

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**May 28, 1980**

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

On the Orders of the Day

**WELCOME TO STUDENTS**

**MR. R.L. ANDREW (Kindersley):** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the attention of the members of the Assembly to the Speaker's gallery where there are 39 Grade 4 students from the Eston School. They are accompanied by their teachers, Beth Baren and Greg Balas and their chaperones, Elaine Jardine and Carol Curtis. As well, Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to advise the Assembly that the town of Eston is in the forefront in bank programs in this province. Their band recently won the junior stage band, concert band and fancy drill competition at the Moose Jaw Band Festival. These Grade 4 students will be going into that band program. I would just like to wish them a fruitful visit to Regina. I hope they enjoy the question period and they have a good trip home.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**QUESTIONS**

**Bill No. 105**

**MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle):** — A question to the House Leader in his role of guiding through government business: I note Bill No. 105 has, since at least last Wednesday, been placed down near the bottom of the list of government business. It has been placed after the Department of the Environment estimates, Department of Education. Can the Attorney General kindly explain why it is always being placed at the bottom of the list?

**HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General):** — Mr. Speaker, it has not always been placed at the bottom of the list. As a result of our discussions with the official opposition, I am always led to believe every day that we will be able to get to Bill No. 105 in order to debate it. But unfortunately while the hon. member is occupied elsewhere or otherwise, in his absence the House somehow gets bogged down in education estimates which take beyond the expected period of time to complete. The result is Bill No. 105 doesn't come up for debate. All I can do is try to reasonably guide the affairs of the House and expect some degree of co-operation from the members opposite. If I get it, it works. If I don't get it, it doesn't work.

**MR. LANE:** — By way of supplementary, I don't expect the House Leader to suggest that the opposition hurry through estimates of such departments as the Department of the Environment (given the record). I think that is the request being made. The Attorney General, of course, is aware that as of this Friday the Unionest Party will get its first payment. As a result of always having the matter down at the bottom of the list, it looks like it is the government's fault that in fact the Unionest Party receives its first payment on Friday. What action is the government going to take?

**MR. ROMANOW:** — I believe, Mr. Speaker, if it is anybody's fault, it is the fault of the opposition . . .

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. ROMANOW:** — . . . who, every time the bill is on the list to start at approximately 3 o'clock or thereafter, chooses to either deliberately lengthen out estimates or otherwise take part in a debate thereby not allowing Bill No. 105 to come through onto the debating format. I say to the hon. member he would be well-advised to leave the negotiations of the House business to his colleague, the member for Indian Head-Wolseley, rather than trying to do it here and rather than trying to make what, I believe, are simple, pure, small-time politics with respect to Bill No. 105. He knows full well how we operate this House.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order. New question.

### **Payment to Unionest Party**

**MR. LANE:** — A new question to the Attorney General. The Leader of the Unionest Party has indicated that money is not the issue. Has the Attorney General any contingency plans to perhaps place the money in trust pending a resolution of Bill No. 105?

**MR. ROMANOW:** — Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member is suggesting is that the legislature in effect break its own law. The law is now (rightly or wrongly) that a third party, as described, shall receive a form of payment. But the hon. member for Qu'Appelle, a member of the legal profession, is suggesting that somehow we withhold that money if it can be withheld, and, in effect, break the law. The only way that we can handle the situation is by introducing Bill 105 to be dealt with by passage of the law as we are doing — as we are attempting to do by the management of the House business. And all I can say is that the suggestion made by the hon. member is one that perhaps could be looked at, but it's a very extreme recommendation to say the least. I'm not going to dismiss it out of hand. Maybe there is some legal avenue which is available here for us to consider, but on the face of it I do think that it is really trying to retroactively ignore the laws of this Assembly and of this province.

**MR. LANE:** — Supplementary. Assuming that there is no breaking of the law as you have just indicated, and assuming that Bill No. 105 passes, what plans does the government have to reclaim the funds?

### **Statement by the Minister of Energy**

**MR. R.L. ANDREW (Kindersley):** — Question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, last night on The National news Mr. Lalonde, Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources in the federal government, indicated that Canada had just fought the referendum in the province of Quebec against a party committed to political separation with economic association, and he drew the analogy that what we face now in Canada is a party or a province, in particular the province of Alberta, committed to economic separation with political association. My question, Mr. Premier, to you is: would you not agree that the momentum gained by the no vote in the province of Quebec toward addressing renewed federalism with consensus politics is, in fact, going to be very much jeopardized by what I see as a very serious confrontation attitude being taken by Mr. Lalonde and the Government of Canada?

**HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier):** — Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member that the

statement by Mr. Lalonde was in the circumstances, and if I understand the statement correctly, ill-advised. It did not seem to me to be a statement designed to bring about the appropriate basis for accommodation and compromise which will be needed to arrive at settlements, not only in the constitutional area, but also in the area of resource management and pricing.

**MR. ANDREW:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Lalonde further indicated I believe, earlier in the energy debate, that he saw a good chance of arriving at an agreement or settlement with all provinces except the province of Alberta. The province of Alberta was the only one that was holding up any energy pricing agreement. He further went on to say (I think press statements would indicate) that the strategy of the federal government is to somehow woo the NDP so they can isolate the province of Alberta in the energy debate. My question to you is: have there been any negotiations between your government and Mr. Lalonde that would give Mr. Lalonde an indication that he can in fact accomplish that purpose?

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — The answer shortly put is no, certainly not that I or our ministers are aware of.

### **Export Tax on Gas**

**MR. ANDREW:** — Question to the Minister of Mineral Resources. The Alberta report that recently came out, Mr. Minister, which I assume you have probably read, indicated some of the proposals being advanced by Mr. Lalonde. One of those proposals would be the imposition of an export tax on gas, and that would affect primarily the province of Alberta and the province of British Columbia; and there would be a rebate formula to the province of British Columbia but not to the province of Alberta. In your negotiations with Mr. Lalonde did this matter come up and did you discuss that matter?

**HON. J.R. MESSER (Minister of Mineral Resources):** — No, the proposal of an export tax was not discussed in any detail, although it was generally alluded to by me because it's obvious that if the federal government is wanting to acquire large sums of money there are only a limited number of areas where they may be able to do that. Certainly one of the first they would want to consider would be the export tax. We inquired as to whether or not there was any current thinking about proposing such an export tax, and if so, how provinces such as British Columbia and Saskatchewan (which is now subject to an export tax for heavy oil) may be treated. The answer, which was very general, from the minister was that certainly it was an option which was open to them. He was not prepared to discuss it in any detail with me. I assumed that if he were prepared to discuss it with Alberta, he wanted to have the opportunity to discuss it with the Minister of Energy in the province of Alberta before discussing in detail with me or other energy ministers in Canada what the federal proposal might be. I have not yet met or talked with Mr. Lalonde since he met with Mr. Leach, the Minister of Energy in Alberta.

**MR. ANDREW:** — A further suggestion, Mr. Minister, in the . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order. If the member has a question?

**MR. ANDREW:** — The other suggestion, Mr. Minister, is that the proposal of Mr. Lalonde would be to take any further increases in the price of oil and use those increases to reduce the federal debt. Can the minister advise this Assembly if that proposal was discussed as well when you met with Mr. Lalonde perhaps two weeks ago?

**MR. MESSER:** — No, not at all, Mr. Speaker. In fact we have conveyed to the federal government that whatever revenues they wish to achieve, we would like to see priorities put to the expending of those moneys toward conservation and development of energy in Canada. We think that is a more appropriate place to direct some of the increased revenues they are hoping to obtain from the producing provinces.

### **Assistance to Cattlemen**

**MR. R.A. LARTER (Estevan):** — A question to the Minister of Agriculture. I have spent the last couple of days in the constituency talking to numerous cattlemen. I find there is a real concern among the cattlemen that their herds this year, in the next few months, are going to be depleting very rapidly with the number of cows going through the auction marts. I wonder if you have any contingency plan over and above the emergency program to discourage the cattlemen from depleting their herds at this time?

**HON. G. MacMURCHY (Minister of Agriculture):** — In reply to the hon. member, no, we have no additional plans. I think in one month's time there has to be a further review of the situation to see what further steps must be taken. It is felt that there will be, in fact, some trimming of the herds. It is felt that with some change in the weather patterns (and we have seen some of it across the province) we can sustain the core herd or the basic herd through the summer, and given some breaks, supply feed for keeping the core herd through the coming fall and winter.

**MR. LARTER:** — Mr. Minister, I hadn't realized just how bad it was until about three or four people came to me over the weekend wanting to get hold of my slough hay. They have never bothered me for this slough hay before. I am concerned that we should have a beef monitoring watch on these cattle. Do you not think that through the ag. rep. meeting with cattlemen in each district, we have to convince them to try to hang on to their herds. With the programs to be offered, do you not think we should be doing a more aggressive job of convincing these people to keep their cattle? We are going to end up in the position, which you stated some time ago, that we are going to be strictly grain farmers.

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — Mr. Speaker, in all sincerity to the hon. member, I don't think we can do any convincing to the cattle people to sustain their herds unless we can provide for them some feed supply, both fodder and grain. The essential or the basic part of our announced program last week was to get in place available stocks, supply that information to the age. reps. and therefore on to the cattlemen and see what we can do to bring feed into the province. That is the process that's going on.

It seems to me not proper or sensible to say to cattlemen, you keep your herds, and not to be able to say where there is at least potential for feed for those cattle.

**MR. J.W.A. GARNER (Wilkie):** — Mr. Minister, is it not possible through your department to set up a monitoring program per R.M., so that we could know at the end of each week how many cattle had been sold in that R.M. to know if we are getting into a real crisis situation, which I believe could happen?

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — Well, I think there will be a monitoring of cattle sales, I think that goes on within the department all the time. But I don't think the question that was directed by the member for Estevan was a question to deal with the problem now. I think

the question is to size up the available feed supplies and then relate the feed supplies to what is happening to the industry in terms of sales.

If we can say to farmers, here is where there's some barley; here's where we can get some slough hay (and I'm pleased that the hon. member is indicating that farmers are seeking out possible sources; there will be a fair bit of slough hay in the province); here is where we're getting some alfalfa pellets and so on, then we can say to farmers, don't get so panicky.

**MR. R. KATZMAN (Rosthern):** — Mr. Minister, several years ago, to stop the outflow of female stock, there was a program brought in by your government of \$60 (I believe) for female stock held over. Is there consideration of some program along that line to suggest you keep the female stock and if you must sell, sell the male stock, so we don't lose our basic herd?

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — I think, Mr. Speaker, I have indicated and I indicate again that our objective in this serious situation is to keep the basic herd. The basic herd is obviously going to be the female stock. I think that our efforts must be to find feed supplies to keep that basic herd and that's what the objective of the program is really intended to do.

I may say I was very pleased last night with the comments from the federal government with respect to its approach to work with us in solving this very serious problem.

### **Increase in Use of Drugs and Alcohol by Students**

**MR. D.G. TAYLOR (Indian Head-Wolseley):** — The Minister of Education, Mr. Minister, the recent SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association) sponsored workshop on alcohol and drug education indicated that the use of alcohol and drugs is continuing to increase in our province. A survey shows that approximately 41 per cent of the students, who were surveyed in Grade 12, are moderate or heavy drinkers by the time they reach that grade.

My question is what action does your department plan to take, what immediate action to help alleviate or eventually solve this serious social problem?

**HON. D.F. McARTHUR (Minister of Education):** — Mr. Chairman, first of all, our department was involved in the sponsoring of that conference and participated in the committee that led up to the conference. Indeed it provided a very substantial amount of the financing for the conference in question, in order to help get a better hold on this problem, in co-operation with the SSTA and others.

As a result of the conference (and I think it's not the sole source of information on this question), we are going to be undertaking certain kinds of measures. For one thing we are currently reviewing the Division III health part of the curriculum to look at the possibility of bringing into that curriculum programs that would deal with the challenges that young adolescents and young teenagers face in our society and looking at providing through that curriculum and through that program a better educational program for young people, which deals with these and other kinds of situations that young people face. I might also indicate to the hon. member that we have been participating in taking some leadership in the Safe Graduation program. In addition to that, we will be continuing to support activities through the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association) and the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) that will assist teachers to deal with the very real problems they face in this respect.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — Supplementary. Mr. Minister, Dr. Don Faris, the head of the provincial rehabilitation program indicates that some of the programs in the schools are not being used; they are not using these programs. Does your department have any thoughts of bringing out a compulsory unit to be taught to the students on drug and alcohol education that would help to solve this problem and that would ensure that this is taught in every school in Saskatchewan?

**MR. McARTHUR:** — That is certainly a possibility we are considering. I think as the hon. member knows, parts of the curriculum that deal with these and other related matters dealing with adolescent lifestyles are organized as such that the school boards have a choice as to whether or not they wish to introduce those programs. That does indeed create some difficulties if we accept it as a provincial policy matter. We should be addressing these kinds of questions. So in this review of this program, we are going to be looking at the possibility of making these kinds of programs required programs. Certainly, no decision has been made of that sort at the present time but that will be considered.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — Final supplementary, Mr. Minister, as you well know. The Education Act makes provision for parent advisory councils and at this time when the Safe Graduation program is highlighted throughout Saskatchewan, I feel that this would make a good study (the study of drug and alcohol abuse) for the parent advisory councils. Would you, Mr. Minister, at this time, because of this serious social problem, use your good offices to encourage the study of the drug and alcohol abuse situation in Saskatchewan through parent advisory councils in this province?

**MR. McARTHUR:** — Certainly as we develop to which I referred, it would be our intent to involve as many parental organizations as possible including those councils.

### **Market Research on Expanding Agricultural Production**

**MR. H.J. SWAN (Rosetown-Elrose):** — Question to the Minister of Agriculture. The irrigation projects in the province have made it possible for farmers to diversify and to grow a wide variety of pulse crops and vegetable crops. My question to you is: what market research has your department done to assist the development of this potential for expanded agricultural production?

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — Mr. Speaker, a good deal of market research has been done by Agdevco (and we had some discussion of their efforts in Crown corporations) and the marketing and research branch of the Department of Agriculture. In terms of providing the hon. member with an answer today, I simply can't do that since I don't have that kind of information on my mind. I can perhaps provide it to the hon. member or perhaps he can raise the question during agricultural estimates when officials of the department will be present and I can provide an answer to the hon. member.

**MR. SWAN:** — Supplementary, to the minister. I would appreciate if you would send across that information of the market research that you've done. Have you done any research to see if it's feasible to process some of these crops and thus provide industry in the province rather than exporting all of it in the raw state?

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — I can say yes to the hon. member regarding the research involving the same two particular organizations of the government. I simply can't give the hon. member any indication of the results of the research but it can additionally be a

question as part of estimates, Mr. Speaker.

### **Testing of Water in Towns, Hamlets and Villages**

**MR. G.S. MUIRHEAD (Arm River):** — Question to the Minister of the Environment. In light of discussions in environment estimates pertaining to the testing of water in all towns, hamlets, and villages, will the minister give us his assurance to this Assembly that he will have his department notify each town, hamlet and village about the different ways of testing water, and also the importance of testing water.

**HON. G.R. BOWERMAN (Minister of the Environment):** — I won't give that assurance, Mr. Speaker, but I will certainly take it under advisement.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — A supplementary to the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Urban), Mr. Speaker, due to the drought in Saskatchewan this spring, wells and water sources could be very low, thus lowering the quality of water. I ask the minister if he agrees there is an urgency in encouraging more frequent water testing in this province this summer?

**HON. W.E. SMISHEK (Minister of Affairs (Urban)):** — Mr. Speaker, no, I do not consider there is an urgency.

### **PCB Spill at Federal Pioneer**

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — A new question to the Minister of the Environment. In light of the fact the Department of the Environment and Federal Pioneer covered the PCBs with pavement in the fall of 1976 and also, in light of the fact these PCBs could have been removed for a few thousand dollars, would you, Mr. Minister, inform this Assembly why you have threatened Federal Pioneer with court action if they refuse to pay for the removal of the PCBs your department sealed nearly four years ago?

**MR. BOWERMAN:** — Mr. Speaker, I advised the hon. member the other day in estimates and in other questions raised before the Assembly, that the matter of Federal Pioneer and the Department of the Environment is now an issue before the courts. I would prefer not to discuss the details of the actions relevant to Federal Pioneer and the background or history related thereto. I think it is important for us to maintain the advice which we have received from our counsel in that respect.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister why is it not the responsibility of your department to pay all costs, especially when your department sealed, had and lied about the whole PCB cover-up at Federal Pioneer?

**MR. SPEAKER:** — I think it is incumbent upon the member to retract the use of that word in this Chamber.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — I will retract it and say misrepresented.

### **Land Acquisition by Sask Housing Corporation**

**MR. LANE:** — A question to the minister responsible for Sask Housing. I directed a question last week as to the announced program of acquisition of infill houses in the City of Regina. Would the minister now explain whether or not that is the program referred to in the annual report of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation which is the Canada-Saskatchewan Urban Rental Housing Pilot Program for Families of

Native Origin or is it a totally different program? Would you kindly explain as well the number of units acquired and their locations?

**MR. SMISHEK:** — Mr. Speaker, no, it is not the same program mentioned in the CMHC report. Mr. Speaker, in the case of the native pilot project we entered into an agreement with the Government of Canada a little more than a year ago to acquire (largely) rather than construct about 1,000 housing units in the major centres. Approximately one-third of them will be in the city of Regina. That is a separate program from the infill program which was announced last week jointly by me and the Mayor of Regina. The infill program is in two areas of the city of Regina, the cathedral area and the north-central area. In total we have acquired to date about 160 lots with over 4,000 front feet.

In the case of the cathedral area, Mr. Speaker, I think some question was raised about people who might be residing there. In looking at the hon. member's question the other day, of the 60 lots or 60 properties we had acquired, only 6 were occupied. It is housing which is largely beyond repair. New housing will be put in place in those units. It will be available to low income and middle income people, single parent families. It's not the same program as the native housing program.

## **SECOND READINGS**

**HON. W.E. SMISHEK (Minister of Affairs (Urban))** moved second reading of Bill No. 119 — **An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am please to move second reading of Bill No. 119. An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act. In recent years, Saskatchewan, like a number of other provinces, has experienced a gradual decline in the viability of the downtown areas in several of our major urban centres. A similar deterioration process of the main streets of some of our smaller urban centres has also been experienced. In the case of cities, it has been the result in part, of major suburban shopping mall. The resulting effects are a shift of business trade from the established downtown area, a marked erosion of the downtown tax base, and generally a visible decay of the inner core which traditionally has been the community's focal point for social, cultural and business activities.

In the case of the smaller urbans, aging main street businesses and public buildings have contributed to a flight of local business to either neighbouring communities or larger regional centres and equally important, communities experience a loss of pride increasingly concerned with these problems. If our urban communities are to remain viable, and to retain their traditional appeal as good places to live, we cannot yield. We cannot let deterioration and decay replace what was once a bustling focus of our urban centres. This government has responded, and will continue to respond to these problems. This response has taken several forms.

For example, for our smaller centres, in 1978 we introduced the Saskatchewan Mainstreet Development Program. This program is jointly administered by Saskatchewan urban affairs and industry and commerce. It is designed to help small communities improve their main street business districts and to retain their share of the economic activity of this province. To date, Mr. Speaker, I am glad to report to this House, that close to 100 centres have participated in this activity which includes grants for improvements to public areas and grants for store front renovations. These have

been very popular programs, Mr. Speaker.

In Saskatchewan cities the government has used its provincial office accommodation needs as a lever to introduce significant new commercial developments downtown and so contribute to revitalization. Weyburn Square, which opened this spring, includes 45,000 square feet of provincial office space and 110,000 square feet of privately developed retail facilities located in the multi-use complex in the heart of downtown Weyburn. Because the government was willing to combine its office needs with commercial retail space at the request of the municipal council, a very real threat to downtown Weyburn was transformed into an opportunity for revitalization.

In other centres such as Saskatoon and Prince Albert, provincial office structures have been sited in key downtown locations in co-operation with the municipalities, to reinforce their efforts to strengthen their downtown areas. In Regina, the recent construction of the SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) building and the Sask Tel building, which is currently under construction, form an integral part of the Cornwall Centre which will include Eaton's and Sears, plus ancillary retail space around a fully covered two-story pedestrian mall. As in Weyburn, the government has used its office space needs to create an opportunity for redevelopment and downtown revitalization. Vital new development will replace obsolete or deteriorating buildings resulting in benefits to the community for years to come. New jobs, new tax dollars for the municipality, new shopping facilities, and a boost for all of downtown Regina will result.

Mr. Speaker, these initiatives demonstrate this government's firm commitment to a policy of downtown revitalization. We are strongly convinced of the need to retain and revitalize the downtowns of our urban communities. This can only be done in partnership with the local municipalities whose enthusiastic response to the Mainstreet program has already demonstrated a similar commitment and concern. Mr. Speaker, these amendments to The Urban Municipality Act being considered by this House will extend the opportunity which exists for municipalities to pursue downtown revitalization.

Mr. Speaker, last year in September my department faced requests from some Saskatchewan cities for approval of rezoning to accommodate new or expanding peripheral malls. The province had reason to believe that each of the proposed peripheral malls would have a detrimental impact on the respective downtowns. Because of this, we were reluctant to give approval without ensuring all alternatives had been considered by the communities.

Without some form of government assistance it became readily apparent that there was no real alternative to peripheral mall development. Deterioration of downtown would be inevitable.

Mr. Speaker, this government is not prepared to sit idly by, nor were a number of local businessmen and private citizens who expressed their similar concerns to me. In response to these concerns, I contracted each of the communities. An offer of assistance to these communities was made to help relocate the proposed shopping malls to downtown locations. After some discussion, the cities of Swift Current and Prince Albert responded favourably.

The offers of assistance which have been made embody certain principles. Each offer responds to a development situation in which a proposal for a peripheral mall would

have threatened the viability of the downtown. For each, the offer of assistance is premised upon municipal commitment to downtown revitalization, and a willingness on the part of the municipality to share in the costs and benefits which this entails.

Local government would be responsible for selection of a downtown site for redevelopment, for assembling the site, for negotiating agreement with a developer, subject to the provincial approval. The municipality would retain ownership of the site, leasing it to the private developer who in turn would finance and build the project.

The cost of acquiring a downtown site would be shared by the municipality and the province. It would be financed through the purchase of municipal debentures by the province. Revenues from annual ground lease payment for the site, from incremental property and business taxes created by the project and from a portion of project income, would be used to service these debentures. Where necessary, this would be supplemented by provincial grants and a municipal share.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments to The Urban Municipality Act are being introduced as part of this government's commitment to downtown revitalization. They will enable municipalities to carry out downtown revitalization projects now being considered for Swift Current and Prince Albert, where such legislative authority does not already exist. If future instances arise in which the government determines that provincial assistance may be necessary for other municipalities to undertake downtown revitalization projects, these provisions will serve in those cases as well.

Mr. Speaker, in this context, I wish to briefly outline these amendments to this House in order to explain what we will achieve.

First, the amendments will authorize a municipality to enter into agreements respecting a downtown revitalization project.

Second, the amendments will clarify and reaffirm municipalities' authority to acquire, hold, improve, and dispose of property to be used for a revitalization project.

Third, these amendments will subject long-term borrowing done for a revitalization project to the usual local government board approval procedure and other normal requirements presently included in the Urban Municipality Act, with certain exceptions.

These exceptions relate to the statutory debenture debt limit for communities and to additional provisions for notice — a public meeting and an opportunity to submit a petition in lieu of an automatic vote of the burgesses. It is intended that these will expedite the process of negotiating downtown projects.

In other amendments municipalities will be given the authority to make grants in conjunction with the downtown revitalization projects and will permit business improvement districts to contribute to the cost of the project.

Finally, in addition to these amendments, provision is made to remove the 1 per cent per month limit on the surcharges that municipalities can impose on property taxpayers who are in default of payment where the tax payment is greater than \$2,000. For property owners with taxes payable under \$2,000, there will be no change. With present interest rate levels it is to the financial benefit of large property owners to delay

payment of taxes until after December 31 in any year. This results in a municipality's having to finance its operations by borrowing at prevailing high interest rates. This is a problem peculiar to cities and the six cities have requested me to bring in these amendments because they would be faced with some difficulties if they were not able to impose higher penalties.

This concludes my remarks with respect to these amendments. To reiterate, these legislative changes will make it possible for local government to pursue downtown revitalization with the co-operation and support of the provincial government. In this manner, these amendments will further reinforce local decision making and autonomy. They demonstrate this government's firm commitment to a policy of downtown revitalization. They provide a unique and positive opportunity for Saskatchewan downtown revitalization.

Accordingly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to move second reading of this bill.

**MR. R.L. ANDREW (Kindersley):** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I adjourn debate on the second reading of this bill, so that I have an opportunity to study in detail the comments of the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Urban), just given this morning, I would simply like to express a couple of concerns.

I think the whole question of downtown revitalization clearly had to be addressed in the province of Saskatchewan, in all towns, in all cities. But I do think that the whole problem requires something more than to have government bring in a program to revitalize the main street areas and to build government buildings in the downtown areas. What we require in the province of Saskatchewan is growth in our small towns and in our cities. And that is not happening, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The towns and the villages of this province are being depopulated, more so than in any province in this country, and that's the long-term question we must address. We must address the question of retaining the population or of having growth of population in our major centres, our cities and major towns. That is the total question we as legislators must address in the coming years.

I noted the other day in the city of Calgary, just by way of example, there were 79 high cranes at work. Now clearly we are not going to have that type of development in the province of Saskatchewan, but that is incredible building there; 2,500 people a month are moving into the city of Calgary.

We in the province of Saskatchewan have to start looking at increasing our population. We are a growth province; we have to address that problem. The way we are going to address that problem and the only way we are going to address that problem is to increase our population, not just in the city of Saskatoon and the city of Regina but in the other major urban centres in this province.

With that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would be leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

**HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General)** moved second reading of Bill No. 125 — **An Act respecting Actions for Defamation.**

He said: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to move second reading of The Defamation Act; well, it is my duty to move second reading of The Defamation Act.

For some time now newspaper publishers and broadcasters have been requesting legislation to overturn the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in *Cherneskey versus Armadale Publishing*. In this case the Supreme Court of Canada considered the defence a fair comment.

The *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* published a letter to the editor criticizing a position taken by one Mr. M. Cherneskey, a local alderman. Mr. Cherneskey sued the paper and was awarded damages. The main and most disturbing point in the majority of judgments is that in order to rely on the defence of fair comment, the newspaper must show that it agreed with the comments expressed in the letter it published. The problem is that in order to avoid liability a newspaper would be forced to publish only those letters with which it agrees.

It is also possible that the principles outlined in the majority judgments may apply to other media — television, radio, cable television, and open-line shows and community programs.

Last summer at its annual meeting in Saskatoon, the uniform Law Conference of Canada adopted a legislative provision to, in effect, overrule *Cherneskey versus Armadale Publishing* (or at least the principles of *Cherneskey versus Armadale Publishing*). The case itself remains untouched as does the award.

The provision that the Uniform Law Conference of Canada proposed is contained in proposed section 12 of the bill which is before the House today. I must advise the legislature that a similar, if not identical, section is before the Assemblies of Manitoba, Alberta and Nova Scotia. Ontario, with its Attorney General, Roy MacMurtry, has also publicly announced that it too proposes to enact legislation to overcome the impact of this case.

Mr. Speaker, we also have taken this opportunity to update our legislation in this area. Libel and slander have been replaced in this bill with an action for defamation. This will mean that the act does not have to provide for several of the old distinctions between libel and slander. The act makes reference to broadcasting as well.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I was asked at a press conference in Saskatoon, last Monday, whether or not broadcasting was included, and erroneously I indicated that broadcasting was not to be included. It is my duty to advise the House that we are also including broadcasting. The requirement for newspapers to register with the Provincial Secretary has been dropped. I should also point out, Mr. Speaker, that this act follows closely *The Uniform Defamation Act*. I believe it is important wherever possible to provide for uniform legislation throughout Canada, Alberta, B.C., Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, P.E.I., Yukon, Northwest Territories have already adopted a uniform defamation act.

Mr. Speaker, I would not like to make some comments on the specific sections of the bill. I will not comment on all the sections because many of them (namely sections 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 19 and 20) are similar to sections in the old libel and slander act. Let me make a comment about a few of them.

Section 2. This is of course the definition section. Broadcasting has been defined to

include our friends in the cable television industry.

I think it is important that the principles of the act be extended to cable television. I have been requested to insure that section 12 applies to our friends and supporters in the cable television industry.

Defamation has been defined to mean liable and slander.

Section 3: under this section we provide here for the action for defamation. I am sure the hon. member for Rosetown-Elrose is most interested in this. As I mentioned earlier, by providing for an action for defamation and by stating that where defamation is proved damages are presumed, we can eliminate certain provisions necessary to cover off the old distinctions between libel and slander.

Section 11: this section prevents an action for defamation where the defamatory matter was contained in an advertisement from being consolidated with another action for defamation. The reason for this is that we feel there should be a separate action, when someone has deliberately gone out to retain space and pay for an advertisement which it is alleged contains defamatory material.

Section 12: this is the section which I have referred to and adopts last year's uniform law conference recommendation made at their meeting in Saskatoon, which we were very honoured and pleased to host. It merely restores, and I want to emphasize the word restores, the right of a defence of fair comment to our friends in the newspaper industry, in particular, but it applies generally. It restores the right of the defence of fair comment to someone publishing alleged defamatory material that is an opinion expressed by another person, even though:

- (a) The publisher did not know that the person expressing the opinion did not hold it;
- (b) Where a reasonable person could hold that opinion, the publisher is not under a duty to inquire into whether or not the person expressing the opinion actually holds that view.

Mr. Speaker, the public policy behind that should be evident to most members. The public policy argument by the newspapers which we subscribe to is that a letter box should be a free and open exchange of conflicting opinions, of which the publisher and editor of the paper may not subscribe to. Now, under Cherneskey, in order to be able to raise the defence of fair comment, when they've published a letter, the publishers of the newspapers will have to believe the contents or to have accepted the contents of the letter. Knowing some of our friends in the newspaper industry, this would indeed cut out a wide variety of newspaper letters to the editor which appear, and dare to challenge the conventional opinions that the editors unfortunately, and regrettably in our province, so strongly and dearly hold to their hearts.

Sections 17 to 20: these sections apply only to actions for defamation brought against newspapers or broadcasters or their employees. As I say, we are extending this bill to our friends in the cable industry. Section 17 is the limitation period, six months from the date the publication of the alleged defamatory matter came to the notice of the defendant. This is the same as the present provisions of The Libel and Slander Act.

Section 18 sets out the notice which must be given before an action for defamation is

commenced.

Section 21 sets out the conditions, where section 19 (mitigation of damages) and section 20 (award of special damages only) do not apply.

One of the requirements for these sections to apply is that a broadcaster must, if requested, give a person a copy — at a reasonable cost to the broadcaster — of defamatory material. Mr. Speaker, some of the members of this House will have had the experience of trying to get a copy of something which has been broadcast over the airwaves by our friends in the electronic media.

Talk about freedom of information legislation, Mr. Speaker, applying to the members of the government; I think some days we should apply a freedom of information bill to our friends in the electronics industry. It is the most difficult thing in the world, very often, to get a copy of the transcript. They raise arguments that the CRTC licenses them and they don't have any obligation necessarily — you bring down your secretary, etc. Well we figure the best way to handle that is to put in the words, at reasonable costs. I realize my friends opposite may not have experienced that kind of frustration with broadcasters, but some of us have had occasion, especially in the light of some of the irresponsible comments made by members opposite outside the Chamber, to request copies. We have found the need to apply a freedom of information bill to this very closed society, the owners of the electronic media.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate our reasons for proposing the legislation; to overrule the legal impacts of the Cherneskey case without touching the case itself; to restore the defence of fair comment to our friends in the newspaper publishing and broadcasting industry; to update our legislation, in other words, to make it more modern; to adopt uniform legislation with respect to defamation.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure this bill will receive speedy passage by the opposition, since we are all very anxious to get on to debating other matters, such as Bill No. 105, as agreed to by members in this House in informal agreements which have heretofore never been revealed quickly. I am sure my friends will be anxious to dispose of this matter very quickly. We can then get on with updating this bill and give to the media the freedom that is so precious and so respected by all those in the House, the freedom of speech which has been so rightfully and strongly maintained by a free and open press in our society. I think, Mr. Speaker, these amendments are in that tradition and we can accordingly expect co-operation, at least on this one item, from the opposition. I move second reading of this bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. R. KATZMAN (Rosthern):** — Mr. Deputy Speaker unfortunately, the critic was called away on an emergency about 15 minutes ago, therefore I would ask leave to adjourn debate so he can make his comments. Then we could proceed with the bill.

Debate adjourned.

**HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General)** moved second reading of Bill No. 124 — **An Act to amend The Queen's Bench Act (No. 2).**

He said: Mr. Speaker, with respect to The Queen's Bench Act (No. 2) and The Small Claims Enforcement Act, these are consequential amendments which relate to the merger bill which has been before this House now for the last two months, unattended

by the members opposite who continually stand the legislation and unfortunately delay the proceedings of the House. We have to move these amendments in any event because they are consequential. Sooner or later I am hopeful that my friends opposite will see fit not to stand the legislation and have it fully debated, pass the merger bill, in which case this particular bill will also become relevant. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 124.

**MR. R. KATZMAN (Rosthern):** — Mr. Chairman, once again, for the reasons I indicated earlier, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

**HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General)** moved second reading of Bill No. 126 — **An Act to amend The Unified Family Court Act.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will introduce this bill again, but I am not optimistic that we will see any more progress on this bill than we have on Bill No. 105, given the position of the Conservative opposition of foot dragging this throughout the piece; but I'll move it in any event. This is, Mr. Speaker, a unified family court act amendment to Bill No. 126. This is one of the amendments originally contained in The Queen's Bench Consequential Amendment Act. We have decided to put this in a separate bill before this legislature, because we would like to proclaim it in force before the consequential amendments come into force.

The amendment is a simple one, and I think the reasons will be obvious. It provides that appeals from the unified family court will be to the court of appeal, and not to a single judge of the court. We have consulted with the chief justice of the province of Saskatchewan and he is in full agreement with this proposed amendment. He informs me that the judges of the court of appeal do not like to sit as single judges on appeals on matters from unified family court, in any event. As well, there is a conflict with The Divorce Act which provides for an appeal to the court of appeal. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Unified Family Court Amendment Act (1980), Bill No. 126.

**MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle):** — Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry I missed the defamation bill, I understand the Attorney General is concerned about getting speedy passage of bills introduced late in the session. The Attorney General seems to have indicated he wants hasty passage of legislation he has brought in the last week, traditionally near the end of the session. On this particular bill that an adjournment of a recently introduced bill (like a couple this morning) is normal practice, but does not delay proceedings in the House.

As a matter of fact, we would be quite prepared to adjourn it until after the Attorney General brings forward Bill No. 105. In the interests of getting to Bill No. 105 today . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order. The Attorney General's remarks at the beginning of his comments were out of order, as are the comments from the member for Qu'Appelle. We are not discussing House business, or in what order it should be proceeded with. We are discussing The Unified Family Court Act and the principle of the bill. If the member for Qu'Appelle can get to that, I would appreciate it.

**MR. LANE:** — Well, I suppose the question arises, why wasn't the Attorney General

called out of order when he . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — The member for Qu'Appelle is now criticizing the Chair. If the member for Qu'Appelle had been watching, he would have noticed I was taking over from the Deputy Speaker when I came into the Chamber and the Attorney General was making his remarks. I think in all fairness, the member for Qu'Appelle should have recognized that and not raised a criticism of the Chair because he was out of order.

**MR. LANE:** — I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

**HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General)** moved second reading of Bill No. 128 — **An Act to amend The Small Claims Enforcement Act (No. 2).**

He said: Mr. Speaker, I shall make a very small comment. This is a consequential amendment to the unified merger proposals which have been stood repeatedly by the member for Qu'Appelle in the Conservative opposition for over two months, delaying and foot dragging. Some day we'll get through that bill and hopefully we'll need the consequential bill as a consequence. So, I move second reading of this bill.

**MR. LANE:** — I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

**HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General)** moved second reading of Bill No. 128 — **An Act to amend The Garage Keepers Act (No. 2).**

He said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to move both Bill No. 128 and Bill No. 129 which are essentially the same. These are consequential amendments which are based on The Personal Property Security Act which has now been stood for about five months by the Conservative opposition, Mr. Speaker, and some day . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — I'm going to ask the Attorney General to deal with the principle of the bill and not the order of the House business or the disorderliness of the House business. He has to stick to the principle of the bill. Otherwise he puts me in the unfortunate position of allowing the member for Qu'Appelle to do the same thing.

**MR. ROMANOW:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The principle of this bill is a consequential amendment to The Personal Property Security Act. I remind you, Mr. Speaker, that The Personal Security Act is still in adjourned debates and one day The Personal Property Security Act will get through second reading and we will need these consequential amendments. I hope that the principle of this bill, which is consequential to personal property will not be delayed for five or six months as The Personal Property Security Act has been to date. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 128, The Garage Keepers Act (No. 2).

**MR. LANE:** — Just to respond — I have had on my desk for the last week material being prepared to debate first on property security and get it through second reading. The Attorney General had not brought it forward on numerous occasions since then. I've had material here being prepared to debate it. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, we have

made it clear to the Attorney General on the personal property and consequential amendments which these are that we would allow speedy passage because he did extend to us the courtesy of being able to meet with his staff and discuss changes on a very complex bill. We have indicated most clearly that we would be prepared to give hasty passage because the courtesy was extended to us to discuss a complex bill with his officials. That applied to the consequential amendments of which these are two and as a consequence they fall, as far as we are concerned, within that personal property and we are quite prepared to expedite them through the House.

Motion agreed to and bill read a second time.

**HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General)** moved second reading of Bill No. 129 — **An Act to amend The Warehousemen's Lien Act.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will make no second reading speech of this because it is a consequential as I indicated and I move second reading of Bill No. 129.

Motion agreed to and bill read a second time.

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

#### Bill No. 13 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act.

Motion to stand bill negatived on the following recorded division:

#### YEAS — 11

Birkbeck	Rousseau	Muirhead
Larter	Swan	Katzman
Lane	Pickering	Andrew
Taylor	Garner	

#### NAYS — 29

Pepper	Banda	Prebble
Romanow	Kaeding	Long
Snyder	Hammersmith	Nelson
Baker	Kowalchuk	Thompson
McArthur	Feschuk	Engel
Gross	Byers	Poniatowski
Shillington	Vickar	White
MacMurchy	Cody	Solomon
Mostoway	Matsalla	Collver
	Lusney	Ham

#### Section 1

**MR. J.W.A. GARNER (Wilkie):** — Mr. Minister, I think I have quite a few remarks to make. What is the lost revenue expected to be if Sask Tel passes Bill No. 13 and most of the

acoustic couplers in the province are allowed to stay?

**HON. D.W. CODY (Minister of Telephones):** — We didn't hear the question. We were shuffling around our papers. Would you mind asking the question again?

**MR. GARNER:** — I'll repeat it, Mr. Minister. What is the lost revenue expected to be if Bill 13 is passed, and none of the acoustic couplers that are in service now are allowed to stay?

**MR. CODY:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, we now allow acoustically coupled equipment. If they're allowed to stay, it's pretty obvious we won't be losing any revenue.

**MR. GARNER:** — Mr. Minister, here is another letter that I've received regarding Bill 13.

. . . your letter of May 7, 1980, outlining your concern over the proposed Bill 13. As a member of free enterprise, we too are very concerned, especially in the areas of points 3 and 4 of your letter.

Point 3: The whole future of electronic information systems in Saskatchewan under the control of Sask Tel. This is a key point. This would remove all choice in the area of (a) hardware: (b) network hook-ups for equipment from word processors to future home terminals. Removing the right to make a decision forces the end user into a compromising position. We will be unable to have any meaningful input into the decisions that will carry the electronic age into the 80s and the 90s.

Just for the member's information, this letter is from Wascana Office Equipment right here in Regina.

Point 4: Sask Tel would have sole authority to manufacture, distribute, or lease telecommunications in Saskatchewan. This is also a key point. As a business we would be competing against government and our own money. Our prime concern that affects us directly is that we market word processing equipment and since government is a very large prospect and user of word processing, our number one competitor becomes a government Crown corporation also with the power under Bill 13 to confiscate equipment attached to the telephone lines.

The steadily expanding use of electronic equipment by individuals and business firms brings to light the pitfalls of Bill 13. Thusly your assistance as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party to help curtail the passing of this legislation would be definitely appreciated.

Mr. Minister, I think if there's one message here it is this: why should business in Saskatchewan — established business — have to compete with its own tax dollar? Sask Tel is set up as a Crown corporation; it's a public utility to provide a service to the people of Saskatchewan at the lowest possible cost. Now with the powers of Bill 13, that same business that pays taxes in Saskatchewan — that very same business — has got to compete with big brother government in order to stay alive. I don't think that's right. You want the power — leasing all, manufacturing all. Then you want to go one step further and have the complete power, the ultimate power, to say who can sell what, who can use what. Not in a public utilities board as we have asked for, no, you want the power

within your cabinet to make the decision on who can sell what and who can connect those lines.

I'm very sure, Mr. Minister that politics won't be kept out of this. When we have private enterprise, whether it's computing firms or word processing firms or it doesn't matter what, prepared to supply the technology and the equipment for the people of Saskatchewan, why does your government have to go into the business?

Are you telling me and the people of Saskatchewan that you're going to provide it that much cheaper? Is that what you're telling me? What about these firms that are already in Saskatchewan? What do they do if you don't agree with a piece of their equipment to be connected to the lines? What are they supposed to do, leave Saskatchewan and go to Alberta to join the young farmers who are going there? It's not right, Mr. Minister, and you know it.

**A MEMBER:** — It's not happening.

**MR. GARNER:** — It's not happening yet. But that brings us to scrambling telecable signals in Saskatoon. Double headend equipment, Mr. Minister, why the double headend equipment? I hope you're making a note of these because I would like a response from you on all these. Oh, he's shaking his head.

I get letters from Regina. I have another one from Moose Jaw, Mr. Minister, your government is terrifying every cable operator in the province — a fear tactic — because you want to own and control all telecommunications in the province of Saskatchewan. You want the people to see what you want them to see. Choice is gone. Freedom of rights is gone with Bill 13. Your government agreed in principle on second reading to amend this Bill 13 as it is now.

Why does your government insist on owning the earth stations? The information brought forward to me is that in the next two years technology is going to improve that much more with earth stations, receiving disks. You know what I'm talking about. Even a farmer could maybe buy one for as little as \$500. But if Bill 13 passes you'll be depriving not only the farmer but the small businessmen, the small towns in Saskatchewan. I know your comeback is going to be fibre optics.

Can we in Saskatchewan really afford fibre optics with a population of approximately 950,000? Can we really afford the fibre optics or would we not be better off going the route of the earth stations? How many other provinces in western Canada that have a larger population than we do are into the fibre optics? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I hear the Minister of Tourism and renewable Resources hollering here. Maybe he will get in and have some questions for the minister. Because undoubtedly, Mr. Chairman, these letters have not just been coming to the Progressive Conservative opposition. They have to have been coming to government members opposite . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I hear them say they haven't received one.

Well, I am going to read a letter here presently, Mr. Chairman, which was sent to the four cabinet ministers in Saskatoon. When you get so many letters, Mr. Chairman, you have a hard time keeping them all separated. I hear the Minister of Agriculture reading them all off. That just brings to note something I remember the minister saying in this House before, that the Progressive Conservatives are only interested in taking care of their big business friends.

Well, I have the Minister of Agriculture (and I think he was in the House when I read a couple of the letters which came from some of his constituents who might even have voted for him — ham radio operators), on one hand saying, they're from the constituents, ham radio operators. But the Minister of Telephones, on the other side says, it is only big business, Mr. Chairman, they can't have it both ways. They can't get together. Why, Mr. Minister, is Sask Tel so dedicated to this Bill No. 13 to prevent . . . Whether it is through the scrambling of telecable signals, depriving the small towns of maybe owning their own earth stations, having double headend equipment when it is not necessary but just used as a means by which they can control communications to the people of Saskatoon, Regina or Moose Jaw, it is total control, state control of Saskatchewan. Mr. Chairman, it is wrong, very wrong.

Mr. Minister, I would like you to reply to some of those questions right now. First of all, how many other provinces in western Canada have a fibre optics system? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I hear the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources answering the questions now. If he will be quiet, I will let him answer some questions in tourism and get that deficit cleaned up. Make some sense. We can delay this as long as they want. Mr. Chairman . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the Minister of Labour has something to add now too. You want it in Moose Jaw. Do you have fibre optics in Moose Jaw? Ah, grandstanding, grandstanding nothing. You want to get into this, fine. My question with the priority, Mr. Minister is on the fibre optics. How many miles of fibre optics do you plan on putting on in the province of Saskatchewan? What is your total cost for this year?

**MR. CODY:** — Mr. Chairman, I didn't expect anything different from the hon. member today. My expectations have certainly been well lived up to.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Answer the question.

**MR. CODY:** — That's for sure. I will answer the question as soon as I can get down to answering some of the things which obviously have been answered innumerable times in this House and in many other ways as well.

First of all, with regard to the first question, fibre optics. I don't believe there is a province in Canada which doesn't have some fibre optics. I don't think there is anyone who has the plan on putting a fibre optics project together like we have in Saskatchewan. But it is just like everything else in Saskatchewan, we have to pioneer it and the people follow along in other provinces. It's no different in this project than it has been in medicare or automobile insurance or you name it. We have pioneered it and the other provinces have followed along on the backs of the people of Saskatchewan. That's always what happens.

We don't mind doing that, because we believe that we should be forerunners in many things. In high technology and high technological things such as fibre optics, we believe we can also be front running and do a good job, not only for the people for whom the member for Wilkie would like us to do the job (and that's his big private enterprise friends, as I said before), but also for the people who live in rural Saskatchewan in places like Moosomin, Estevan, and Wilkie. We want to see that those people also have an opportunity some day to see cable television and at the same time have the opportunity to have such things as fire alarms and other kinds of things.

It's pretty obvious, as the member for Regina Centre said, the member for Wilkie does not want the people in Saskatchewan to have cable television. If that's his wish, we can

probably accommodate him in Wilkie. If he doesn't want to have it, let the Wilkie people express themselves in that way and we'll accommodate him and we won't put cable television into Wilkie.

That is not a threat, Mr. Member for Estevan. I am asking you now to come forward with the views that the Wilkie people have and if the people in Wilkie say to me, as the minister in charge of Sask Tel, that they don't want cable television, I can accommodate them. That's all I'm saying.

Specifically I don't believe there are many (if any) provinces in Canada which don't have some type of fibre optics in place or will be putting it in place in the very near future.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to manufacturing of all equipment, it's pretty obvious that we have no intention of manufacturing all of the equipment that will, at some point in time, be attached to our lines. It doesn't make sense to even suggest that we would want to manufacture all that equipment. We have manufacturing firms right in the city of Regina now, which are doing that very job. We believe that they're doing a good job. One firm is Northern Telecom. They are doing the job of assembling telephones; they are doing the job of manufacturing cable. We don't in any way want to interfere with that company, because we think they are doing a good job, giving lots of jobs to ordinary citizens in this province. We have no intentions of manufacturing all of the equipment.

With regard to double headend equipment, I'm just going to very briefly talk about that for a second or two, and then I'm going to tell the member that I'm not going to talk any more today about cable television in Saskatoon and Saskatoon cable television, because of the fact that it is now before the courts and I don't think it would be right for me to stand in this legislature and say things that may . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm not talking about cable television in Regina, I'm talking about Saskatoon Telecable . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I said I am not going to talk about cable television in Saskatoon, and cable television in Saskatoon is obviously handled by Saskatoon Telecable. I don't feel it's right for me to indicate or give any suggestions or answer any questions with regard to Saskatoon Telecable when it in fact is today before the courts. It may well in fact have a serious effect on the decision which a judge may want to make one way or another, and I'm not going to get into that.

With regard to headend equipment, we don't have double headend equipment in Saskatchewan, anymore than they have double headend equipment in Alberta or in Manitoba. If the member want to explain to me specifically what he means by double headend equipment, I may be able to answer his question specifically. But as far as I am concerned, we have no double headend equipment. It's pretty obvious the reason the member says something about double headend equipment is because he is misinformed. He obviously hasn't received the facts that he should have and doesn't know the technologies, and as a result feels there might be double headend equipment when in fact this is not the case.

With regard to earth stations, the member asks a question with regard to earth stations for farmers. Well, if a farmer can get a licence from the Department of Communications in Ottawa, we would have no way of stopping him (if we did want to stop him) and of course we are not going to stop him. That's not our intention. Our intention is to own earth stations in areas where there are a large number of subscribers, we need the revenue we derive by carrying the signal from a satellite from a satellite to an earth station and delivering it to our customer — Saskatoon Telecable, Cable Regina, Prairie Co-ax, or

what have you.

We have to have this bulk amount of revenue so that we can give cable television to a place like Swift Current or Wilkie or Yorkton or Estevan at a reasonable rate. And if we don't have this ability by owning the earth stations, we will not have the money to be able to rate-average throughout the province, and as a result we will not be able to give cable television to the very small communities in this province. And the member for Regina South says, that is nonsense. The member for Regina South obviously knows very little about cable television. He knows very little about a lot of things, I have noted over the last couple of years.

I think if we do not have the ability to own the earth stations, we will never see the city when we have a good network of fibre optics throughout this province to give small communities an opportunity to watch cable television. We, on this side of the House, believe in all of the communities in Saskatchewan. We believe that everybody in Saskatchewan should have an opportunity to watch cable television at a reasonable rate, not like the Tories opposite. They believe that by allowing earth stations to be owned by the cable television operators they will be able to deliver the signal throughout the province. That simply is not the case. They obviously don't know the technologies, it wouldn't happen.

I just wish the hon. member for Wilkie would at some point in time do a touch more homework, so that the questions we have to answer have properly been asked (so we can answer them in some definitive way).

**MR. GARNER:** — Well, Mr. Minister, just a couple of points from your remarks there. First of all (and I will check Hansard when it comes out) I sure don't like it and I know the people of Wilkie constituency will not appreciate it. I don't know how to phrase it really until I see the Hansard, but it seemed to me it was a threat. If you don't vote for the right political party, forget fibre optics and forget cable television. Now that sounds to me, Mr. Minister, like a government that's running out of control and wants more control. Mr. Minister I say to you that's wrong . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

I hear one of the Saskatoon MLAs saying they just want to control Tories. Well, these letters I have received sure aren't all from Tories, when they were Sask Tel employees they couldn't have all been Tories. I think a lot of them are though. But I heard the comment over there before, Mr. Chairman, from one of the members (I don't remember which one) that, oh, we didn't receive any letters. Well, here's one for you — to the four Saskatoon cabinet ministers from Western Business Machines, copy to Jim Garner:

We would like to express to you our concerns regarding the implications of the proposed Bill No. 13 to amend the Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act. We have been in the office machine industry in Saskatchewan for many years and are aware that we are on the threshold of a new era of communications. Communicating word processors, computers and copiers are now a reality. Electronic mail is not only a possibility but a certainty. It is of concern to us to have Sask Tel given the added powers implicit in these amendments. This is particularly true in view of the fact that SaskComp is now in the computer retail business market. Hewlett-Packard and Sask Tel are, we understand, about to become involved in the direct marketing of a word processor.

Having a government monopoly operating in direct competition to us is bad

enough. But when they also have the power to stop (and I repeat, to stop) anyone else from competing with them, the situation is untenable. All that has to happen after this bill is approved is for Sask Tel to say, we haven't approved that yet and you are denied service! We hope you will use your influence to have the section which would allow Sask Tel to market equipment changed. If this is not done a system of appeal through an impartial body should be put in place. As the legislation now stand sit is like being in favour of freedom of press and having one group owning all the printing presses. Yours truly, K. Stead, CIM, Manager of Western Business Machines.

Mr. Chairman, there's one letter to the Saskatoon cabinet ministers.

**MR. ROMANOW:** — Big deal!

**MR. GARNER:** — Ah, now all of a sudden they have three. Later on it will be ten. But they hide them. Mr. Chairman, this is just a prime example that when a government wants something badly enough, and wants enough control, it doesn't matter how much or when the people make representation to them, they file it, they shelve it or maybe they throw it out the window, but they don't listen. They don't listen to the people of Saskatchewan.

It is just a very good thing, Mr. Chairman, that the members on this side of the House are here and are willing to listen to the people of Saskatchewan and act on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan (not just the big business operations, but also the ham radio operators and all of them). Mr. Chairman, there is no way I am going to be satisfied with Bill 13, nor are any of the members of the Progressive Conservative opposition, until we pass some of the amendments we will be bringing forth to take away some of the state powers the NDP government wants.

Mr. Chairman, the minister stated before that he wouldn't talk any more about Telecable in Saskatoon because it's before the courts. You know, it seems that as the days drag on in this session there are more government ministers and departments before the courts in Saskatchewan. This should point out something to the people of Saskatchewan. The government is in court; why is this government always in court? Why, Mr. Chairman, is this government always in court? We'll be known as the court government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman. Not a government listening to the people, but a government that is always in the court, always stepping too far. Mr. Chairman, people are starting to fight back. Gone are the days (and I say those days are gone, Mr. Chairman) when people are going to sit back and be quiet.

But I would like to bring to your attention, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, some of the tactics used by this government and Sask Tel to try and control and manipulate the people in Saskatchewan. Here's a letter from A.L.M. Nelson, President of Sask Tel.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Take it as read. We've already heard that.

**MR. GARNER:** — No. I hear the minister saying take it as read. This is a very important thing, Mr. Chairman, a very important letter. They're not only trying to manipulate the employees who are now with Sask Tel, but they're reaching back. 5, 10, 15 years, to the employees who worked with Sask Tel then.

Dear Fellow employees, present and former. In recent days considerable public debate has taken place with respect to two issues of great importance to the corporation. One issue deals with Bill 13, or the interconnect bill as some people referred to it. The other was our decision to pick up (Mr. Chairman, this is very important here, I should have underlined it.) House of Commons debates carried on the Anik satellite by the use of earth stations and the subsequent dispute with the Saskatoon Telecable. Both issues challenged our role as the province's designated common carrier.

Our decision to pick up — they already could pick up the signal through these connections with the CBC on the Telesat satellite. But they weren't happy with that. They had to go through and pick up the signal by the Canadian Satellite Network because the Canadian Satellite Network (which Saskatoon Telecable is a shareholder in) was projecting that signal too. Canadian Satellite Network and Saskatoon Telecable had a joint effort. They had all the licences. Sask Tel wasn't happy with that because it was kind of on the side. I mean, they had done their own thing. They didn't get the permission from Sask Tel as Bill No. 13 would call for. They had to get all the signals.

Now I could agree, Mr. Chairman, that if Sask Tel couldn't get the signal, maybe make a deal with Canadian Satellite Network to get that signal as well. They were already getting the signal; but so was someone else. Someone else in the province was getting the signal. They didn't like that because that wouldn't fit well with their little socialist image which is being projected out there — total control of all the communications. And they could see that they were losing some of that control because private government licences and the government regulations, and was providing a service to its customers, and its customers are the people of Saskatchewan. But they still had one need that double headend equipment, Mr. Chairman? I can only guess why we have that double headend equipment. My guess is so that Sask Tel still has the final lever, and can act as if Bill 13 had already been passed to be able to cut that signal off to the people of Saskatchewan.

I hear the minister talk about increased revenues. Increased revenues when you're putting double headend equipment in? We have one headend. It should be sufficient. Now we have double headend equipment. But back to this letter, Mr. Chairman; it's what I call kind of a scare tactic, or a fear tactic by the government.

Bill 13 is before the legislature now. As a matter of fact second reading was scheduled to begin this week (that was April 22). The earth station issue could possibly end up in the courts.

Mr. Chairman, it has ended up in the courts. This is just how far this government is going to go on the earth station.

The two special reports to the employees contained in this information

package are intended to familiarize you with both issues. I think that employees, especially informed employees, are Sask Tel's best ambassadors.

And in the letter in larger print is:

Special reports to employees. I hope you take time to read this information. I hope that in doing so the two issues will be much clearer to your minds. Should you still have questions please talk to our public affairs people, or call me. Yours sincerely, Arnold Nelson.

Well, Mr. Minister, I would like to ask you why it was necessary to put that letter out? I could see maybe to present employees, Mr. Minister, but to former employees, I mean, former employees who may have moved to Alberta or to Manitoba?

Mr. Minister, this seems to me like the tactic of controlling all the people and the employees of Sask Tel. I wonder if you state to your employees when you hire them, Mr. Minister of Sask Tel, that even if they don't work for you five years from now you'll still be sending material packages on why you're doing this. Mr. Minister, I say to you I received this letter from one of your former Sask Tel employees and he was very unhappy to receive it. He said, I don't work for Sask Tel any more, Mr. Minister, that gentleman even went one step further. We'll sure be getting into what he told me later on, what he was asked to do when he worked for Sask Tel . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You name him, I hear the Attorney General say. The last time we talked on second reading on this he took a long weekend on a witch hunt. Name him now. You see, Mr. Chairman, that's just what I'm saying . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, the letter was sent by the president, Mr. A.L.M. Nelson.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — Mr. Chairman, I move the committee report progress on Bill No. 13 and beg leave to sit again.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order! I wonder if we could clarify the motion of the hon. member for Indian Head-Wolseley. Was the intent of the motion to report progress on Bill No. 13 and to go on to other items or was it to report progress from the committee and go back into the House?

**MR. TAYLOR:** — What I said was that I moved that the committee report progress on Bill No. 13 and beg leave to sit again.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — The motion is that the committee rise, report progress on Bill No. 13 and ask for leave to sit again.

**MR. ROMANOW:** — Mr. Chairman.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — That's a non-debatable motion. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt this motion?

Order! The question before the committee is the motion by the hon. member for Indian Head-Wolseley that the committee rise, report progress on Bill No. 13 and ask for leave to sit again.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

**YEAS — 10**

Birkbeck  
Lane  
Taylor  
Rousseau

Swan  
Garner  
Muirhead

Katzman  
Andrew  
McLeod

**NAYS — 23**

Pepper  
Smishek  
Romanow  
Snyder  
Gross  
Shillington  
MacMurchy  
Mostoway

Banda  
Kowalchuk  
MacAuley  
Feschuk  
Byers  
Vickar  
Cody  
Lusney

Prebble  
Long  
Nelson  
Thompson  
Engel  
Poniatowski  
White

The committee recessed until 2 p.m.