan. There is no sincerity in their proposal because, if there was sincerity, they would have consultation, and they didn't have any; if they in fact believed that people on the lower end of the scale, those below the poverty line, if they believed and wanted to help them prepare for a pension . . . And I'll tell you, they'd have to modify the pension from what they're proposing, because let there be no mistake:

For a woman whose only source of income is the 9,133 or less that she earns, the plan is useless.

This is what a group of women say who have analysed the plan.

And they stand and they shake and they say, oh yes, it's wonderful. Why didn't you in fact . . .

An Hon. Member: — Tell us it's Palma Anderson.

Mr. Koskie: — Well that's right, it is. It is Palma Anderson. And what they're saying is Palma Anderson has no right to put forward an analysis of their pension plan.

I'll ask you, why don't you come into this legislature and why aren't you in fact standing up and indicating all of the groups, all of the groups . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. It is my duty to inform the Assembly that the time under rule 16 has elapsed.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask for leave of the Assembly to move down the order paper to government orders now, immediately following the rule of 16 debate.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Mr. Birkbeck: — May I have leave to introduce a group of students, please.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Birkbeck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the pleasure to day to introduce a group of students. I do this on behalf of the Deputy Premier, Mr. Speaker. The students are from Redvers Elementary School, Redvers, of course, in the Deputy Premier's constituency. They are grade 6 students. They are numbered 28 in numbers of course.

I'm going to be able to meet with the group — I want them to understand that — to make sure that they have an opportunity to have some refreshments, to make sure they get their pictures taken. And I will be meeting with them on behalf of their member who unfortunately is busy with other business today and couldn't be here to introduce them.

So I trust that they've had a good tour, and I would imagine that they are visiting other parts of the city as well. I'm going to look forward to meeting you and sharing what information I can with you and answer any questions you may have. So I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming the students here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 48 — An Act to establish the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency and govern its activities and to provide for an appeal board with respect to certain assessment matters

Mr. Chairman: — I would like to ask the minister to please introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, beside me Mr. Dave Innes, deputy minister of Urban Affairs. And then also assisting us today will be Mr. Keith Schneider, assistant deputy minister of Urban Affairs; Mr. Dave Robinson, assistant executive director, Saskatchewan Assessment Authority; Mr. John Edwards, assistant director of municipal finance branch.

Clause 1

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few remarks, and a number of questions which I will want to ask the minister with respect to this Bill. I think, obviously, it is one of the pieces of legislation before us that has received a considerable amount of attention from the various sectors of the public and, I think, concern that

has been very legitimate and well founded.

I want to say that I think this legislation can best be described as legislation which is typical of the countless boondoggles that have resulted from the kind of mismanagement that we've seen from this government and with its lack of any sense of direction. It's a boondoggle of the highest order.

Now the minister presented the Bill, made his second remarks without any due consideration for the interests of certain groups in this province, and the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association is one of them. And I notice in the press recently that now he's saying it's not carved in stone.

I want to simply say that, had this government and the minister taken the time to consult with the Saskatchewan school trustees, to consult with people like the cities of Regina and Saskatoon, the difficulties which the minister faces and has faced for the last number of days, he would not have had to face. And it's really typical of a government which really will do anything that thinks it can get away with, and then when it gets caught, might react depending on the political strength of those who object. And that point, I think, has to be made and underlined when we consider this legislation.

And I simply want to say that there is no government that can govern properly simply by responding to polls or by delaying and covering up by studies of other studies, as we've seen it with so many situations here like the bingo inquiry, which is one of them, and other such kinds of things that have happened.

Mr. Chairman, the government has spent over \$500,000 on a Local Government Finance Commission — over \$500,000. That's half a million dollars on the Local Government Finance Commission. And now, before that high profile commission is even given the opportunity to present its final report, which it is indicating it is supposed to provide by the end of this month — that's when it's due — we see the minister come rushing in with a legislation which is flawed. And now wonder it's flawed. After having set up the mechanism to discuss and deliberate and consult, they pay no attention to the results of that consultation. In fact they don't even wait for the final recommendation.

The Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, has said the commission is a waste of money because they've said the government does not intend to pay any attention. And they're right. The evidence is here. And so those associations, as far as I know, have pulled out of the Local Government Finance commission operation because of their disappointment.

Almost everyone who is involved has been critical of this Bill establishing the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency which the government opposite has pretended to be an independent agency. And I will refer to a clause in a moment or two which I think clearly indicates it has no intention to have it become an independent agency.

And I simply say to the minister that had you, Mr. Minister, followed the appropriate process, and had you been honest in your pretensions of consultations, there is no doubt that everyone could have been satisfied. As it is, your motives, I have to say, or certainly the motives of your government, are questionable.

I have here an editorial which is from the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* which refers to this Bill. And it says in the editorial, and I think quite accurately that:

The creation of this new agency was recommended by the provincially appointed Local Government Finance Commission which had an interim report and which was going to have a final report at the end of this month.

And it said:

The new structure totally ignores education.

Now Education spends about half of the property tax dollars in Saskatchewan — half of the property tax dollars. One would have thought that it would have only made sense by any reasonable people considering such a proposition that Education would have a role to play in the assessment management agency.

(1600)

The other thing about this Bill, Mr. Chairman, is that it's saying to municipalities, some of whom may choose not to belong to SUMA or may choose not to belong to SARM because they are voluntary association, it's saying to them they are automatically excluded and that they will have no say in the assessment of property in Saskatchewan.

Another sector that's left out — and I point this out to the minister, and I hope that he is aware of it already — is the city of Regina and Saskatoon which, if I am correct, have about two-thirds of the total assessment in the province, but they may not necessarily have any input into the commission. And both the councils in Regina and the council in Saskatoon — and I know at the council meeting yesterday in Saskatoon this was discussed at great length — and the mayor of Saskatoon, Mr. Cliff Wright, have said that that is a flaw. As a matter of fact, Mayor Cliff Wright has said in no uncertain terms that what is happening is that there is a politicizing of the assessment process by this government.

The editorial concludes with the following comment:

Some additional thought should go into this initiative. One thing that might be revealed is that it is far from certain such an addition to the assessment process in Saskatchewan is either necessary or desirable.

The government acted in haste, Mr. Chairman, obviously, and many have recognized that it has acted in haste.

I suggest to the minister that with all of the shortcomings that are inherent in this Bill, probably the best thing that the government could have done is what it has done with

two or three other pieces of legislation, and that is simply pull it and let the government finance commission make its final report, have the appropriate and sincere and real consultations, and then come forward with a Bill that made appropriate sense.

The interim report of the commission, Mr. Chairman, said that there should be . . . school divisions have one representative on a seven-member board of directors. And I simply have to ask: when this was considered in cabinet, where was the Minister of Education — where was the Minister of Education? Not a word was she saying about the lack of representation for school trustees on the assessment management agency. Not a word did she say in second reading, and this is the minister of the Crown whose role it is to speak for education — not a word.

An Hon. Member: — Consultation again.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, yes, they talk of consultation, but the fact of the matter is that the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association were not consulted about the draft of the Bill. They did not receive a copy of the Bill. It was quite a number of days when I contacted the SSTA when they had not yet received a copy of the Bill; in fact I took it upon myself to send it to them. And it was simply an attempt by the government, with the acquiescence of the Minister of Education, to slide it through and make sure that it was gone by before anybody could do something about it.

Fortunately enough, that didn't happen. It was not allowed to slide by. And so school trustees — I have a whole file of letters that they have written — have made it clear that they were concerned. And I would only hope that the minister has now reconsidered and that some changes will be made that are meaningful changes with regard to the representation by those people who represent 50 per cent of the property tax dollar in Saskatchewan when it comes to expenditure.

I have an amendment, Mr. Chairman, which I am quite prepared to propose under the appropriate clause, which will change that. It's an amendment that would amend section 6 of the printed Bill in which it would provide for the representation of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, which is what the recommendation of the commission was, and I will table that amendment if the page would come forward, please.

Obviously there will need to be subsequent amendments to it, dealing with all the other clauses and sections of the Bill, and I have them too. If they're necessary, we can provide them. If the government is not prepared to do its work, we're prepared to do it for them, Mr. Chairman.

Now I want to make a comment before I go on to some specific questions — a comment about the so-called independence of this assessment management agency. In section 8, I believe it is, Mr. Chairman, it says the following; it deals under the section of conflict of interest. Section 8 reads:

Notwithstanding The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, where a member of the Legislative Assembly is appointed as a member of

the board, he is not, by reason only of the appointment or of any payment made to him pursuant to subsection 6(9), required to vacate his seat and is not disqualified from sitting or voting in the Legislative Assembly.

Now I ask: if it is supposed to be an independent agency, why is there a provision in this Bill for the appointment of a member of this Legislative Assembly, who would obviously be a member of the government? It puts a lie to the claim that it is intended to be an independent agency.

I also have an amendment to that section 8, Mr. Chairman, which I will table a copy of and move later, in which it removes section 8(1), which makes reference to the appointment of a member of the Legislative Assembly, because if it is to be an independent agency, it should truly be an independent agency.

Mr. Chairman, in concluding I simply have to say that this has probably been a piece of legislation that's seen more stumbling and bumbling around than any other besides the "Wire-haeuser" Bill which we are considering here in committee and hopefully later today. Have I mispronounced it? Weyerhaeuser. Well it's a bit of a haywire deal. It's a bit of a haywire deal, so I think calling it a "Wire-haeuser" Bill is probably quite appropriate.

But, Mr. Minister, I ask you: why did you not, when you introduced this legislation, consider it important enough to include in the Bill representation by the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the member opposite has made a number of comments that I should respond to. I think at the outset of our consideration of this particular piece of legislation, first of all I'm pleased that this legislature will be, I trust, enacting a Bill to establish an independent assessment management agency in the province.

This is something that the Local government Finance Commission has recommended, and of course the Local Government Finance Commission has had input from many, many people and organizations around the province. As well, the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) are very supportive of the concept of an independent assessment management agency being established.

And I believe this is likely something that should have been done some time ago. It was not. And I'm pleased that our government is able to move this particular piece of legislation.

I should indicate that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association was consulted as much as two to three months ago concerning the nature of the Bill; the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities was, as well; and they, of course, are representative of the vast majority of municipal councils which exist here in the province. For example, the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association represents 99 per cent of urban councils here in the province. So there was

substantial consultation through the Local Government Finance Commission process, and there was substantial consultation with the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association and, as well, with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities.

My understanding is the Minister of Education some time ago was in discussion with the president of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association concerning this particular issue. It was not raised at that particular point in time as being a concern of the trustees and was not brought forward to us until such time as the Bill in fact was tabled. And I myself have had considerable discussion with the president of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association; I understand the Minister of Education has, and we will be bringing forward House amendments to accommodate the membership of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association on this particular agency on its board.

As it pertains to the Saskatoon situation, as I indicated, our discussions have been with the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association that represents 99 per cent of the municipal councils in our province. They have some disagreement with the Saskatoon city council. Nevertheless, we have listed to the concerns of all parties, and it is our opinion that the way the Bill is presently written, which would require the urban municipalities association to consult with the larger cities prior to appointment of a member, that that in fact will give the larger cities the opportunity to be involved and consulted.

Thirdly, as it relates to the conflict of interest provision, it was felt appropriate to have this particular section, section 8, included in the proposed legislation because it might very well be from time to time that there may be a member of the Legislative Assembly, who would have substantial and considerable expertise in the area of assessment, and that it would be appropriate to appoint that particular individual. As well, it might be that either the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association or the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities may want to appoint one of their members, who also happens to be a member of the Legislative Assembly, to represent their particular organization.

Well that is highly unlikely. It was felt that both options should be included as potential options. I don't anticipate that it is likely that an appointment would be made concerning a member of the Legislative Assembly, but it was felt that this would not be an unreasonable thing to include.

So as far as it relates to the independence of the agency, of course there will be five people appointed by organizations that have nothing to do with the provincial government in the sense of being run by the provincial government — two from the urban municipalities side, two from the rural municipalities side, one from the trustees side — and so of course the independence of the agency would be assured by such a dominant majority on the board. And of course the chairman would only be appointed after consultation.

So I think that the concerns of the member opposite have

been adequately addressed. I'm pleased that the Bill is before the Assembly, and I hope in very short and due course that we will be able to have an independent assessment agency here in the province.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, obviously the work that the opposition did and that Saskatchewan school trustees did has been effective. I fear to think of what would have been the case if the Bill had been not spoken about and delayed for two or three days so that people out there who are concerned would not have had an opportunity to react. You got caught, basically; you got caught trying to snow somebody, and now you have to do something about it. But since there will be amendments — I've already indicated to the House the ones I have tabled — that we're prepared . . .(inaudible interjection). . . Yes, we've tabled them. We were prepared to move those amendments and we still are.

You didn't address the question, Mr. Minister, and I'll rephrase it somewhat to make it simpler. Why was the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association not consulted on the draft of this Bill before tabling in the House? Obviously it should not have been considered to be a controversial issue. It's not a tax measure where you have to not tell people ahead of time what the tax provision is going to be so that they can't make money on it, or lose money on it, or whatever. Why was the school trustees association not consulted with the draft of the Bill, as is the normal process? I'm sure you do it with all your other legislation, as any other minister does on these kind of Bills. What was the problem?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Well I indicated to the member that the Minister of Education had been in discussion with the president of the trustees association some time ago and had raised the matter at that time. My understanding is that concerns were not expressed at that particular point in time; nothing was forthcoming after those discussions. As a consequence, it was felt appropriate to carry on with the membership that had been proposed in the original draft of the Bill.

(1615)

And of course I think one can understand that municipalities have been much more involved in the matter of assessment than trustees have been in the past, and I can give good examples of the functions that municipalities have pertaining to assessment, which school boards do not have. And I think that explains the matter.

Nevertheless, as I indicated, the trustees did press their point. I did meet with the chairman of the trustees association; I understand the Minister of Education did . . .

An Hon. Member: — When?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Just very recently. And I indicated before that the Minister of Education, if you had been listening, had in fact discussed the matter a long time back with the president, and the matter was not raised after that.

So, as I indicated, we will be bringing forth House

amendments to accommodate membership of the trustees association on the agency.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Once again, we will support . . . I've had a chance now to look at the amendments, and we will support them because they were our amendments, initially, and the issues which we have raised.

If the Minister of Education, Mr. Minister, had consulted with the school trustees association — I don't accept what you say, but had she — then obviously the Minister of Education has very little influence in your cabinet. Because if she truly had consulted with the school trustees, the school trustees would have told her in no uncertain terms: here is the recommendation, the interim recommendation of the Local Government Finance Commission respecting property management in Saskatchewan. And any minister of Education doing his or her job would have dug in at the cabinet table and said: over my dead body; you're not going to leave out school trustee representation from the management agency.

Something went wrong, and that's the point that's been made. I'm not going to pursue it; I think the point has been well established. Once again, the method of the operation of your government, that is what's at question here. You will try anything if you think you can get away with it. Well you didn't get away with it, and so now you've got to make some amendments, and we're glad that you're making them. If you hadn't have made them, ours were ready and we would have made them.

I resent to some degree, on the part of school trustees and as an educator, your insinuation — although you do not specifically say it — that somehow school trustees have a less important role to play than people in municipalities. I always thought all local government people were important. They spend 50 per cent, approximately, of property tax dollars. They are relying more and more, under your administration, on property taxes to pay for education. Surely they should have a voice on as important a function as assessment if you're going to have an assessment agency that is independent and run as you have proposed it.

Mr. Minister, I have another question and it also has some concern; it has concern among all local government organizations. The question is this: it was recommended in this report — which obviously you do not pay any attention to — and in the discussions that you had with SUMA and SARM and SSTA prior to the discussion on any Bill, but the discussions on this report, all of those organizations said, we would like to appoint people who we choose to appoint, not necessarily always elected mayors or councillors or aldermen or trustees. I believe that still to be their position, and that's where the mayor of Saskatoon refers to as potentially politicizing this body.

I am not suggesting that councillors or mayors or school trustees cannot do an extremely adequate job, but that's for them to decide, whether they may not have wanted to appoint one person who may have particular expertise in the whole question of assessment. Maybe it's an administrator that's well-known in one of our local governments or school divisions. Maybe it's somebody from the public, but it should be their choice and not the

government choice. Why did you chose, Mr. Minister, not to give them that right to appoint the person of their choice?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — We wanted the majority of the membership of the board to be people that were elected by individuals at the local level — people elected by individuals who live in rural municipalities, people elected by individuals who live in urban municipalities, people elected to sit as a trustee on a local board.

We felt that if this assessment management agency was going to be sensitive to and represent the real concerns of individuals at the local level, then in fact we should have local elected officials. Yes, we could have had bureaucrats sit on the board, and I'm sure that there are very, very competent people in local bureaucracies, as there are in the provincial bureaucracy, but we felt that, at the outset of the establishment of this agency, it would be very, very important for this particular agency to be directed, not by people who work in a bureaucracy, but to be directed by people who, in one sense, are very accountable to people at the local level who have been elected by individuals at that particular local level. We felt — we still feel — that that is the appropriate way for this particular agency to be governed.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, as I indicated, I am not going to pursue this at length since we have resolved, I think, some of the major issues here.

I simply say that . . . I should pause. Up in the gallery is Mr. Jake Volk and a couple of other members of the SSTA, who I do not know personally. I know that he represents the school trustees here, and I would like to extend my welcome and everybody else's. I know that he and the SSTA will be pleased about the changes that are being proposed here.

Just a comment on your comment, Mr. Minister. That is that you thought, the government thought, Big Brother government thought, that you had to do it a certain way. School trustees, rural councillors, urban councillors, had a different idea. They really sincerely believe in an independent assessment agency. Somehow you decided what you thought was more important than what they thought. We could debate that for the afternoon and probably accomplish nothing. I just simply want to say that I don't agree with that process, and any government of which we in this caucus would be a part of certainly would not have part of that kind of a process.

I want to ask you some specific questions. Funding arrangements. I understand that in the first year the funding of this agency will be done by the provincial government where there's a \$5.5 million budget. I may be wrong on the figure; you can correct me. What are the funding arrangements for the years after? Is there a 50-50 sharing? Can you outline that to the House?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Well I want to make a number of comments in response to the criticisms that have come from the member opposite. First of all, he indicated that we paid no attention to the report of the Local Government Finance Commission. That is simple nonsense. This Bill is here because the Local Government

Finance Commission has made the recommendation that there be an independent assessment agency, and that in fact is their final recommendation. They will not be bringing in another recommendation with regards to the assessment matters in the province. They have recommended that there be an assessment agency, and that is in fact what we have been responding to.

Then he suggests that somehow we are imposing something upon local governments. I would remind the member opposite that when your party was in power, there never was an opportunity for anybody at any level of local government to be involved in directing assessment. Assessment was something which you held close to the heart of the provincial government, and you weren't willing to give it up to people at the local level. And there are those who argue, and perhaps quite rightly, that in fact assessment was politically directed under the former NDP administration.

Well what we are doing by setting up an independent assessment agency, and by permitting councillors from rural municipalities and councillors from urban municipalities and a representative from the trustees association to be involved in directing the assessment agency, is to ensure that that kind of potential for politicization that was there before is no longer there today. and that is exactly why we have moved in the direction that we have.

Third, the member opposite suggested that somehow, in the past, trustees had been on the same level as others were when it came to assessment matters, and he knows that is simply not the case. The Local Government Finance Commission, I think, recognized that because they recommended one trustee, and they recommended four people from SUMA and SARM. So there is a substantial difference.

The member opposite knows full well that, for example in the four large cities, where assessment has been a function of the local municipalities, that school boards have had nothing to do with assessment in the past. He knows that. He knows that school boards do not hear appeals on assessment issues. He knows that school boards cannot grant tax abatements or reductions. Those have always been in the purview of local municipal councils, and consequently councils have been much more actively involved in the issue of assessment than school boards have been in the past.

So I think that he needs to recognize that there is a significant difference between the function of local councils on the one hand and local school boards on the other hand, and it's important to make that particular point.

As it pertains to the financing of the independent agency, the government will carry on its particular commitment, as it has been in the past, over to the new, independent agency. Any additional dollars which the agency may want to spend over and above the amount that is coming from the provincial government — that those incremental dollars would be cost-shared, 50 per cent of those new dollars coming from the provincial government and 50 per cent of those new dollars coming from SUMA and

coming from SARM, coming from those local municipalities.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm looking at this interim report. It says here: Property Assessment in Saskatchewan: interim report of the local government finance committee. Now if that's not an interim report, I'm not sure how clear you have to make it.

I also want to point out that the school trustees, if I am correct, have been traditionally a member of — I'm not sure exactly of the right title, but a council or an advisory council on assessment? I think that's correct. This Bill was even proposing to eliminate their function in that. But that is no longer a problem if the amendments, which you and I both have proposed, proceed.

Mr. Minister, can you very briefly outline, besides the fact that there are . . . it's now going to have different types of people on the board, can you outline for me what this assessment agency will be able to do — not who the people are going to be involved, but what the assessment agency will be able to do which the former system was not able to do?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Well the new agency will be able to make independent assessment decisions, driven by and governed by priorities of local government, which previously was not able to be done. I mean, that's the fundamental difference between this Act, what has been proposed today, and what has been the case in the past.

So there is a . . . It's a difference in governments; that's essentially what this Bill is talking about.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — In other words, its functions will not change at all. You're solving none of the assessment difficulties that have been around us for quite some time, Mr. Minister.

(1630)

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Well the number of these things that previously would have been done by the minister will now be done by the agency. There are some new things, for example, on page 8, section 12:

(h) undertake research and studies into valuation practices and procedures and shifts in taxation;

(g) consult as it considers advisable with municipal councils (and so on).

I think it's fair to say that the general kinds of things that were done previously by the assessment authority will continue to be done in the future. I mean, obviously when you're talking about assessment, you're not going to have any radical departures or additions or changes in the future in terms of functions or things that are actually done as it pertains to assessment. Those kinds of activities would naturally continue on into the future.

What is substantially different here, of course, is that now those activities will be driven and motivated by the local level rather than under the umbrella and the authority of the provincial government or an individual minister.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — With respect to the appointment of representatives by SUMA, SSTA now, and SARM, what's the process? Will these associations actually appoint or name their two people on their, Mr. Minister, or is there some selection process which you will employ, or whoever is the next minister? Are the two people who these associations name, the people who actually will be appointed?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Yes.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Final question. In other words, you will not be saying, give me four name, I will pick two; you will take the two? I want that on the record. I'm not pursuing it for any particular reason other than I think it's . . . This has been raised with me, and I think it's important we get that.

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Yes, well, we are concerned that when you establish an independent agency and that you ask SUMA and SARM and the trustees to put forward their representatives on that agency, obviously it shouldn't be the provincial government who is deciding who the trustees are or who the councillors are. And so we concur that those particular people whose names are put forward will be the ones that will be appointed.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2

Mr. Chairman: — There's an amendment to clause 2, which reads as follows:

Section 2 of the printed Bill. Amend section 2 of the printed Bill:

- (a) by relettering clauses (g) to (o) as clauses (h) to (p) respectively;
- (b) by adding the following clause after clause (f): "board of education" "(g) 'board of education' means a board of education within the meaning of The Education Act";
- (c) by relettering clauses (p) and (q) as clauses (r) and (s) respectively; and
- (d) by adding the following clause after relettered clause (p): "SSTA" "(q) 'SSTA' means the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association".

Clause 2 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 5 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 6

Mr. Chairman: — Clause 6. There are amendments. Number one:

To amend section 6 of the printed Bill:

- (a) by relettering clause (1)(d) as clause (e);

(b) by striking out clause (1)(c) and substituting the following:

"(c) one person nominated by SSTA who is a member of a board of education;

(d) one person nominated by the minister, after consultation with SARM and SUMA; and";

(c) by renumbering subclause (4)(c)(iii) as subclause (iv);

(d) by striking out "and" after subclause (4)(c)(ii);

(e) by adding the following subclause after subclause (4)(c)(ii):

"(iii) appointed pursuant to clause (1)(c), on the earlier of:

(A) the day specified for the termination by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation, in writing, of SSTA; and (B) the day on which he ceases to be a member of a board of education"; and

(f) by striking out "clause (1)(c) or (d)" in the first line of renumbered subclause (4)(c)(iv) and substituting "clause (1)(d) or (e)".

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I just want to say that, Mr. Chairman, my amendment is now included with respect to these provisions in these amendments so I don't find it necessary to move it.

Clause 6 as amended agreed to.

Clause 7

Mr. Chairman: — There is an amendment which reads as follows:

Amend section 7 of the printed Bill:

(a) by striking out "SARM and SUMA" in the second line of subsection (1) and substituting "SARM, SUMA and SSTA";

(b) by striking out "SARM or SUMA" in the first line of subsection (2) and substituting "SARM, SUMA or SSTA";

(c) by striking out "(a) or (b), SARM or SUMA" in the third line of subsection (3) and substituting "(a), (b) or (c), SARM, SUMA or SSTA";

(d) by striking out "SARM or SUMA" in the first line of subsection (4) and substituting "SARM, SUMA or SSTA";

(e) by striking out "(a) or (b)" in the last two lines of subsection (4) and substituting "(a), (b) or (c)";

(f) by striking out "(a) or (b)" in the second line of subsection (5) and substituting "(a), (b) or (c)";

(g) by striking out "SARM or SUMA" in the third line of subsection (5) and substituting "SARM, SUMA or SSTA";

(h) by striking out "SARM or SUMA" in the first line of subsection (6) and substituting "SARM, SUMA or SSTA".

Clause 7 as amended agreed to.

Clause 8

Mr. Chairman: — There's an amendment which reads as follows:

Amend section 8 of the printed Bill:

(a) by adding "or board of education" after "municipality" in the second line of subsection (2); and

(b) by adding "or board of education, as the case may be" after "municipality" in the last line of subsection (2).

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I think we're on "Conflict of Interest," section 8. Mr. Minister, in your amendments does it deal with the question of the appointment of a member of the Legislative Assembly, or not? You do not deal with that one?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — No, that is remaining in the Bill.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Minister, I indicated that I have some concern about that. I think if it's truly an independent agency, then I do not know why the government should be able to appoint a member of its caucus to the board of this assessment agency. I'm not questioning the abilities of anyone who might be appointed; that's not the issue here. The issue here is the question of independence or a facade, and I'm worried that what we have here is a facade.

I indicated in my initial remarks that I thought it was important we deal with that question, and I tabled a copy of an amendment. If it's in order, Mr. Chairman — you'll have to indicate to me whether it is; I think it is — I would like to move an amendment to section 8 of the printed Bill. It's an amendment which I move by myself and seconded by my colleague, the member from Regina Centre:

Amend section 8 of the printed Bill by striking out subsection (1) and renumbering subsection (2) as section 8.

Essentially what that does is removes the provision for the appointment of a member of this Legislative Assembly. It could be a Legislative Secretary, but I will pass this in first.

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Chairman, I understand that the precedent for permitting a member of the Legislative Assembly to sit on an independent agency such as this was in fact established by the former government when they set up the Wakamow Valley Authority. And I understand that The Wakamow Valley Authority Act, if that's the correct title, does in fact permit the appointing of a member of the Legislative Assembly to sit on that particular agency, which one would of course deem to be

a fairly independent agency.

So I think the precedent for what we are doing has already been established. It was established by the former government. It's not something that I disagree with. I think it's an appropriate kind of a provision in legislation. I would have thought that the member opposite would have been aware of that before he moved his amendment.

I just offer that comment to him, and I would urge all members of the Assembly to defeat the amendment. I think that the Bill as it is worded is appropriate and is in keeping with traditions in fact that were even established by the former government.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Minister, I don't think you can make the analogy between the Wakamow Valley Authority and the independent assessment management agency of Saskatchewan. The government has made big about their total commitment to the independent agency.

What the minister is saying, there is no precedent. That is not a precedent. Development of a recreation area or a park area or a land set aside for green areas, where both the municipal governments and the provincial government are spending money on its development, has got now parallel to the establishment of an independent assessment management agency.

I say, Mr. Chairman, and I say to those private members back there who are not in the cabinet and therefore are not privileged to all that information which their cabinet never shares with the, please consider what your cabinet is doing here. They are saying they want to be able to have a watch-dog over this agency, which is supposedly independent, and they're prepared to appoint one of their own to sit on it.

That puts into question the whole idea of an independent assessment management agency. We object to it. We have an amendment, which we propose to delete that provision in the Bill. The members back on the government side of the House may choose to vote against the amendment; that's a choice they will make. We will be asking that it be done on division because we want to make it very clear and for the record where we stand on this and point out to the public where the government stands.

I think it's quite a legitimate amendment. I would hope the minister might reconsider and urge his members to vote for the amendment. I'm surprised he didn't have the amendment here along with all the other amendments, because I think it's as important as the other ones.

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I would simply respond in concluding debate on this amendment, that if this amendment were passed, in fact, you would be tying the hand of SUMA, tying the hand of SARM, or tying the hand of trustees if they happen to have a member of their particular local council, who happen to have expertise in the area of assessment, who also happen to run to become an MLA, and that particular organization wanted that individual to represent them on that particular board. It could be a member of the opposition. It could be an

independent member of the Assembly. It could be a member of the government caucus. It would make no difference. So in essence what you have done is you have said, those particular local councils shouldn't have that option if they want to have it.

But secondly, as I indicated, the precedent has been established by your particular government. There you have a local body out there, an authority of a particular type, and you said it was all right for an MLA to sit there. Now you're saying it's not all right. Not only is it not all right, but in fact the local councils shouldn't have the opportunity if they want to. We disagree with that, and so we would naturally be voting against the amendment.

(1645)

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I can't let that by. The minister talks about tying hands — tying the hands of local municipalities. I simply say to him: he's already tied their hands. The minister has tied the hands and the government has tied the hands of local municipalities when they said you can't appoint who you want. We're going to tell you who you can appoint. That's what they're saying.

What this provision does, Mr. Chairman, in spite of the grand words of the minister, is allows the government to appoint as their representative maybe the member from Morse. Now that may not happen because after the next election, I'm not sure whether he'll be here or not, that's for his constituency to decide, but it allows the government to appoint one of their caucus to this agency.

What the mayor of Saskatoon, Cliff Wright has said, that the government is really only politicizing the operation, I think is right, and the minister, by refusing to allow this amendment to be put into the Bill, I think is confirming what Cliff Wright said and what we are saying.

Amendment negated on division.

Clause 8 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 11 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 12

Mr. Chairman: — Clause 12 has an amendment which reads as follows:

Amend section 12 of the printed Bill:

(a) by adding "boards of education," after "councils," in the second line of clause (1)(g); and

(b) by adding "or The Education Act" after "Act" in the second line of clause (1)(k).

Clause 12 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 13 to 18 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 19

Mr. Chairman: — Clause 19 has an amendment which

reads:

Amend section 19 of the printed Bill by striking out "SARM and SUMA" in the last line of subsection (2) and substituting "SARM, SUMA and SSTA".

Clause 19 as amended agreed to.

Clause 20

Mr. Chairman: — Clause 20 has an amendment which reads:

Amend section 20 of the printed Bill by striking out "SARM and SUMA" in the second line of subsection (1) and substituting "SARM, SUMA and SSTA".

Clause 20 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 21 to 44 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill as amended.

Bill No. 49 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the enactment of The Assessment Management Agency Act

Clause 1

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Just one question — because they're consequential I don't have any — Mr. Minister, have you had your officials check to see whether amendments are not necessary here because of amendments which we have just considered under the previous Bill?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Yes, there are no House amendments that are necessary in this Bill.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 66 — An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984 (No. 2)

Clause 1

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, there are some . . . We have discussed in this House before some of the implications that are not seen in the Bill itself. Can you tell me, what considerations did you make of the effect of your proposals here on rural communities and small businesses in rural communities? Was there some kind of feasibility or economic impact study that was done by your government in order that you might fully appreciate and understand the implications on many businesses in rural Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Well the store hours issue is a complex issue, but I think it's fair to say that a consensus of people believe that the decision that the government is proposing is the appropriate decision, that being to give local councils the authority to determine what the store

hours should be in their individual local area. It might very well be that some councils may not change their by-law at all; it may be that other councils will want to change their by-law. But I think the issue at heart here is: who should be the one who decides? Should it be the provincial government that establishes a regulation for the entire province?

All of the information and comment that we had been receiving suggested just the opposite. The Saskatchewan chamber of commerce, which represents businesses from across the province, said that you should in fact give the decision to the local councils. The Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, which represents municipalities from around the province, said: give that decision to the local municipal councils; let them make the decision. The Minister of Tourism and Small Business travelled the province for a good portion of this year and met with large numbers of business people, and they said: let that particular regulation pertaining to store hours be determined at the local level rather than the provincial government always trying to regulate and control everything.

Now I know that that is the position of the members opposite even though many organizations and many individuals have said, allow the municipal councils the right to determine what the need for store hours opening should be in their particular jurisdiction. Even though many organizations and individuals have said that, the NDP stand virtually alone in opposing that particular position. They would want the provincial government, as I understand it, to regulate store hours.

So as I indicated, we have had significant consultation with large numbers of people and organizations around the province. And I think the reviews in the various newspapers and comments on radio and television from various spokesmen would indicate that the changes being proposed by the provincial government are in order and they are well supported around the province.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, there are others who have had another point of view on this thing, and you well know that, but you didn't answer my question. Can you tell me what studies your government or officials of your government have made on economic impact on small-business places in rural Saskatchewan and small-business family operations in big urbans? Did you do those kind of studies? And if you did, what were they, and can I have access to them?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Well the small-business people that we talked to, that the minister over there talked to, said to us, they said: de-regulate; give it to the local councils. They didn't say, spend taxpayers' money on another study. They don't want taxpayers' money spent on another study. They want a decision made by a strong government that understands what the needs in Saskatchewan are, and they want the decision made, and that's exactly what this government has done. They want the local municipal councils to be able to make the decision.

When I met with the chamber of commerce, they didn't say, spend the taxpayers' money on another study. They

said, have the courage to make the decision on store hours that should be made, and that's to give it to the local municipal councils, and that's exactly what we have done.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, many local municipal councils have expressed concern about your legislation, Mr. Minister . . .

An Hon. Member: — Who? Name one.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well go to the city of Weyburn and you'll find one, for example, to pick out a city that is well-known, as are all communities in Saskatchewan. But there are also others who have expressed concern because they are afraid of what the implications are, not only from the point of view of the kind of pressures that are now going to develop and the bidding war that will develop, but also because of the implications on family-operated business, small-business places.

We accept the fact, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, that there is a need and a demand for some extension of late night shopping. We have never argued against that. We argued against your negligence in looking after the interests of small-business places, family business operations, and people who are going to be working in these places of business.

You have just confirmed our greatest fears. You took no time at all to consider these implications. And the nature of your Bill . . . Here we have a Bill that comes in late in the session — It's not even printed in the normal kind of a Bill; you might as well have run it on a Gestetner; that's what it looks like — which shows the kind of haste in which you brought it in after your caucus obviously struggled and fought and clawed at each other because they know that it has got certain implications which you failed to recognize.

I know the member from Saskatoon knows about those problems. She has a lot of small-business people in her constituency, and she spends a lot of time with them, as I do in mine. So we appreciate those problems. Even the member for Sutherland should be concerned. And that's the point that I'm making.

All I want to know is did you do some studies on economic impact? You've told me you haven't, so there's no sense asking for those studies because you don't have them.

As I indicated earlier, I will be moving an amendment to the Bill, to section 4, and when we get to that section, I will then move it.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

Clause 4

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I will move the amendment and then I will make some comments on it. But I am moving an amendment which has been prepared for me by the law clerk. It's section 4 of the printed Bill:

Amend clause 121(3)(b) of the Act, as being enacted by clause 4(3)(b) of the printed Bill, by striking out "six" in the third line and substituting "two".

division.

Yeas — 5

Tchorzewski
Koskie
Shillington

Engel
Lusney

And if you will accept this, I will explain what I am attempting to do.

(2200)

Yes, Mr. Chairman, I explained in second reading what our concerns were here, and I've referred to them again just now — that the Bill is brought in in a very broad sense without appropriate consultation. The minister talks about consultations; we know there haven't been any. He is reacting to some pressures from the big multinationals, the large chains, the SuperValus of this world and so on, at the expense of small-business people.

Their store hours . . . If you would consider the amendment, Mr. Minister, you could extend it by one day, which the city of Regina agreed last night in consultation with their business community — to extend it by one day. That's really what the concern and the request has been there — extend it by one day. Let the municipalities decide whether they want to stay with the present system or have two — I'm not taking away any right from the municipalities; they want that right and they should have it — instead of going the full six.

If you go the two, you could always extend it another year, another session. If you go the six, you've jumped over the edge of the cliff and there's no return. And that's why, by going the way you have, you're creating a potential problem.

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Chairman, I would make two or three short comments. First of all, that the amendment that the member opposite is proposing flies directly in the face of all of the recommendations that have been received by this government. They fly in the face of the comments of the mayor from Moose Jaw. They fly in the face of the comments from people in North Battleford. They fly in the face of the comments of the Saskatchewan chamber of commerce. They fly in the face of the comments of the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association.

What they tell us is that the NDP do not trust local councils to be able to make appropriate decisions in their particular jurisdictions. And what it tells us fundamentally is that the NDP want to be the ones who control and regulate people's lives. That is not the philosophy that we adopt.

In the previous Bill we established an independent assessment agency to give people at the local level the authority to determine their affairs. Now we are doing the same thing with regards to store hours. We are giving local councils the authority to determine their own affairs. That should have been done a long time ago in this province, and I'm pleased that that is the direction that our Progressive Conservative government is moving.

Amendment negatived on the following recorded

Nays — 26

Birkbeck	McLeod
Lane	Katzman
Schmidt	Myers
Dirks	Embry
Klein	Currie
Martens	Smith (Moose Jaw South)
Muirhead	McLaren
Johnson	Young
Weiman	Rybchuk
Caswell	Domotor
Meagher	Muller
Glauser	Gerich
Petersen	Swenson

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.