

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan
December 12, 1980

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

QUESTIONS

Inflation Control Measures

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Speaker, question to the Minister of Finance. Mr. Minister, in the past year we have repeatedly asked you and your government (and frustratingly so, I might add) to accept your responsibilities with respect to the inflation that's facing the people of this province, which is now, you might say, out of control. In light of yesterday's announcement, the 16.14 per cent Bank of Canada interest rate, are you now prepared to announce and introduce some programs to help this situation? For example, are you now prepared to put a freeze on public utility rates for the next year or two? Would you be prepared, for example, to remove the 5 per cent sales tax to help the people in this province?

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, I think the members of the House are well aware that the responsibility for monetary and interest policy in this country is at the level of the federal government. It is there where the responsibility lies. We have, as a provincial government, stressed very aggressively the fact that we think that the present policy of the federal government in Ottawa — and the policy of the former federal government in Ottawa, during which time the members opposite were very silent when they allowed and encouraged interest rates to go up very dramatically — is the wrong policy. It is causing exactly the opposite of what it is intended to do. The high interest rate, it has been argued, is supposed to cause inflation to go down. In fact the interest rate situation, as it is now, is such that it is encouraging inflation to go up. I have taken steps in that I have sent a Telex to the federal Minister of Finance asking that the governor of the Bank of Canada appear before the meeting of finance ministers, which is taking place Wednesday next in Ottawa, to explain his position, and asking Mr. MacEachern to explain the federal government's position on the question of the interest rate situation and the inflationary situation and what they are prepared to do with it. We will continue to take that position with them in the hope that maybe they will get off their non-policy as it applies to the direction of the Canadian economy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Supplementary question to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker. You haven't answered my question, Mr. Minister. I am prepared to agree with you that the spiralling interest rate is a responsibility of the federal government, but this government sitting across from me today has a responsibility to the people of this province. I don't really like to do your job, Mr. Minister, but you have \$210 million of retained earnings in the power corporation, and you have \$125 million of retained earning in Sask Tel. Now that is enough to maintain and to freeze the present rates for the next five years, and still have millions of dollars left in those Crown corporations. Are you prepared to introduce a program putting a freeze on those, and go as far as removing the sales tax to help the people of this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, obviously anything that this government

might do in the future with a new budget is under review and it would be announced in due course. At the present time, Mr. Speaker, there are no plans to put any kind of a freeze on the rates in the power corporation. But I ask the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, to urge the government in Alberta to not increase the price of natural gas, and I'm sure that that will make a significant difference to the price Saskatchewan people have to pay.

I want to also say that it is not as if the Government of Saskatchewan has not taken some steps to ease the burden of inflation on Saskatchewan people. We have done it in every budget introduced for the last several years, including the budget of this fiscal year, Mr. Speaker. There is in that budget, because of indexing, a \$26 million income tax saving to Saskatchewan citizens. We have introduced a \$6 million capital gains tax rebate. We have expanded the sales tax reduction to farmers of Saskatchewan so that farmers because of exemptions from sales tax, have a saving of \$26 million. I think that's a pretty major contribution and of some assistance to them.

We also introduced a \$50 tax reduction for senior citizens and increased the tax cut for children. Those are some of the very significant steps which we have taken but we cannot continue. No province in this country, even Alberta, I suspect can continue to subsidize policies which are atrociously bad from a . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. I think it is quite clear that the members on both sides of the House are getting into a debate on this issue. The point of this period is questions and answers.

Financial Relief to Home-owners

MR. LANE: — Question to the Minister of Finance. We attempted last year, during the rising interest rate period which existed last spring . . . (At that time you had allies in the press gallery who didn't think you had to do anything either.) But I ask you, now that this is the second time this year we've gone through this cycle, to those home-owners whose mortgage term is coming due during this period of high interest rates and who will be forced to renew at a significantly higher rate, would the minister be prepared to give financial assistance through a one-year grant program? If the rates do go down in the future they can take advantage at that time but in the interim they are protected from the high interest rates. Would you give assistance to those people?

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, let me just answer the question as briefly and as concisely as I can. We now provide property improvement grants of \$44 million for home-owners. We have introduced (and home-owners are getting benefit of it this year) a mortgage interest tax credit program where people who are paying mortgages can have deductions to a certain amount for the interest that they pay on those mortgages, so we have taken some of those steps that the member opposite is speaking about.

We can do all those things, Mr. Speaker, but it still remains that the fundamental and the basic problem is the interest rate situation, which can only be handled at a national level, as a national initiative. We will do everything within our power (and I ask the members opposite to assist us) to try to convince the federal government to change the position they are now taking, which is bringing this country to a ruinous economic situation.

MR. LANE: — Supplementary to the minister. The minister has just admitted, because

the problems exist for the consumers and the people of Saskatchewan., notwithstanding your programs, that one can take the position that your programs have been a failure. Are you prepared to give some assistance to young families in the province of Saskatchewan by announcing, effective January 1, the removal of the sales tax on children's clothing to give some immediate financial relief to the consumers of Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to compare the situation in Saskatchewan and the results to anywhere in Canada. I am prepared to indicate to the member that in the areas of bankruptcies, the bankruptcies of businesses in Saskatchewan in 1980 are 71, in Manitoba they are 97 and in the province of Alberta (which is a fairly wealthy province) they are 278.

I think that clearly indicates that some of the efforts and initiatives which we have taken as the Government of Saskatchewan have had some positive impact.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Effect of Bill C-42 on Mail Delivery

MR. KATZMAN: — Question to the Premier. Before the federal house there is a bill called C-42, which is the setting up of the Crown corporation, the post office. Within that bill is a restriction that will not allow the Saskatchewan transportation system or any other private carrier to carry mail, parcels or goods, as they presently do. They will be prohibited and every rural area of the province will be affected. Have you sent a letter of protest or done anything to protect the rights of the rural community in this province?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I am not sure of the factual base put forward by the hon. member to the effect of the proposed provision in the bill. Accordingly, I will take notice of the question.

MR. KATZMAN: — While you are taking notice, Mr. Premier, are you suggesting that once again your intergovernmental affairs minister is so busy learning French that he isn't worried about protecting the rights of the citizens of this province and the services that they want and must have?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I don't think that question really requires an answer. I will accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Souris-Cannington not to take the time of the House with an answer. I suggest that he suggest the same to the hon. member for Rosthern, not to take the time of the House with questions.

Joint Communique Urging Increase of Initial Wheat Payment

MR. BERNTSON: — A question to the Minister of Agriculture. I'm sure the minister knows that our dollar is in the worst shape that it has been in since 1934. Operating loans for farmers in Saskatchewan as of today are on average, 18 per cent. In light of the fact that world price for spring wheat is around \$7 and durum wheat around \$9 and that initial payment to farmers in Saskatchewan is \$4.25, would the minister indicate whether or not he has made any representation to the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board to have the initial price of wheat raised? If not, would he join with this side of the House in lobbying the minister responsible for the wheat board to get the initial payment for wheat up to say, \$6.25 a bushel to help farmers during this

time of severe cost-price squeeze?

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, no I have not, in a formal way, sent a letter to the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board asking for an increase in the initial price for wheat. I will certainly be glad to join with the hon. member in forwarding to the minister a joint communique indicating our position on the increase in the initial price. I think now that we have joined together in addressing the issue of the embargo (and we're both looking forward to a response from the federal government on the Russian grain embargo and compensation to producers for that), a good step would be to join together in asking for an increase in the initial price for wheat.

MR. BERNTSON: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister of Agriculture be prepared to meet with me immediately after question period to draft such a communique to be sent to the minister?

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — I'll be glad to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Reported CIC Purchase of Prince Albert Pulp Mill

MR. McLEOD: — I have a question for the minister responsible for the Crown investments corporation. Mr. Minister, is your government actively considering the purchase of a 70 per cent share of Prince Albert Pulp Meadow Lake stud mill and the chemical plant in Saskatoon as has been reported?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, government policy with respect to our option to acquire the 70 per cent share in PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company), on which we have a right of first refusal, will be announced in due course in January.

MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Minister, will members of your government not agree that it would be of more benefit to the people of Saskatchewan if you were to spend the kind of money that you must now be considering in the Parson & Whittemore Inc. share of the pulp mill — in other words buying something that is already in place. Would you not agree that it would be much better for you to put that kind of money into the stimulation of the housing industry, housing starts and that something, to benefit people here and to benefit the forest industry which is now in operation in the province?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the question is a hypothetical one because the government has not stated any intentions at this point in time of investing any money anywhere. We will make our announcement in due course. Whatever the announcement is, once it has been made, I will be quite prepared to debate it with the hon. member for Meadow Lake.

Vichert Report Recommendations

MR. TAYLOR: — A question to the Minister of Culture and Youth. Mr. Minister, is it your intention, or the intention of your department and the government opposite, to act upon the recommendations of the Vichert report and to establish a Crown corporation for culture within this province?

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Mr. Speaker, the report that the hon. member refers to is the subject of some amount of public discussion as well as internal government discussion and review. I can tell the hon. member that it is my intent that we should have a great deal of consultation and interested parties and groups, including those in the arts and

culture fields, and there will be, in due course, an announcement with respect to government policy. But we have not, Mr. Speaker, made any decision with respect to that recommendation, and I might add with respect to any of the specific recommendations, at this time.

MR. TAYLOR: — Supplementary. Mr. Minister, do you see the implications of this report, the recommendations of it, requiring legislation that would be discussed in this Chamber?

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Mr. Speaker, any sections of that report that are accepted for implementation and require legislation, as I think the hon. member knows, will be not only discussed, but I presume will be debated in this Chamber.

MR. TAYLOR: — Final supplementary. If that is the case, Mr. Minister, and this being the fall session of the legislature, where I believe it is the government's intent to lay out some kind of legislation for perusal by the opposition and interested people in this province, can you explain to me why you have not brought forth such legislation so we could have time to study it, debate and show it to other people? Is it your intention to do the same thing with the Crown corporation that you are with the ward system — shove it down the throats of the people without a chance for them to react?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Mr. Speaker, I will say to the hon. member that it is my intention to do the same with this as I have done with the ward system, and that is provide for a lot of discussion, consultation, study and analysis of the proposals. That is what was done with the ward system. I will remind the hon. member that we go back to May when the initial discussions on the ward system began. That is perhaps more lead time than is customary for legislation, but because of the importance of the discussion there was a wish to have full and active discussion of the issue with all of its implications. The same with the cultural policy considerations.

We have the Vichert report which is under consideration and review, including a lot of public discussion and consultation. The reasons there is no announcement of legislation is, as I indicated to the hon. member earlier, that we have not made decisions about any of the matters which would require legislation. I think it would be absolutely foolhardy to bring in legislation when we are not at that appropriate point at this time.

Government Position on the Ward System

MR. TAYLOR: — Since the minister has mentioned the ward system, I understand by your latest talks and public utterances that you are thinking of changing your position on the ward system, that you are in fact backing off from your previous stand. Will you then, Mr. Minister, allow free and open discussion and take a second look at the imposition of the ward system in this province?

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Mr. Speaker, I am in no way changing my position with respect to the ward system. I am open to discussion with school boards and interested people and organizations about the subject and that is what I have been doing. I don't think that's in any way inconsistent with the way we should proceed with respect to matters of this sort.

Woody Lake Fire

MR. HARDY: — A question to the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources. First I would like to thank the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources for agreeing to come to Kelsey-Tisdale to see the effects of the Woody Lake fire and to look into the prevention and control of future fires. Also I would like to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs for agreeing to help share some of the costs of fire-fighting in our municipality of Hudson Bay. However, the government has an internal study of the Woody Lake fire and to date has refused to release the study. Will the minister now reconsider tabling and making public the government's study on the Woody Lake fire?

HON. MR. GROSS: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member makes note that I have agreed to go to Hudson Bay and look at the Woody Lake fire. For the benefit of the member opposite, I have been in Hudson Bay a number of times and looked at the fire when it was burning, so I don't know why we would want to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I wasn't campaigning up there, Gary; we were down in Estevan, where we were successful, I might add.

In regard to his second question about releasing an internal report to the House and to the public, it's a matter of course, not only in this province but in all provinces across Canada where forest fires occur, that you do internal post-mortems and you keep those studies internal, just as they are. The reason is quite simple. It is because of the fact that you have a great many fires in any given year, particularly in a year like we had in Saskatchewan, in a years like we had in Alberta, like we had in Manitoba and Ontario, where there were up to 1,000 fires burning. The problem is that it would be almost impossible to have public inquiries, as the member suggests to look at those fires — each and every one of them. So that's why we conduct internal post-mortems and learn from those experiences as well, I might add. Accordingly that study will be kept internal.

MR. HARDY: — A supplementary. Will the minister not admit that it is extremely suspicious that the government will have a public inquiry into the Moose Jaw fire, where the government seemingly has not been involved, but where the government is heavily involved and is probably negligent, it hides the report and tries to keep the matter secret and hidden from the public?

HON. MR. GROSS: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what inquiry the member is referring to. There no doubt is an inquiry into the Moose Jaw fire as there would be in any other fire of that size.

Forest fires are considerably different from fire you might have in an urban centre like Moose Jaw, or for that matter any other kind of fire. Because of the great number of them and because of the severity of the forest fire situation this year, my comments remain the same.

Minister's Reply to Question re Crop Insurance Payments

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday during question period the hon. member for Arm River asked about crop insurance payments. I have received a report from the crop insurance board and I would like to provide the information to the hon. member.

The policy of the crop insurance board with respect to payments of claims is to make every effort to put the payments in the hands of the insured farmer within 90 days of the date of the adjustment. The following steps are involved?

1. Measurement of bins and sampling of grain at the time of the adjustment.
2. Sending samples for grading.
3. Claims are held in area office until grading information is received.
4. Grades are entered into claim forms, and claims are submitted to head office after being checked.
5. Claims are registered in head office, checked and forwarded to data entry.
6. Data entry is entered into the computer system. A statement of indemnity and proof of loss agreement is produced and mailed to the insured.
7. If insured is in agreement that the indemnity is calculated properly, he signs proof of loss agreement and return it to head office.
8. Payment is then issued within three or four days on receipt of signed proof of loss unless a deferred payment is requested.

The hon. member would note the steps of the process before payment can be made.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to note that of the \$80 million in claims processed to December 10, a total of \$18.9 million was deferred on request. It should also be noted that all of the field adjustments will be completed as of December 12, and that some 60,085 inspections will have been carried out during this crop year. Because of the heavy workload in certain areas of the province there have been back-ups in area offices at times.

However, the fact that 13,608 spot loss hail claims and 16,456 yield loss claims have been processed in the amount of \$80,127,992 as of December 9, 1980, would seem to indicate that in a general way there has not been a delay in handling claims.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the board is confident that all claims will have been processed — there are approximately 16,000 claims remaining to be processed — by the end of January.

MR. BERNTSON: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Obviously the minister tries to downplay the importance oft his when he say that — what was it — 18 per cent or whatever by their own request had asked for deferment of payment. Obviously those that asked for deferment of payment are the people who didn't need the money that quickly. But it is words, Mr. Minister, just words. Where is the action? Where is the money? There are a lot of people out there who have been waiting for cheques since August. Now that is five months. Where is the money and when can they expect their cheques?

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, I will ignore the comments from the hon. member for Souris-Cannington. I provided a report from the crop insurance board. They feel they are doing a very good job. I think a look at what they have done would

indicate to all members that they should support the efforts of the crop insurance board this year in fulfilling their obligations, getting those adjustments completed, and delivering the money to the producer.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, can you tell me why the crop insurance can't administer something that they only put 5 per cent in? It's the farmer's money which pays the premiums — 50 per cent from the federal government — and you can't even make a good job of administering it. Pay the money to the farmers before they go broke!

SPC Charges

MR. SWAN: — A question to the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Power Corporation. The small community of Bounty made an application to have natural gas brought into their community at the time the main line was laid, and that's going back about six years. The line went through — the tap-off valve on the main line is there — but you have never proceeded to bring the gas into the small community.

They have had numerous letters and visits with the power corporation over the last three years. Each time they visit with you, they get a different figure of how much money it is going to cost them to have the gas installed. The last figure was in excess of \$25,000.

My question to you, Mr. Minister, is will you look into this particular concern for this small community? It is only a community of about 40. Can you consider their need for the gas and their closeness to the main line, which is only a mile and a quarter away and come up with something that is realistic in the way of price to put natural gas into that small community?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can give the hon. member the undertaking that I will have the corporation examine in some detail the circumstances surrounding the individual case of Bounty, and the possibility of connecting Bounty to the natural gas distribution system.

Of course, it's part of a larger question which has been raised on other occasions by members opposite; I suppose at some point in time it becomes a matter of cold, hard economics. The member will probably know that those connections that have not been made to some of the smaller, more uneconomic communities represent something in the order of \$14,000 a connection, which becomes a fairly impressive costs and one which at some point in time becomes less than economic. The question of providing subsidies for natural gas or electrical power obviously has to be considered as an option with respect to the installation and connection of natural gas service. It is a matter which I will undertake to respond to him in writing as I expect he would probably wish to have an answer sometime before February or March.

MR. SWAN: — Mr. Minister, while you are looking into that, I have another concern with the power corporation. I have had it registered by the municipality of Canaan. They tell me that to move eight poles you charged them \$4,000. It was necessary to move the poles for road construction. They feel that the bill is excessive, far beyond the cost to the power corporation. They would also like you to look into that.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Yes, I will also take notice of that, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: — It's Christmas, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order. I'm the Speaker. I'm not Santa Claus.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

PRIORITY OF DEBATE

Economic Plight of the Citizens of Saskatchewan

MR. BERNTSON: — Before the orders of the day, I rise in accordance with rule 17 for which notice has been provided and acknowledgement received. I hereby give notice of our intention to move that a matter be given priority of debate under rule 17 for the purpose of discussing an urgent matter of public importance. I state the matter to be that the economic plight of the citizens of Saskatchewan, as illustrated by the following points, is becoming a staggering burden.

1. The citizens of Saskatchewan are faced with ever-increasing inflation which, in light of the Conference Board of Canada's economic forecast December 11, 1980, will cause an unbearable burden on many of our citizens who are on fixed income, such as senior citizens.
2. The farm community is caught in an ever-increasing cost-price squeeze.
3. Housing starts are down and it is increasingly more difficult to own a home in Saskatchewan.
4. Bankruptcies of businesses in Saskatchewan are increasing at an alarming rate.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, there is an urgent and compelling need for this Assembly to debate the methods of providing economic relief for the senior citizens, the farmers, the businessmen, and the home-owners of Saskatchewan.

I understand, Mr. Speaker now has to review this and determine whether it falls into the parameters of rule 17. Then I presume he will allow us to go forward with our motion.

MR. SPEAKER: — A notice regarding this matter proposed for a priority of debate was received in the Clerk's office at 7:40 a.m. today, for which I thank the hon. member. I refer all hon. members to a ruling of the Chair on February 23, 1971. I quote a section of that ruling as follows:

The fundamental principle underlying Rule 17 is to provide an opportunity within a proper framework of parliamentary procedure where none otherwise existed for the immediate discussion of any matter deemed to be of such urgency and importance, that all normal and special business of the House should be put to one side in order to provide complete right of way to discussion of one particular specific subject.

The subject matter of a debate under Rule 17 must not be of a continuing nature and must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention.

I refer all hon. members to Beauchesne's *Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, Fifth Edition, paragraph 286, page 92:

The fact that a grievance is continuing is not sufficient if it is not of recent occurrence.

Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice*, Seventeenth Edition, page 365:

Although the matter raised is of great public importance it is not of sufficient urgency that all of the normal business of the Assembly should be put to one side.

Is there anything further on order of the day?

MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if Mr. Speaker, would outline for this side of the House, what “urgent and compelling” is? We have businesses going bankrupt at an ever-increasing rate in Saskatchewan.

MR. SPEAKER: — The member is starting to debate the issue. I am sure when something urgent and compelling of the nature which the member suggests comes forward and conforms with the rules which are laid down for rule 17, I will recognize it, as I have in the past. For this occasion I have determined this matter is a matter of continuing . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Of course it's continuing.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! This matter is of continuing nature and therefore doesn't qualify under rule 17.

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, speaking to that . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — If I can enter in this debate . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! If the member is rising on a point of order I am quite prepared to permit it. I have made my ruling. I cannot entertain any debate on my ruling because I can't debate my rulings.

MR. TAYLOR: — I just have one question. How do you deal with something that is of a continuing nature if you can't use this vehicle?

MR. SPEAKER: — I hesitate to give the member advice on how to conduct his business in the House because that is not my job here. There are all kinds of opportunities to bring matters forward which may be of a continuing nature. There are other methods of bringing matters forward which are of an urgent nature, and which have just occurred, that fall under rule 17. The matter which the member has brought forward at this time doesn't qualify under that rule. Therefore we can't proceed on the matter.

MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, point of order. The point of order is that you are ruling on a matter such as inflation which has peaks . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — That is not a point of order.

MR. LANE: — I am saying it is not a continuous matter. I am going to give the indication why it is not a continuous matter.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! The member is in fact debating my ruling . . .

MR. LANE: — I am not.

MR. SPEAKER: — Oh yes, you are!

MR. LANE: — If I could challenge your ruling I would, Mr. Speaker, because your ruling says that we can't deal with inflation in this House and we can't deal with high interest rates. That is what your ruling means. On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, your ruling means that this House can never . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! The member is completely out of order.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I wonder if I might . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! With regard to the procedure of the business in the House at this time, I was under the impression that we were done with items before orders of the day. If I have overlooked someone, I will ask the House if they wish to return to orders of the day. All right, we are still on orders of the day.

Tabling of Confederation and Constitution Documents

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I would like to table some material requested by hon. members. It is a selection of documents: Confederation and the Constitution, selected documents, December 1976 to September 1980; Trudeau-Blakeney exchange on patriation at the first ministers' conference, February 5 and 5, 1979; speeches and interviews by the Hon. Allan Blakeney in the course of a trip to Ontario and Quebec, April 1980; The Future of Canada: Saskatchewan Perspective which is dated in September 1980; a statements by the Hon. Allan Blakeney on the proposed federal resolution of October 9, 1980; a statement by the Hon. Allan Blakeney at Toronto on October 14, 1980; notes for remarks by Premier Allan Blakeney at the Dalhousie Law Alumni Association, Halifax, October 27, 1980.

In noting the comments of the hon. member, there are undoubtedly some contradictions of a modest nature over four years, but that is rather better than is frequently the scorecard.

MR. LANE: — I would like to respond to the Premier and thank him for . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — There is no opportunity in the rules to respond to the tabling of documents.

MOTION

House Adjournment

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, before the orders of the day, I would like to move, seconded by the hon. member for Moose Jaw South, by leave of the Assembly:

That when this Assembly do adjourn at the end of the sitting of the day on which this motion is adopted, it shall stand adjourned to a date set by Mr.

Speaker, upon the request of the government, and that Mr. Speaker, shall give each member seven clear days notice, if possible, by wire and registered mail, of such time.

This is the standard motion given for the conclusion of the fall session, which I anticipate will be today.

Motion agreed.

SECOND READINGS

HON. MR. MCARTHUR moved second reading of Bill No. 22 — **An Act to amend The Association of School Business Officials of Saskatchewan Act.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak to the second reading of this bill. While the amendments proposed through this bill to The Association of School Business Officials of Saskatchewan Act are neither numerous nor particularly complex, they do represent and reflect the kind organization and structure we have in education in our province, which I believe is very progressive and very advanced. They also represent the continuing co-operation and good will which exists between school boards, between teachers, between business officials and business administrators and me and the Department of Education.

If I might, Mr. Speaker, I just want, as a general introduction to this bill because it does involve a very, very important group of officials who work in the education field, to say something briefly about the general background to this legislation. As the members of this House will well know, in 1978 this legislature passed the new Education Act. That act is recognized throughout Canada as being the most advanced and most progressive education legislation anywhere in Canada.

This point was brought home to me one year ago when the president of the Canadian School Trustees' association spoke to the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association here in Saskatchewan, and indicated that his organization was looking at our legislation as a model to be promoted and developed all across the country because they believe that our legislation recognizes the partnership that exists in education and translates that partnership in a legislative way, into a reality which makes it possible to have an excellent working relationship among all of the partners and that also, Mr. Speaker, provides for the highest quality education that exists anywhere in Canada.

In reference to that, Mr. Speaker, I should indicate that the partnership which exists in education is a very important partnership. I think at times we may fail to recognize all of the important partners within the structure and processes of education. Those partners are of course, first and foremost, the parents and the children and the young people who are involved in their education system. We must give recognition to the important contribution, the important role, and the important responsibilities we have to the needs and rights of parents and young people.

In addition to parents and young people, of course, and important group of partners in the educational process, in the education system, are the teachers. We have, I believe, in this province, the best group of teachers anywhere in Canada as well, I think that is one of the reasons why we have such a high-quality education provided in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I think that our legislation with respect to the provisions, protections of the rights, and the development of the education of teachers in this province, is excellent legislation. That, I think, is another reason why our Education Act is looked upon with such envy all across the country.

In addition to the parents and young people on the one hand, and teachers on the other, partners in education include the school trustees and the school boards. Mr. Speaker, I spoke as recently as about two or three weeks ago to the school trustees of Saskatchewan and had the opportunity to discuss with them, a number of times, items with respect to trusteeship. I think our legislation, Mr. Speaker, recognizes very clearly the important role which trustees play in the educational process.

Trustees are exactly what the word implies. They are people who under the laws and the legislation of the province are given a very, very important trust and a responsibility as part of that trust, to ensure on the one hand that the education system is administered in accordance with the legislation, the policies and the regulations of the responsible authority for the content and quality of education, namely the provincial Department of Education. As well they must recognize that trusteeship involves identifying and responding to the needs of parents and young people within the school system. In addition, there is an important provision, and our legislation now makes provision for this, as part of that trusteeship, to ensure that parents and young people do have an active role in the management and the direction of the education system. Those are all part and parcel of the very sacred trust which is provided for trustees under our school system.

Of course, in addition to that, there are all the employees of the school boards and employees of the trustees, one group of whom is this group of school business officials who are referred to in this act.

Finally, a part of the partnership, and a very important part of the partnership, is the Department of Education, the Government of Saskatchewan, and the Minister of Education. I think that it's important to recognize that education under the constitutional provisions of this country is a provincial responsibility. That responsibility, by that constitutional framework, rests in the hands of this legislature and through this legislature to the delegated authorities that are provided under the act: the Department of Education, the Minister of Education, school boards and the other partners.

Mr. Speaker, we have, I think, developed an excellent balance in terms of the distribution of the responsibilities that this legislature has provided a distribution of those responsibilities between the Department of Education, the Minister of Education, and the school boards.

I want to just say something very briefly about that, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important to recognize that, first of all, there are some important principles in education: matters relating to quality, matters relating to content, matters relating to equality of opportunity and accessibility. These are matters which very, very clearly rest at the provincial level. There is a very clear provincial responsibility to ensure that we have a high quality education provided to all of our young people in this province, that it is provided in a context of equality which provides equality in terms of basic quality, equality in terms of content, equality in terms of opportunities which are created, and equality in terms of accessibility.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am the first to recognize that, at the ministerial level and in the department level, we have some critical responsibilities with respect to education, and that we must accept that responsibility. That's not always easy, Mr. Speaker, because education like everything else is not necessarily something upon which there can be agreement on all things. But I think that what we can do in trying to ensure that we exercise that responsibility in a responsible fashion is to ensure that we have as much openness, discussion and consultation as possible and that we try to provide that through an open dialogue about the issues and question we face. I make reference, Mr. Speaker, to the recent decisions with respect to the election of school trustees in the urban centres. In that case, Mr. Speaker, recognizing this partnership, we have provided for a great deal of lead time to discuss this issue and a very careful study of this issue to ensure that there is full consideration of all of the matters that should be looked at and considered in the course of making this decision. There is an opportunity for consultation and discussion, an opportunity for the intent of the government to be known, and now an opportunity for further reflection on that as we prepare for the recess and the upcoming winter and spring session of the legislature.

I mention that because it emphasizes there are difficulties — this recent incident with respect to this ward system or the subdivisional system. I mention this because it illustrates a kind of problem we get into when we try to work on this co-operative relationship. Open dialogue, open discussion, of course gives rise to a certain degree of controversy around those subjects and I think we have to be mature enough, responsible enough — all of us in this legislature as well as other in education who are part of the partnership — to understand that dialogue and discussion, if it is going to take place in an open and effective way, must be sincere in terms of participation. It must not be exploited for political ends but rather be seen as something that is important to participate in in terms of substance. And that's why I challenge the hon. members and others to talk about the issues behind these things, because only if you deal with them in terms of the issues and not in terms of partisan political advantage to try to distort the situation, can you really effectively have an open and productive partnership within education.

Mr. Speaker, I for one am proud of what we have done in terms of our relationship particularly with school boards. I think this legislation that we are considering here is a further illustration of that. We have accepted as a basic principle that school boards in our province have developed to a point where they can effectively carry out many wide-ranging responsibilities. Part of that is the administration and management of the school administration within which they operate, and therefore it is very important that we recognize the important role of the administrative officials within the school systems because they, after all, in terms of financial management and in terms of the basic administration of the administrative aspects of the system, provide the very, very important support that the school boards need. Mr. Speaker, we in this province, I believe, have a very, very qualified, very, very competent, very, very effective group of administrators working within our school system. And to a certain degree this bill, while it contains a number of technical changes to the legislation, stands as a kind of statement of our confidence and a recognition of our belief in the abilities and the contributions that school business officials in this province are making.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say in speaking on second reading of this bill that I have welcomed the initiative and the consultation and co-operation which has come from school business officials in this province in drafting this bill. Many of these

amendments come from their suggestions and their proposals, and that, Mr. Speaker, I welcome and I look forward to in the future, because that is the way I think one effectively does business when one is working in a co-operative arrangement.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before you proposes that we have a new interpretation section added to the act. I think the most significant definition in this section is the new definition of a school business official.

The proposed definition is intended to recognize that we do have some very important people who function in the educational system, as I have said, and who fall into this category of school business officials. These are basically a group of people who should no longer be placed in separate, highly-defined categories, but rather their general competence in school business administration should be recognized. And so therefore we are intending, through this amendment, to encompass all definitions of school business officials currently used in our Education Act. This will allow for easy amendment of the act in the future as new titles are created (if they are created) and old titles are withdrawn.

Turning to section 12, Mr. Speaker, the bill proposed the deletion of the naming of the age of majority and the substitution of a reference to the age of majority as defined in The Interpretation Act. This, Mr. Speaker, is done in order to assure consistency in definition in the future, so that we don't have any problems with losing reference to this item in the legislation, should there ever be anything done with respect to The Interpretation Act in the future.

The amendment proposed for section 14 of the act will change the legal title of a school business official, and I think this is really very important, Mr. Speaker. I think this is critically important because it does recognize (as I mentioned earlier) . . .

HON. MR. GROSS: — Would you go over that again for us?

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Yes, I have been referring here specifically (and I want to make it clear to the hon. member for Morse) that this is really the part of the legislation that I think gives a clear indication of our intent to recognize the school business official himself. We're going to change the title from registered school secretary-treasurer to registered school business official.

I might add that the results from a direct request from the association of school business officials that the act be amended in this respect. The hon. member for Rosetown will be familiar what the concerns of school business officials; I know he has worked closely with them and I know he understands . . . I see other hon. members opposite make light of the role of school business officials in our system, but the hon. member for Rosetown knows how important the school business officials have been historically to the development of our educational system. He knows, I'm sure, from his discussions the importance they placed upon this kind of change in definition, so that we can reflect more appropriately the various designations of officials we have had around and bring them into line with the general concept that school business officials are a group of competent professional people in the system who should be recognized as a group, and that we shouldn't have the separate categories of secretary-treasurer or superintendent of administration or treasurer or whatever, but rather should try to encompass those within one general definition. If school boards wish to use separate working titles in that respect, they should feel free to do so.

As I say, that is something that the association members themselves — I have met with the executive — place a great deal of importance on.

The final amendment, Mr. Speaker, relates to section 18 and proposes the replacement of school board and school unit board by the terms, board of education. The Education Act no longer contains the earlier terms and this amendment will simply make the Association of School Business Officials of Saskatchewan Act consistent with The Education Act., and so that just tidies up that matter.

Mr. Speaker, I again emphasize that while this bill in itself does not make a lot of major change in any way to the structure of education, it is part of this ongoing process of ensuring that we get the basic legislation framework set up so that the partnership is clearly recognized and so that all of the partners in the process are clearly recognized and respected. It is for this reason, Mr. Speaker, that I am bringing forward this legislation at this time as part of the ongoing process of strengthening that structure.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to place these amendments before you in this House and I am quite sure, knowing that there are former teachers and trustees on the other side who have the kind of respect I do for school business officials, that they will not only be supported by all members on this side but by all members on the opposite side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 22 — An Act to amend The Association of School Business Officials of Saskatchewan Act.

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the remarks of the Minister of Education. His rather lengthy descriptions of the ward system, I think are proof positive that he is certainly feeling the wounds of this hasty action in trying to implement the ward system in the urban centres. I would hope that the minister would continue to move back from this and let the trustees have their say.

I certainly believe, along with the minister, that education must be a co-operative venture and that the main participants in the education scene are, of course, you, Mr. Minister, your department, the boards, the teachers, and the parents, I didn't hear much mentioned of the students, but they certainly are the main commodity in the educational system. They are what it is all for.

I believe that we should have co-operation and that we should work together. But I say from the past actions of your department, what you are telling me, my friend, is what we said about old Polonius — words, words, words. Actions speak stronger than words.

Let's just look at the record of your department since you have become the minister. I remember last year, Mr. Minister, there was a contract signed between the teachers and the boards in this province along with the government. If my mind remembers correctly (and I'm sure it does), the trustees were not present at the signing of that agreement. Now where is the trust and the co-operation?

I see this year that the ward system is being introduced. I am being beleaguered every day with calls from concerned trustees in these cities, and so is the minister. So I say, where is the co-operation? Where is this co-operation and trust? Then I heard the minister say that it is the department's responsibility for equality and for equal opportunity to ensure this. I agree with that. But I also agree and stand foursquare and

strong with the parents in this province of Saskatchewan, that they have the right to say what their children are being taught in the schools of the province. Listen to the grassroots people out there. I gave evidence in the throne speech debate, Mr. Minister, that that is not happening under this administration, that education is being run from the top down.

Now, in the matter of the business officials in education, I too, feel that they are an important part of the educational scene. They are the fellows who put the policies that the board has brought together from the parents into action, the financial aspects of the operating of the board. They administer the grants from the government. They are an integral, an important, and a necessary part of our education system.

However, Mr. Minister, judging from the past action of your department, in view especially of the ward system and the contract negotiations of last year and the failure to listen to the elected school boards, who are the representatives of the people in this province, I would be very remiss to give any type of support or condemnation of this bill until I go out and talk to the school business officials.

You say they have input into this, I will take that on face value, but what I want to find out is: is this what they really want in the bill? Because, Mr. Minister the track record of your department and the government opposite in listening to the people of Saskatchewan about educational matters is very bad. So, therefore, in view of this I will have to take this out and talk to these important people in the educational system, Mr. Minister. I, therefore, beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

HON. MR. ROMANOW moved second reading of Bill No. 23 — **An Act to amend The Surrogate Court Act.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, subsection 45(1) of The Surrogate Court Act provides a procedure whereby persons legally interested in receiving a grant of probate, or letters of administration and estates with a value of under \$5,000, may request the local clerk of that applicable judicial centre to prepare all necessary papers and documents leading to the grant desired.

At the present time the section can be interpreted to allow corporations, law firms and persons not resident in Saskatchewan, to utilize the services of the local clerk in what can be extremely complex estates.

The philosophy behind this sections is to assist individuals acting on their behalf and resident in Saskatchewan. The effect of the amendment is therefore to confine the operation of section 45 to individuals residing in Saskatchewan and acting on their behalf to request the services of the local clerk.

I move second reading of this bill.

Motion agreed to and bill read a second time.

HON. MR. ROMANOW moved second reading of Bill No. 24 — **An Act to amend The Provincial Court Act.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, with respect to this bill, all judges in the province of

Saskatchewan are continually sought after by numerous bodies to sit as arbitrators or conciliators. I think this is testimony to the general adjudicative ability of judges. However, it is the wish of this government that a judge should devote himself exclusively to his role as a judge, as outlined in legislation, both provincial and federal, and only take on those arbitration duties as assigned to him under legislation of the Parliament of Canada, or this province's legislature, or by the Governor General in Council of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

To this end an additional subsection has been added to section 19. This new subsection is a direct parallel to section 47 of the Judge's Act, Canada. This subsection prevents a judge from acting as a commissioner, arbitrator, adjudicator, referee, conciliator or mediator, unless he is authorized or appointed to act by legislation or order in council.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of this bill.

Motion agreed to and bill read a second time.

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI moved second reading of Bill No. 25 — **An Act to amend The Heritage Fund (Saskatchewan) Act.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words about this amendment to The Heritage Fund (Saskatchewan) Act. Much of what I am going to say will be in line with what I said yesterday on the amendments to The Department of Finance Act, because the two amendments, the one I explained yesterday and the one before us today, are parallel. One is contingent on the other, or one is necessary because of what we have done. This one is necessary on The Heritage Fund (Saskatchewan) Act because of what we have done with The Department of Finance Act.

As I have indicated, and as the order paper shows, Mr. Speaker, the bill before us will amend The Heritage Fund (Saskatchewan) Act to bring the accounting arrangements for the revenue cutoff for any fiscal year into line with the accounting arrangements for the expenditures. An amendment with an identical objective is contained in the bill on which I spoke yesterday and which was responded to by the hon. member for Regina South. That was the amendment to The Department of Finance Act.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, let me take a minute to say one or two things about The Heritage Fund (Saskatchewan) Act and what its implications are and have been.

I tabled today in the House, and it should be distributed, the annual report of the Saskatchewan Heritage Fund for the year ending fiscal '79-80. I might say that in that report it is clear that the decision which was made by the government to establish the kinds of policies we have, with regard to resource revenues and with the establishment of the heritage fund, was a very appropriate and positive decision for the people of Saskatchewan. The report indicates that the revenues increased very significantly, something like 16.3 per cent for the heritage fund — and this is from non-renewable resource sources — in 1979-80. I would like to indicate to the House that the increase in revenues to the heritage fund for 1980-81 will even be much greater on a percentage basis than it was in 1979-80.

I think, Mr. Speaker, the bill which established The Heritage Fund (Saskatchewan) Act in 1975 was a very good decision on the part of the government. It gave us and the legislature an opportunity to provide some prudent management to our revenues and

to assure that some funds were set aside for investments for the future, and this is something we have been able to accomplish. It would be very easy for any minister of finance or any people on the treasury benches of any government to spend all moneys that come from things like non-renewable resources in one particular year, and it would probably be a very positive thing to do for that particular year. But any government that is prepared to look to the future and the needs of other generations who follow, should be prepared to manage carefully to assure that the services which are necessary today are provided in the future, and also, to assure that those kinds of services which will be necessary in the future, will be provided because we have assured that there are revenues to make that possible.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, the consolidated and the heritage fund are operated on the basis of what is called a modified cash-accounting system. Essentially the legislature in it's review of the estimates approves the cash expenditures that are to be made during any fiscal year. In general the accounting methodology utilized for the two funds is a cash method which includes the moneys actually paid out or received in the fiscal year, as opposed to an accrual accounting approach which would include the amounts payable or receivable after the end of the fiscal year. Expenditures which are not actually paid, or revenues not received until some period after the end of the fiscal year, are not retroactively included in the fiscal year in which the commitment was made or the revenue owing. This cash-flow accounting approach is well understood by the members of the legislature, since it is amounts of cash that are appropriated by the Assembly for expenditures during any specified fiscal year. Any amounts received after the end of the fiscal year must be appropriated by the Assembly in the new fiscal year. I said it yesterday, but I repeat that for a purpose. Mr. Speaker, I know the members opposite will be concerned about amending another portion of the finance act and amending a different portion of the heritage fund act than the one we are doing. His argument is that you should pay out earlier than is now required; we can now pay out of this fiscal year, as late as April 30, those costs or expenditures that are as of this fiscal year. The member say we should change that from April 30 to April 15 or April 1. I want to say that that would not be possible . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — No, no. I didn't say that.

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Well that's the way I understood him. If he didn't say that, then I will just ask him to respond afterwards.

That would not be possible, Mr. Speaker, because really, when a supply is made available to the province from a supplier, whatever the commodity or service provided, most businesses have a time period in which they send their bills. In many cases it is as much as 30 days; in some cases it's more than that, but not in very many. So we have to allow for that time period. Therefore I think the present situation with regard to an extension of the expenditure period is an appropriate one and what we want to do with these amendments is to bring the revenue cutoff period into line with the expenditures cutoff period.

Our system, Mr. Speaker, is a modified cash accounting system, however, to account for the fact that our bill paying and revenue collection system function with a one month lag in many circumstances. In effect, many of the payments for services or goods purchased and received in march of any fiscal year are not actually paid until April, as I have indicated.

As well, revenue from fees and royalties are taxes imposed for March which may not be received until April. That's not unusual. In both circumstances the cash transaction occurs in the next fiscal year. The cash accounting system has been modified to facilitate the situation at the end of the fiscal year.

On the expenditure side of the consolidated fund, and of this bill to which I am speaking this morning, these modifications are authorized by a number of sections. In the consolidated fund it is provided by section 63 of The Department of Finance Act. A similar provision of expenditures is contained in section 13 of The Heritage Fund (Saskatchewan) Act. In other words, Mr. Speaker, the expenditure cutoff for accounting purposes for any given fiscal year is effectively 30 days after the end of the fiscal year.

It should be clearly noted, of course, that the only expenditures incurred in April that are included in the previous fiscal year are those related to work performed or goods received or services rendered in that previous fiscal year. Such a provision, as it relates to revenue received by the consolidated fund, is currently contained as I have indicated in The Department of Finance Act.

A similar provision for revenue is currently contained in section 12 of The Heritage Fund (Saskatchewan) Act. The inconsistency between revenue provisions and the expenditure provision, it seems to me, should be quite obvious. The revenue cutoff is April 15, while the expenditure cutoff is April 30, for each fiscal year. This discrepancy arose because of some amendments that were made in 1977 when the expenditure cutoff was advanced from April 15 to April 30, and no change was made to the date for the revenue cutoff at the same time.

The impact of the amendments in section 38 of The Department of Finance Act, which I spoke to yesterday, and section 12 of The Heritage Fund (Saskatchewan) Act, is to bring consistency to the treatment of revenues and expenditures in the modifications to the cash accounting system.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, in closing, that the amendments to The Heritage Fund (Saskatchewan) Act also eliminate a wording error to clause 28(b) that was introduced during the spring session of 1980. It is not of any major significance; it is just a housekeeping correction to a wording error.

With those words, Mr. Speaker, and with that explanation I would like to move second reading of this bill to amend The Heritage Fund (Saskatchewan) Act.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to thank the minister for giving me the opportunity to respond to the announcement he made this morning referring to *Public Accounts* and the tremendous increase in revenues to the heritage fund. I don't know what it has to do with this bill, but since he made the announcement I would be very happy to add a few words to his comments.

The minister this morning indicated the tremendous increase and advantages we were receiving out of the heritage fund. I don't know whether he listened very carefully to the question period this morning, but the point we have been trying to make to the minister is that as long as these increases are continuing (and so they should), the building up of the heritage fund for the purposes that you are building it up is not at all in line with our thinking.

You continually pour the millions of dollars being made out of the heritage fund into non-renewable resources and forget completely that we have renewable resources in this province that could use the same kind of assistance and help.

Mr. Minister, \$50 million in hopper cars is small compared to the billions of dollars you are talking about in the potash industry; the hundreds of millions of dollars you are talking about in the uranium industry. At a time when Canada is faced with the worst inflation we have seen in 40 years with the cost to the senior citizens, to the young people of this province and to the people in general, the minister can stand and brag about the increases poured back into the heritage fund and to non-renewable resources with total disregard for the needs of the people of this province. If there is as much money in the heritage fund as the minister claims, what is preventing him and this government from assisting the people of this province in this time of need? Why can't the government assist the people of this province today by putting a freeze on public utilities?

I haven't reviewed the annual report that the minister is tabling today. Unfortunately they wait till the last day of the sitting of this House before they table it. It has probably been available for the last two weeks when we first hear the throne speech. Why wait till today? If it's so good then you can well afford to do as we suggested to you in the question period this morning. As I indicated earlier you have over \$200 million of retained earnings in Sask Power; you have over \$125 million of retained earnings in Sask Tel and you have almost \$200 million of retained earnings in potash. But are the people of Saskatchewan receiving the benefits of those profits? No, because you are continually increasing the rates. You are not putting any money from the potash into the consolidated fund to help the people of this province with perhaps a reduced sales tax or the elimination of it.

Take the increases in Sask Power, for example, of 50 per cent in the last four years. And when it comes election time in a year or two or three from now, the people of this province will be wise to the gimmicks that you've been using such as waiting until that year to announce some program to buy the votes that you will want at that time. But by continually taxing the people in between elections, you build up huge profits and retained earnings in all these Crown corporations. I readily admit that the high interest rate today is the responsibility of the federal government, but you have a responsibility to the people of this province to assist them now when many of them are going to be losing their homes and farms. Many of them will be living in poverty and unable to meet the cost of living that is escalating and spiralling.

I don't know why we would have had to wait until today to receive the *Public Accounts* and the *Saskatchewan Heritage Fund Report* that were put on my desk five minutes ago, which I haven't had time to study or look at or even open the first page.

The minister indicated in his comments a few minutes ago that government is looking to the future. The future looks very bleak for many people of this province, but what's pessimistic about asking the government to spend the money that they've got sitting doing nothing? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Certainly I'm jealous. Why shouldn't I be when I see almost a billion dollars in retained earnings of the Crown corporations continuously stockpile the profits and do nothing with them. That's exactly the point we have been trying to make with you. This bill is, as the minister indicated, almost a copy of the bill which was introduced yesterday in this Assembly. He indicated that I wanted to move it back from April 30 to April 15 or April 1. Well, I never said April 1. I said April

15 for the expenditures, but not April 1.

Now, Mr. Speaker, for years the act called for April 15 when all systems in bookkeeping were done manually. For some reason the civil servants of that department were able to cope with that date. Today we have the technology at our disposal to do it in a matter of seconds and they want to extend it instead of taking it back.

The minister indicated that some businesses send out their bills even 30 days late or 30 days past the end of the month. Well, if that is the case, your bill won't help them at all anyway, because after 30 days, if they send it out at that time, it will go into the next fiscal year anyway.

Yesterday on the Department of Finance bill I voted against it, as did the members on this side of the House; it was passed on second reading. Today, rather than vote against this bill, I am going to ask leave to adjourn debate for the simple reason, Mr. Speaker, that it will give the minister an opportunity to think about what I have suggested to him and come back in the spring, at the next session of the legislature, to perhaps agree with my suggestions and to change it to read April 15, which will give his department sufficient time. I know he has very competent staff to be able to handle the closing of those books in the two-week period rather than taking 30 days. The government, rather than becoming more efficient, want to become less efficient by continuously creating and causing delays.

Having said those few words, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cowley that Bill No. 5 — **An Act to amend The Real Estate Brokers Act** be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to and bill read a second time.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cowley that Bill No. 14 — **An Act to amend the Business Corporations Act** be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to and bill read a second time.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cowley that Bill No. 15 — **An Act to amend The Business Names Registration Act** be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to and bill read a second time.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Robbins that Bill No. 8 — **An Act to amend The Provincial Mediation Board Act** be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to and bill read a second time.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No 2 — An Act to amend The Reciprocal Enforcement of Maintenance Order Act.

Section 1 as amended agreed.

Sections 2 to 8 inclusive agreed.

The committee agreed to report the bill as amended.

Bill No. 7 — An Act to amend The Farm Security Act.

Section 1 as amended agreed.

Sections 2 to 5 inclusive agreed.

The committee agreed to report the bill as amended.

Bill No. 17 — An Act to amend The Department of Finance Act.

Section 1

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Chairman, once again I would only ask the minister to reconsider this bill. The bill in itself, without the heritage fund, as he admitted earlier today, is of little value. The other one will have to be amended before it can be implemented in the bookkeeping system of the government. I would ask the minister to either withdraw the bill or vote it down, or whatever and come back next spring with both of them. We will both have some time to give it some thought. We will certainly not be passing the heritage fund bill today, since the debate has been adjourned on it. Since there is little value to it by itself, my suggestion again is that we withhold, cancel, vote against, drop it, or whatever.

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Chairman, I appreciate what the member is saying. I obviously can't agree with him that there is little value. There is a considerable amount of value in the bill. There is an anomaly which now exists: the cutoff period for the expenditures incurred is April 30. The cutoff period for the revenue for any fiscal year is April 15. I, for one, don't quite understand why that anomaly ought to be there.

I suppose, as the member said, the other option would be to change the cutoff of the expenditure period from April 30 to April 1, not April 1 as I thought he had said. I accept that correction. That I would say, Mr. Chairman, would not accomplish some very important requirements. I think it would not accommodate the paying of expenditures for a fiscal year out of moneys which are coming as revenue for that fiscal year, as well as it ought to be.

I think you would create some difficulties in that his solution, or his proposal, would mean there would be a considerable amount of expenditures accrued in 1980-81 that would have to be paid out of the fiscal budget 1981-81, because of the acceleration of the cutoff period. There is no other way, you have to. They are not there. Experience in the past, and thus the amendment which came about in 1977, showed that there had to be at least that period of time. I am not sure whether there was any debate on that amendment; I was not aware of any. I was unable to find any but there may have been.

I still maintain that what the amendment does to The Department of Finance Act (that is, changing the revenue cutoff from April 15 to April 30) is an appropriate and a good amendment. It brings it in line with what has existed since 1977 with regard to the cutoff of the expenditure aspect of it, and so I am not convinced that we should be changing the proposal which we have before us now.

Now that the member for Regina South has heard a better explanation than I maybe gave yesterday, I would hope that maybe he will join with me in supporting the amendment.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Chairman, my only concern is efficiency within this government and that seems to escape the minister. I know for a fact the minister has some very capable people. I cannot understand his thinking when he says that the bills don't come in. Most businesses today will mail out their bills well prior to the fifth of the month. Most of them mail them out before the end of the month, so you've got them; you can pay them. You have the computers; you have the capable people; you have the system; you have everything you need. Nine months to wait for this is ridiculous.

All you're saying and suggesting is that we delay it some more. All I'm saying to you is, get efficient; get in line; bring it back. Instead of the thirtieth, pay your bills before April 15. April being the first month following the beginning of the fiscal year. The bills are there; the system is there; the people are there. Why are you trying to delay it that much more?

Unless there is something that is escaping my attention in this particular matter, Mr. Speaker, I will never agree that we need an extra 15 days to pay bills. You can do it in the period of time that I have suggested: the expenditures to be brought in line with revenues rather than the other way around, revenues to be brought in line with expenditures.

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Chairman, because I really stated our case, there is no suggestion here of a delay. In the expenditure thing, we're leaving that the same and that's not being changed. All we're doing is making the cutoff for the revenue period the same as the cutoff is for the expenditure period, and that is April 30.

Let us assume that this happens. Let us assume that the goods supplied come at the end of the first week of April (which is not unusual) or the last week in March, I should say. Even with the computer systems that are there (and I sometimes am skeptical about computers, but that's a person point of view), there is a system of processing and verification and other things that are required in order to meet the requirements of the auditor and the public accounts and so on. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I think the public needs those kinds of safeguards and that kind of careful analysis done by those agencies of the government that expend the public's money. I don't apologize for some of those delays that take place in the processing and the verification. They're important and they're required.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I really have nothing more to say, other than to take the member's suggestions as suggestions and disagree and say that we should support the amendment.

Section 1 agreed to on division.

Section 2 agreed to on division.

AN HON. MEMBER: — There needed to be an amendment to a printing error. I don't know whether the officers are aware of that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Do you want to just check that out? If we're going to be passing the bill, we may as well.

MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Chairman, maybe we can stand this bill and come back to it after he checks. Let's proceed with the other ones and pick it up later on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Is it agreed that we stand this for a few moments?

Bill No. 24 — An Act to amend The Provincial Court Act.

Section 1 as amended agreed.

Sections 2 and 3 agreed.

The committee agreed to report the bill as amended.

Bill No. 5 — An Act to amend The Real Estate Brokers Act.

Section 1 as amended agreed.

Sections 2 to 9 inclusive agreed.

The committee agreed to report the bills as amended.

Bill No. 14 — An Act to amend The Business Corporations Act.

Title as amended agreed.

Section 1

MR. LANE: — I asked for some information the other day and my question dealt with that and The Business Names Registration Act. Firstly, I asked what the proposed fees were to be. Secondly, I asked whether or not the company's branch of the new department to be announced in January, consumer and corporate affairs or whatever you are going to call it, will in fact allow the practice (as does the land titles) that those having a significant use of the branch have the right to pay a deposit or a certain amount of money and run up a credit so they are not preparing cheques for every item. As I say, it is to the advantage of the government. It gives them the use of the funds. It is also a convenience to those having a significant use of the office.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — I am advised by Mr. Leo Beaudry, who is the deputy provincial secretary, that the fee is \$10. With respect to the name of the department, it (for whatever it is worth) is the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs. With respect to the suggestion, the only thing I can give you is this. The new department and Mr. Beaudry say: “The suggestion that the corporation branch operate a deposit account such as the land title’s office, is one which the department is looking at and feels may eventually come about as the number of corporations increases. The suggestion is one which is being examined and implemented as soon as it is practical to do so.” The argument here, I gather, is that there is not the same kind of volume to justify this at the present time. I am making a judgment call and I shouldn’t be making a judgment call. The issue is whether or not the volume is sufficient to justify that kind of a deposit.

I guess what I am saying to the hon. member is that my personal view is that it is a very good suggestion and it should operate as you say — a kind of current basis deposit account. We are asking the department to implement it if there are no difficulties with it. The department has not yet said to us yes or no on it, but they are looking at it. That’s the best I can give you.

MR. LANE: — It’s not the number of corporations, of course, which is the only factor. You have searches of the corporations’ security register. I suggest to you that they do run up. It shouldn’t be based just on the number of corporations; it should be based on the usage. I would think that the volume should in fact justify it. The government gets the use of the money. It has some financial advantage to the government. It strikes me that you wouldn’t agree with it.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Chairman, I personally think the idea has a lot of merit. Mr. Beaudry says that this has been looked at in the past and there is (and I don’t have the information here) an expense factor from the government’s point of view for the operation of the system. I can get into the details or undertake to provide that argument to the hon. member if he wants to get into the details of it.

But I can say with respect to the suggestion made in December of 1980, both the minister, Mr. Cowley, and I are asking the officials to see if we can implement it because I agree with you on the policy. I’d like to leave a little caveat of escape if there is some administrative or financial difficulty on it.

MR. LANE: — Why were these bills not put before the non-controversial bills committee?

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — I just believe, Mr. Chairman, that the non-controversial bills committee simply has limited value. This is my own personal view. Perhaps I shouldn’t be taking the rules that way but as House Leader I would sooner run them through the House and take the time of the House than to run it through the committee. That’s my reason.

Section 1 as amended agreed.

Section 2 to 9 inclusive agreed.

Section 10

MR. LANE: — Why the change to section 252?

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Chairman, the official, Mr. Beaudry, advises me that the way the law is presently worded, strictly speaking, under 255 the documents must “conform to law,” which places an undue burden on the officials of the department to in effect make a legal judgment or conformation to law. Whereas in reality what they are doing is making sure they conform to the prescribed form, which may or may not be subject to the conformity of the law. That would be determined presumably in subsequent court challenge or legal contest. Therefore the amendment is to change that and to put the prescription to form as opposed to conformation with law which has, in reality, been the way the practice has been operating.

MR. LANE: — Are there any actions or proposed actions against the department through the operation of the act and the interpretation of the act?

Section 10 agreed.

Sections 11 to 15 inclusive agreed.

Section 16 as amended agreed.

Sections 17 and 18 agreed.

The committee agreed to report the bill as amended.

Bill No. 15 — An Act to amend The Business Names Registration Act.

Section 1 as amended agreed.

Sections 2 to 6 inclusive agreed.

The committee agreed to report the bill as amended.

Bill No. 8 — An Act to amend The Provincial Mediation Board Act.

Section 1 as amended agreed.

Sections 2 and 3 agreed.

The committee agreed to report the bill as amended.

Bill No. 17 — An Act to amend the Department of Finance Act.

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — You were correct. There is a small change which is necessary to section 3 of the bill because of some wrong dates in there. Before I move that amendment which I have discussed with the hon. member for Regina South, I just want to make sure that the appropriate change has been made to section 1 and that is to strike out 1981 and substitute 1980. I think that is in hand.

So I would move, seconded by the member for Shellbrook:

That all the words in section 3 following the word “assent” be deleted.

The reason is they are not required.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — You say you were changing the date of section 1?

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — That's done because it is straightforward. Section 1 now says '1981.' This is not 1981. It's an error. It's 1980.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — That section was passed by this House before, Mr. Minister. I don't know how you can turn around and change that now. It has been passed as it is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — 1980 is there.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — 1981 is there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — No, in section 1 it is 1980.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Well, I show 1981 in section 1.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — It was amended.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — It wasn't amended.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Yes, it was.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — When?

MR. CHAIRMAN: — It was one-half hour ago when the bill was before the committee.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — I have a comment on that. I am not going to argue that point but I am going to say that this is evidence of the stupidity of having this session at this time of year. We have 20 bills handed . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . of the time of the session.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Chairman, the only comment I want to make on that particular amendment is that we have had 20 bills handed in to this House this session, three of them are wrong which we have already found this morning. You have had since June to bring in these bills and make them up. Surely we can have a little more efficiency and competency on that side of the House, to come in with these bills correct in the first place. We have had nothing but a nothing session so far this year with housekeeping bills, and even they cannot be correct.

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Chairman, the amendment is simply to bring the timing of the bill in line with the timing of the assent, which is today. It is not in any way changing the bill or its intent. I don't believe that any session is a nothing session. It provides an opportunity for our members, both on the opposition side and on the government side, to state points of view. I think that's important.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — I would just like to say, Mr. Chairman, that it is not a question of just changing a date. It's a question of the bill being in error. The bill says it is retroactive. How can it be retroactive when the date hasn't even occurred? It's not a question of just changing a date. It's a question of the bill being brought in wrongly. You have had a lot of time to bring these bills in and to have them correct.

Sections 1 to 3 inclusive agreed.

The committee agreed to report the bill as amended.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Romanow that Bill No. 18 — **An Act to amend The Members of the Legislative Assembly Conflict of Interests Act** be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to and bill read a second time.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 18 — An Act to amend The Members of the Legislative Assembly Conflict of Interests Act.

Section 1

MR. LANE: — I wanted to make a comment before letting the bill go through. I have had assurance from the officials in the Attorney General's department that the amendments affect no member and allow no member to avoid the act, and for that reason we will be supporting the amendments and will let it go through.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — I should say on the record, I know of no member affected as a consequence of these amendments. I just don't want . . . you know, in case something comes up. I don't foresee anything. I know of no situation which deals with that 60-day situation — that's what we're talking about. I undertake that to the member.

Section 1 as amended agreed.

Section 2 agreed.

Sections 3 to 6 inclusive as amended agreed.

The committee agreed to report the bill as amended.

ROYAL ASSENT

At 12:32 p.m. His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, having entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne and gave royal assent to the bills presented to him.

His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor then retired from the Chamber at 12:34 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, I would like, on behalf of the members on the government side of the House, to wish you, sir, and the members of the opposition, all the members of the Chamber, the Clerk and his staff (even my friends in the press gallery), a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and with that do now move that the House adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER: — You have heard the motion. Is there any debate on the motion?

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, it certainly isn't debate, but on behalf of the opposition, I would like to wish everyone here, the members on the government side, the Clerk, you Mr. Speaker, members of the press and everyone, the best for the festive season.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — Before putting the motion on the adjournment, I do want to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Pat Michael, who has assisted us at the Table as a guest Clerk. I say that it was most convenient for our legislature that you were available in our time of need. We in Saskatchewan, of course, cannot claim Pat Michael as a Saskatchewan person. He was born in the province of Alberta, but the good news is that he spent a good part of his childhood and all of his youth in the province of Saskatchewan.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — We are very glad to have him back on our 75th anniversary for this duty at the Table, and we are most thankful for his services.

I also want to join the members of the Assembly in extending greetings to all sides of the House, to the staff of the House and to those above us the best wishes for the holiday season and 1981. Having said that, I now wish to ask the Assembly if they are in agreement of the motion of the Attorney General for the adjournment of the House.

Motion agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: — The House now stands adjourned at the call of the Chair.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:37 p.m.