

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Third Session — Nineteenth Legislature

Wednesday, April 8, 1981.

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.
Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS
WELCOME TO STUDENTS

MR. MOSTOWAY: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to this House a group of approximately 12 students from the Saskatoon Community College accompanied by Mr. Robin Stonehouse. They are situated in the Speaker's gallery on the right hand side. I understand that they have visited the RCMP depot. They are here now, and they will be visiting the museum a little later on. It is my hope that you find the democratic process and action in this House this afternoon very interesting. I look forward to meeting you later on. Have a safe journey home.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce through you to the members of this House a group of 32 students from the Bruno Central High School. They are seated in the west gallery. They have come to Regina to make a tour of a number of interesting places, such as the RCMP barracks, as well as visit the legislature. It is my hope they will find the proceedings here interesting and educational, and that they will go away with a better understanding of what our governmental process is all about. I want to point out that they are accompanied by their teachers, Mary Ann Gerwing, Vern Zakowsky, and Lisette Janneau, as well as by chaperones, Greg Kehrig, and Erna Glaser. I would like to extend a personal welcome to them all and ask the members to join me in extending them a welcome, as well.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly 61 grade 5 students from the Ethel Milliken School. They are accompanied by their teachers, Miss Nonnee Reiman and Mrs. Brenda Arnold. These two teachers have brought their students to the legislature many times. I hope you will enjoy the question period this afternoon. I will meet with you right after question period. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming this group to the legislature this afternoon.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce a group of 34 grade 8 students from Osler Elementary School who are here in the Speaker's gallery visiting with us today. I understand they will be touring around. I will be meeting with them later. We wish them a good day here.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Prime Minister's Statement re Attendance at Premiers' Meeting

MR. LANE: — I would like to direct a question to the Deputy Premier. In light of the Prime Minister's statement yesterday that he is now prepared to meet with the premiers next Thursday (I believe it is), some of the premiers have responded by stating . . . Premier Bennett is quoted as saying that the Prime Minister would not be welcome at the meeting. Premier Lyon has indicated that the Prime Minister has not been invited. What is the Deputy Premier's position or the government's position on whether or not the Prime Minister should be invited or should attend the meeting with the premiers next week?

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, here I would (in answering the hon. member) take the position which I believe has been articulated by the Hon. Premier of Manitoba, Mr. Sterling Lyon, that is the meeting of the 16th was originally intended as, and is, a meeting of the eight premiers, their ministers and officials. The eight provinces have developed what we think is, subject to final approval, an alternative amending formula. That meeting never intended the Prime Minister's attendance. I think, however, it is contemplated that there would be, after the premiers' meeting, a subsequent meeting where the Prime Minister, and those others as would be appropriate, would sit down to discuss the outcome of the original premiers' meeting on April 16. I believe that is the situation. Accordingly, I don't think that it can or should be categorized as a question of whether the Prime Minister should or shouldn't be there. I don't think it ever was intended that he be at that original meeting of the 16th that Mr. Lyon announced a few days ago.

MR. LANE: — By way of supplementary on the same topic. Last Friday, I believe it was, we debated, and it came down to your position that there were two sides to the issue: the federal and the provincial. I refer to the latest continuation of the propaganda (or ad campaign) of the government opposite on the constitution, indicating Canada's conflicting visions which say there are two views. There is the narrow federal viewpoint, and the narrow provincial viewpoint. You say there's a third, because both of those are wrong. This kind of negates your argument of the other day. That ad leaves a very distinct impression that the province of Saskatchewan has a third position different from both the provinces and the federal government. Would you give your unequivocal assurance that when the Premier of Saskatchewan attends the meeting with the other premiers and takes a position of support of those premiers opposing the federal position, you will withdraw the ad campaign that seems to be attacking the other provincial premiers? I ask you: will you give the people of Saskatchewan the unequivocal assurance that the Premier of Saskatchewan will finally support unequivocally those provinces opposing Trudeau's constitutional package?

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, there is no contradiction in the advertisements as to the position of government, which has been stated certainly during the last year, approximately, since the most recent round of constitutional negotiations has been going on. Indeed, the debate does tend to get polarized, and we say wrongly so, by those who argue on the one hand that Canada and the national will is represented by what the 10 provinces say it is, and on the other hand, by those who argue that Canada and the national will is represented by what parliament says it is. We say that the definition of Canada is neither of those two extremes. It is the institutions and the division of powers — a combination of the both.

There are requirements of what Premier Blakeney describes as a double majority in a highly diversified nation such as ours. Now that is our view of the country, and because

we say the resolution of the Prime Minister does not reflect that view in detail and in substance, we oppose the resolution. It may very well be that some of the other premiers oppose it for different reasons, but the fact is that we are united with the other seven premiers and governments in our opposition to what is being proposed. And there is no contradiction in that position, although we may have a difference with the official opposition as to our visions of the nation. Obviously that seems to be the case, but the legal, political, and policy posture has stemmed from that philosophical view of Saskatchewan as articulated in that last ad.

MR. LANE: — I think the consistent position of the government opposite is that you would continue to negotiate, compromise, or sit on the fence as long as possible. Would the Deputy Premier now be prepared to admit that this ad campaign is really an attempt to justify to the people of Saskatchewan your long-standing reluctance and resistance to unequivocally join the other provinces in the court action and your reluctance to unequivocally support the fighting provinces (as we refer to them), and that this particular ad campaign really will attempt to undermine in the public's minds, the position of those fighting for provincial rights in this country.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's last question is predicated exclusively on the vision of the country which revolves around (as I would interpret it) provincial rights. We also have national rights or federal rights; it is a federal state we live in. Those who argue exclusively for provincial rights, to the exclusion of a federal vision of the country, would deny the country. It is imperative for those who would address the issue of Canada and the constitution realistically to address, in their definition and protection of provincial rights, some proper role for the federal government in a country such as ours.

And that's what that ad seeks to do. It seeks to say that there is within the constitutional mix a proper and delicate balance. It's not an either/or situation. It isn't Mr. Trudeau's position that Canada is what parliament says it is, nor is it the member for Qu'Appelle's vision that Canada is what 10 provinces together say it is. Clearly, we are a federal hybrid country which involves, on some occasions, the decision-making processes of both levels.

Because our constitutional resolution does not reflect that, we oppose it. Accordingly, any attempt to improve the resolution that we have been engaged in for the last four or five months, regrettably unsuccessfully, has been prompted by that particular vision of the nation.

MR. COLLVER: — Supplementary to the Attorney General. If I am incorrect in repeating what you have answered in these questions, I hope the Attorney General will correct me. As I understand what he has just said, the concept that Canada is a federal country and a balance between federal and provincial powers is essential for the maintenance of this country, those who would negate that either on the one side or the other are negating the country. What options has your government discussed in the event (as appears extremely likely) that Mr. Trudeau takes unilateral action, passes the bill, either through closure or negotiation with the other parties, and then takes the bill to Britain for final approval? May I ask the Attorney General just what options are there if the Prime Minister of Canada negates his own country and creates merely a country which parliament says it is?

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, clearly we have given considerable thought to this and the eventuality, but I don't propose to answer, in specifics, the hon. member's

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question. It is my hope still (perhaps some would argue naively so; I candidly admit that the chances do not appear to be good at the present), that we would get around the conference table, Prime Minister and premiers, and go at it one more time to work up a constitutional framework which is symptomatic and resembles what Canada is all about — consensus and compromise.

Since I believe that to be a prospect, I think it would be counterproductive for me to articulate our views or our policies or our attitudes, in the eventuality of the resolution going through unamended. It has some time yet to do that; it has to clear the House. There is going to be a premiers' meeting on April 16; there may be a Prime Minister-premiers' get together after that. We don't know the certainty of the resolution in the United Kingdom parliament. In my judgment it would be premature and unwise to discuss those details other than the firm belief that it must be some form of special Canadian lunacy which stops us from getting around the table and working this thing out in a compromise way, recognizing the interests of the provinces and the federal government. I'm still hoping the Prime Minister will exhibit his leadership of the country and take that responsibility in hand.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Suspension of Wilderness Camp Employees

MR. HARDY: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Labor. It was brought to my attention today that two employees of the provincial correctional institute at the wilderness camp at Hudson Bay had been suspended for three days for refusing to work in excess of 10 hours without authorization that overtime would be paid. I understand, also, that these employees had been threatened with further suspension and possible dismissal. Has your department been requested to act on behalf of these employees and, if so, what is your department prepared to do?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I have to tell the hon. member for Kelsey-Tisdale that a call was received by my office this morning while I was attending treasury board. Accordingly, I didn't have an opportunity to check the details myself, but my understanding from the telephone conversation was that two employees were indeed discharged and it had to do with overtime provisions. I have asked the officers of the Department of Labor in the standards and apprenticeship branch to be in touch with the employees in question as soon as possible.

I think it can be said that on the face of it, it appears there may be a violation of The Labor Standards Act, but I think it is somewhat early for me to make a judgment at long distance whether this is or is not the case. Certainly the labor standards officers of the department will be in touch with those employees in an attempt to evaluate and determine whether there has been a violation. If there has been a violation, appropriate action will be taken.

MR. HARDY: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. As you have stated, your department is conducting an investigation into this problem. I would like to refresh your memory. Ten days ago I asked the Department of Social Services to look into this matter. Again this week, I inquired of the Department of Social Services if anything had been done. A couple of days ago I asked your department to take action so this would not happen. Now, with further suspensions or maybe dismissals (as you have indicated) does your department consider this unfair? Would you now give consideration to implementing unfair labor charges against the employer, the social services department?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SNYDER: — The hon. member raised the same question during estimates when my estimates were before the House. I gave him a clear understanding that the attempt was being made at that time to reconcile whatever difficulties existed, and that the Public Service Commission and the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Association were indeed in the process of conducting dialogue with respect to that very question.

I indicated to the member at that time that up until that point, and in fact until earlier today, there had not been received by my department any complaint by members. The work which was conducted to that point and dialogue which had taken place had taken place between the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Association and the employees in question. Now, obviously, that is the appropriate way to go in the event that there is a violation which is determined to be a violation of The Labor Standards Act. If that is the case then we will take appropriate action. In the meantime, the SGEA and the Public Service Commission have been attempting to reconcile whatever difficulty is here.

If you know anything of the history, you will know something about the fact that there was a 10-hour averaging permit which was in existence until a short time ago. So, it's not just as clear as it might be with respect to whether a violation has actually taken place. I would think on the face of it, I can say it appears that there very well might be a violation. If there is we will act in appropriate fashion.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, the member for Kelsey-Tisdale indicated that there was threat and coercion toward these employees, as well as the suspension. Is your department now saying that that in itself is not an unfair labor practice?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — The hon. member obviously hasn't read The Trade Union Act or he would know where the unfair labor practices lie. It is an unfair labor practice to coerce, to intimidate or to threaten an employee with respect to their efforts to organize . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, you're not listening, and accordingly, with a thick overburden of bone it's going to be difficult for anything to penetrate.

I just want to indicate to the hon. member that this is probably not a violation of The Trade Union Act. It is probably not an unfair labor practice; but it is very likely, or could very likely be a violation of The Labor Standards Act, and is not properly described as an unfair labor . . .

POINT OF PRIVILEGE

MR. SPEAKER: — What's the Point of Privilege?

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is using unparliamentary language in describing the question of the member for Rosthern. I ask that he withdraw those remarks at this time.

AN HON. MEMBER: — I apologize.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. I listened carefully to what the minister was saying, and I must

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say that I've heard unparliamentary language which is much more severe than any the minister has used at this time. Now, the member for Indian Head-Wolseley might have taken exception to the term "thick overburden of bone" but I'm unaware to whom that was being applied. I didn't hear it being applied directly to anyone. I think if a person were to examine what is parliamentary and what is unparliamentary, it would be unlikely that that would be found in the terms of being unparliamentary.

I appreciate the member's being concerned about unparliamentary language, and I hope they are always as concerned about it as they appear to be at this time. I can find nothing that the member has said as being unparliamentary. It might have been undesirable, but that is not for me to judge.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to withdraw, indicating perhaps that it might be referred to more properly as being offered in bad taste — perhaps not unparliamentary, but in bad taste.

QUESTIONS (continued)

Initial Payments for Wheat

MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Agriculture. We are all aware of the reluctance of the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board to announce initial payments. We are also aware of his encouraging farmers to plant an additional 10 per cent, I think, as it relates to wheat acreage this year. Now, to further confuse the market signals, we have the chairman of the Canada Grain Council saying:

Farmers should be careful about plans to plant increased wheat acreages. Even with average weather conditions in major producing areas, we could be moving, in the next few months, to a wheat supply unparalleled in 20 years.

Now, that seems further to confuse the market signals which farmers need to intelligently plan spring planting. Since there seems to be nothing coming from the feds, have you taken, or will you take your armies of agrologists and market analysts in your department and see what they can do about coming up with some solid and accurate market signals from which farmers in Saskatchewan can intelligently plan?

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, I can report to the hon. member that officials from my department have been in touch with the Canadian Wheat Board with respect to this issue. There is, obviously, a rather unstable market. All one has to do is look at what has happened to the price of wheat in recent weeks, which is, according to wheat board officials, subject to a good crop-growing climate in the southern hemisphere. We have not had a response from the federal government on this issue. I think the response from the federal government on this issue is important, because they by order in council set the initial price. So we are waiting to hear the position of the federal government on this issue.

Fairly clearly, it's a concern to farmers as they look at the market place, as they hear conflicting reports, and do not have a guarantee of initial price from the federal government. We can only pursue, I think, at this time at least, the federal government in attempting to have them establish what the initial price is going to be so they can guarantee the price.

MR. BERNTSON: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I don't disagree with what the

minister has said, but would you not agree that there seems to be a bit of a contradiction here? On the one hand we're saying with good weather in the southern hemisphere we are going to have a glut in the world wheat market, and on the other hand we are saying to go ahead and plant an extra 10 per cent acreage in wheat. Would you not agree that what we should be doing is tell the farmers that we have a potential market disaster in wheat – in fact we could have a glut – and so we should be a little careful instead of filling up bins we can't move? You know the story. Would you not agree that we should come clean with the farmers and just tell them like it is?

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, I'd be glad to tell the farmers and to tell the hon. member the way it is. But I think I'm as confused as the hon. member opposite is confused, as the farmers are confused. And until we get a clear statement coming from (I would say) the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, the confusion is going to remain. The conflict, Mr. Speaker, is with respect to the market place where what's happening today, in statements from some of the spokesmen from Ottawa and from the market scene, is in conflict with the projections to sell 50 per cent more grain by 1985. Additionally, the pricing picture today is in conflict with the statement I read from the minister's office that grain wheat prices would increase 10 to 15 per cent over last year. Now I think the only way it can be cleared up is by those who are responsible . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I'd encourage the people who are asking the questions and the people who are answering the questions to attempt to strip some of the debate out of their questions and answers. I think we are getting into a debating period here rather than a question and answer period.

Revenue Sharing for Rural Municipalities

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Rural Affairs. Mr. Minister, the rural municipalities are now just concluding making up their mill rate for the coming year, and this is the second year that they made up their mill rate on the basis of the new formula of revenue sharing. I think this is year number two for it. Mr. Minister, last year – the initial year of revenue sharing – did not significantly increase the number of dollars going back to the rural municipalities. Some were up, some were down, but basically it averaged out about right. This second year was probably the key year in the transition to the new formula. Mr. Minister, it would appear that the same situation is still true; that there is no significant increase in dollar values to the R.M.s. Would the minister acknowledge whether his new formula will be under review for coming years since this one obviously isn't giving them sufficient money?

HON. MR. KAEDING: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the member is aware that the revenue-sharing program is based on the performance of the four major tax bases, and that formula brought forth an increase of 10.2 per cent this year for rural municipalities. All municipalities are sharing in this additional money. There is \$3.5 million of additional money. Now there are situations where, because of increased assessments in some municipalities, they will not get any more money than last year. Some may even get a little less because their assessment as related to all of the other assessments in the province has gone up. There are many municipalities, of course, which have very substantial increases. But the average increase across the province is 10.2 per cent, or \$3.5 million. We think that's adequate to take care of the inflationary costs which are taking place in the rural municipalities.

MR. THATCHER: — Supplementary question to the minister. Mr. Minister, since gross

provincial revenues went up about 13 per cent this year, your 10 per cent figure is an acknowledgement that you are not even allowing the municipalities to keep up with the rate of inflation. Mr. Minister, would it not be worthy of consideration for next year's budget for municipalities to take a designated fixed percentage of gross provincial revenues regardless of their source, and allow that specified percentage (whether it be 10, 15, or whatever) to be split among the municipalities according to their size and their assessment base? In other words, instead of just four items, any source of revenue that the provincial government would receive would then be designated by statute to the municipalities.

HON. MR. KAEDING: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think when the decision was made to have the four tax bases, the decision was made on the basis of the fact that those were the four most reliable tax bases which we could set the figure on. The fact that you say there was a 13 per cent and some increase in the gross revenues in those tax bases is a fact. However, when we made the decision to go into revenue sharing, we discussed with SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) on what basis they would want this applied: whether they would want it applied year by year as the rates were struck (which could mean maybe 6 per cent one year and 20 per cent in another) or whether we should average it across the piece for three years. They made the decision with us that it would be more appropriate for them to have it on a three-year moving average. That is what we are doing. You will recall that last year the rate was 7.76 per cent. This year, as you indicated, it is something like 13 per cent. So, when you average that out you come to 10.2 per cent. We are on a two-year average; next year we will be on a three-year average and it will move from there on.

MR. THATCHER: — Final supplementary to the minister. Surely you are aware of the increase in the mill rates of the school units, which is tacked on right at the R.M. office? Surely the minister must by now be receiving reports of municipalities which are not even receiving as much money in grants, conditional or unconditional, from the government as they received last year. If you haven't, I will provide you with some from my constituency. In light of all this pressure now going to all R.M.s (which anyone has to acknowledge have been the most efficient government in this country), the minister must acknowledge that some change in his formula for succeeding years is necessary.

HON. MR. KAEDING: — Mr. Speaker, I would not agree that a change in the formula is required. The formula is one which has been established through consultation with the municipalities. It reflects fairly accurately the ability of rural municipalities to raise revenues. If the allocations went down, it was because their assessments went up and they were able to raise more money on their own. Therefore, because there is an attempt to equalize the grants across the province, they may have received a smaller grant this year than other years, but a very limited number would have received less.

SGI Refund

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Speaker, on Monday last the hon. member for Regina South asked a question and I'll refer to the question, if I may. Mr. Alfred Turner of Prince Albert purchased a new automobile on December 31, 1980. He licensed it on January 2, 1981, paying \$203. On March 17 he received a notice of underpayment for \$72. When will Mr. Turner receive his \$72 refund? When will you straighten out the mess in SGI?

I thank the member for sending me Xerox copies of the original application for Mr.

Turner's licence and also a Xerox copy of the notice of underpayment. I don't know where he got them. I'm sometimes falsely accused of checking files in SGI, and I have never checked a file in my life.

In response to the hon. member for Regina South, I want to point out that he failed to give me all the information. This is often the case. When Mr. Turner registered his new auto – remember it was a new auto – on January 2, Mr. Turner completed an amended renewal. In other words, he did two things. First, he renewed his plates for February 1, 1981, to January 31, 1982. Second, he changed the vehicle covered by those plates. Mr. Turner should have been charged the new rate, since they went into effect on February 1, which was the date of expiry of his old plates. He wasn't charged that.

The issuing system caught the mistake and the notice of underpayment was sent. The member should see that rather than demonstrating any error, this example shows the licensing system is capable of catching and correcting a mistake made by a licence issuer, be it an overpayment or an underpayment. A point which may be confusing the member is Mr. Turner's coverage from January 2, when he transferred his plate, until February 1, when coverage under the renewed plate began. It is true that we could have charged for the extra 29 days of coverage. Mr. Turner replaced a lower premium vehicle with a newer, higher premium vehicle. We did not charge him, nor do we charge for any similar amended renewal.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Speaker, obviously, the minister did not get the information, as he indicated I didn't. I ask you, Mr. Minister, if you will check this. The fact is that he asked the issuer at the time, because of the controversy at that time, if he could not cancel that year and just buy a plate for the new automobile, and he was told that he could. Therefore, your argument is invalid, Mr. Minister. I direct you to look at that application again where it says the effective date is January 2. It's right on your application. And, the date of expiry is January 31, 1982, which is normal at any time you buy that licence during the month of January. Again, I ask you to go back and recheck. I think you will find that you are wrong.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Speaker, if I may briefly reply to the hon. member. I am not wrong. The fact of the matter is that it was a transfer. The old plate ran from February 1 to January 31 and it's replacing that plate.

ANNOUNCEMENT

MR. SPEAKER: — Before orders of the day I want to take this opportunity to remind the members, for the final time, that the CPA (Canadian Parliamentary Association) annual dinner and meeting is this evening at the Centre of the Arts at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Snyder that Bill No. 19 – **An Act to amend The Trade Union Act** be now read a second time.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Mr. Speaker, there has been a good bit of dialogue respecting the rather simple amendment to The Trade Union Act which was brought before this

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House as a result of circumstances which occurred some months ago. I have to begin, first of all, by acknowledging that my friend, the hon. member for Rosthern attempted to take the highroad. I have to acknowledge some of his good instincts and some of the work he has done in the past with respect to occupational health and safety. I have to concede also that he has at least some knowledge about the concerns affecting working people. I can appreciate some of his problem, surrounded as he is by the people to his right and to his left.

I think the member for Rosthern, when he spoke on this debate, carefully avoided taking any kind of discernible position, except to indicate that he and the people on that side of the House intend to vote against this amendment on second reading.

The member for Rosthern flew a few kites indicating there should be more safeguards, and perhaps there should be advance polls, mail out ballots, or absentee votes for strike procedures. I think, at the same time, he would have to concede that he ignores totally the kind of rigidity that such a requirement would build into the whole system for the trade unions in question.

I think it should be obvious, Mr. Speaker, that the voting procedures provided for by statute, or by regulation, which might be perfectly suitable in one set of circumstances, could be totally ludicrous if they are applied in another set of circumstances. For example, precise voting regulations, which were made to apply for a situation where there are 10,000 members affected, would unquestionably have no relevance whatsoever in a plant of, perhaps, 100 members where they work eight hours a day and had voting opportunities very readily available to them.

All I am saying is that the suggestion which seems to be made by members opposite would build a rigidity into voting procedures which I think would be totally ludicrous and unmanageable.

I think that what the members opposite refuse to acknowledge is that unions are democratically constituted organizations. They have the authority and the rights, through an active and well informed membership, to self-regulate and to self-discipline. That seems to be a feature not recognized by members opposite. I am afraid, Mr. Speaker, that I lack patience with those union members who lack the initiative or the will to take charge of their union, but instead call on the government to assume responsibilities for those duties and obligations which are properly their own. I must admit that I have little patience for those who never attend a union meeting and yet feel free to call on the Minister of Labor and ask for provisions to be enshrined in a statute which they themselves can provide for in their own constitution.

I am prepared, Mr. Speaker, to be my brother's keeper. I am not prepared, however, to babysit and wet-nurse timid and negligent adult trade unionists who lack the will to chart their own course and be captains of their own ship.

I was an active unionist, Mr. Speaker. We (and I refer to another member in this House, the hon. member for Moose Jaw North) used to put the fear of God in our leaders when they appeared before us on an annual basis. We were the most important people in that organization. We were the most powerful and important persons in that trade union organization because we were the dues-paying members. Our leaders dared not forget that at any time.

I trust, Mr. Speaker, it will be noted that my patience is limited for those who whine and

cry for attention when the opportunity is theirs to be masters of their own fortune.

The member for Rosthern also alluded to the need for a government-conducted strike vote. Obviously, he hasn't considered the fairness and the equity that should certainly demand a similar requirement for management, as well as the union. If the logic of the member for Rosthern is acceptable, then should not the government supervise a vote among the shareholders of Ipsco (Interprovincial Steel and Pipe Corporation) or Westank should they wish to lock out their employees? I think that is a fundamental question that should be answered in this House.

These people opposite, Mr. Speaker, are the authors of more inconsistent thought than one would believe possible. They indicate that a total of the entire membership must vote in the affirmative in order to validate a strike. However, I ask you, in the event of a ratification vote to accept a contract after a strike has taken place or perhaps during the course of negotiation, should there not be a 50 per cent plus one ratification vote of the entire membership? I ask that there should be some consistency.

I ask you to apply your logic, then, to the set of circumstances in the city of Saskatoon in the recent CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) dispute, involving 660 voting members. Using the logic of members opposite, if one-half of that membership voted, if 330 of the total 660 voted unanimously to accept the contract and to ratify an agreement which had been signed, then according to the logic of the hon. member for Rosthern and his colleagues, you would have to say to those 330 people, who voted unanimously to accept the contract and return to work, that they would have to remain out on strike. That kind of convoluted logic seems to be the only kind that the member for Rosthern can embrace.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this amendment merely returns 11(2)(d) to its original meaning, as it was believed to be understood prior to the ruling made by Judge Johnson. That was suggested by the Premier, and echoed by me when we said that it had served us well for many years.

Furthermore, I think it has to be said that this restores the consistency with The Construction Industry Labor Relations Act, section 19, which members opposite voted for when it was passed on another occasion. Section 19 of The Construction Industry Labor Relations Act says, and I refresh your memory:

Notwithstanding clause 11(2)(d) of The Trade Union Act, it is an unfair labor practice for a unionized employee, a person acting on behalf of a labor organization or any other person, to declare, authorize or take part in a strike unless: (a) a strike vote is taken by secret ballot among all the members of the trade union who are eligible to vote and who are or will be directly affected by the result of the collective bargaining in respect of which the vote is taken; and (b) a majority of those persons voting under clause (a) vote in favor of a strike.

Very simple and precise, and that's the provision you stood in your place and voted for when The Construction Industry Labor Relations Act was before you.

The members for Regina South and Thunder Creek alleged that this version of 11(2)(d) was written by one Larry Brown. If they were even vaguely acquainted with the facts, they would know that Larry Brown does not support this amendment and he is on record on several occasions as condemning this approach, while favoring the absolute

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repeal of 11(2)(d). I don't know where the member for Regina South has been all his life, but if he was in any way knowledgeable about the facts of the case, he would not be making those statements in the House.

The member for Regina South, in the convoluted presentation he made, indicated also that I should be devoting my attention to improvements in The Workers' Compensation Act. So once again I have to say to the hon. member that I'm pleased to hear he will be supporting me in improvements to The Workers' Compensation Act when it comes before us.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition of members opposite to this legislation is really nothing more than a symptom of a much larger and a much more ominous problem. I have to observe that it appears the proposed amendment to 11(2)(d) of The Trade Union Act has become something of a focal point for renewed attacks on trade unions and the manner in which they are inclined to conduct their affairs.

I have before me, and I'm sure members opposite have seen a copy of an article which appeared in the Regina *Leader-Post*, and I believe other daily newspapers: "Who Will Decide to Strike?" The advertisement refers to Bill 19 as a dangerous amendment to The Trade Union Act and that article, or that paid ad, urges readers to fill out a coupon to obtain more information on policies which threaten their individual rights. I'm afraid those responsible for the ad have not had the courage to identify themselves, but I think it's safe to assume that their social and political views lie out somewhere to the right of General Bull Moose and Archie Bunker.

The advertisement goes on to assert that the amendments before the Assembly are clearly a perversion of the very basis of unionism and a violation of democratic procedures.

These persons opposite, who seem to subscribe to that point of view, and others who apparently were the authors of this particular paid ad, ignore totally the fact that the federal government, the Conservative Government of Newfoundland, the Conservative Government of Manitoba, the Conservative Government of Ontario and the Government of Quebec, are all entirely silent with respect to voting procedures which would validate a strike. They make no mention in their labor relations acts or their trade union acts with respect to voting procedures.

In the province of Alberta, good old Tory Alberta, they have a provision in their trade union act which provides that in order to validate a strike, and I quote from their trade union act, "a majority of those who actually vote are the people who shall make that decision."

I was a little surprised when the member for Indian Head-Wolseley took exception to the voting procedures which provide for the validation of a strike vote. Coming as he does, I'm sure, out of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation where they have the unequivocal right to strike and to withdraw their services, he must know that within the teachers' act, within any legislative provision, there is no procedure at all under which the members of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation have the opportunity to have a strike vote provided for them by secret ballot or by any other method. Their act is entirely silent with respect to that matter.

Mr. Speaker, it isn't Bill 19. This bill which is under consideration now isn't dangerous.

It's the advertisement itself, Mr. Speaker, which is dangerous in terms of the irresponsible statements and inaccuracies, the effect of which, I think, is an attempt to cloud the minds of those citizens who are not familiar with the role and function of the trade union movement.

Quite frankly, I'm shocked and disturbed that the bill has generated this kind of opposition, and what appears to be an attempt to deliver such a mass of misinformation about the way in which unions carry on their business. I recall a contributed article in the Regina *Leader-Post* of January 30, 1981, by the executive director of what is referred to as the newly formed employers' federation. I am glad to see him in the gallery today. And it adds further to the confusion with comments about the possibility of rigged ballots and minority rule.

Now that recent organizational meeting offered by Mr. O'Donoghue (?) attracted a grand total of five people who were reluctant to be in any way identified. And I don't wonder, Mr. Speaker, because that newly formed employers' association has shrouded itself already with an irresponsible and a reactionary position with respect to the trade union organizations and the method in which they conduct their affairs.

The trade unions are democratic organizations operating in a democratic society. They are no different in this respect than other organizations in our society. They have operating rules. They have operating procedures as do other organizations. They have a constitution as do other organizations. They have the mechanisms by which policies are determined as do other organizations. And in common with other organizations, they have the means by which a course of action, not favored by the majority of the members, is changed. In this setting, Mr. Speaker, The Trade Union Act, in addition to guaranteeing the rights of workers to organize in unions if they so choose, provides some ground rules to facilitate effective collective bargaining. From this standpoint, Mr. Speaker, the act is similar to other legislation which establishes the ground rules for other organizations, and for other kinds of intergroup relationships.

The specific method by which an organization or an association translates the ground rules into operational procedures, Mr. Speaker, is up to that organization itself. Union decisions are made through the process which the majority of members have themselves established on the basis of democratic principles. Accordingly, if there is a majority vote on the part of an employee group in favor of forming a union, then there is a union. If a majority votes in favour of leaving a union, then there is a decertification. If there is a majority vote in favor of strike action, then there can be a strike. And what could be more equitable than this? These kinds of decisions are entirely in accord with the traditional principles of democracy upon which our society has been created. Why then, Mr. Speaker, do these anonymous critics of Bill 19, hiding behind their ill-informed advertisement, utter nonsense like:

The amendment will adversely affect all of us. (And) Don't let it be possible for our rights and your rights to be taken by a few.

To me at least, Mr. Speaker, the answer is rather obvious. The authors of the advertisement in reality do not give two hoots for the rights of workers. What they are interested in doing is to make it more administratively difficult and more complex for unions to operate in a well-accepted and time honored way and in turn lessen the effectiveness of the collective bargaining process itself. Moreover, I have a strange feeling that we are actually witnessing the renewal of the old "right to work" campaign on the part of a few die-hards who have forgotten to join the rest of us in the latter part

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of the 20th century, under the guise of freeing workers from the bondage of compulsory union membership.

Such a campaign, in truth, advocates one of the most anti-democratic concepts around. That right to work campaign which we see rearing its ugly head would allow a majority of employees, in a group, to ignore the decision of the majority with regard to union membership. At the same time, it would permit the minority to share the benefits which the union has been instrumental in obtaining. This notion is completely inequitable, Mr. Speaker; fortunately, it is also unworkable. It would bring nothing but confusion and chaos to the industrial relations scene.

Mr. Speaker, as a long-time union member, I very much resent the message which this advertisement and the article mentioned is trying to convey to the public: namely, that unions are irresponsible and undemocratic. Undoubtedly, other union members will be equally offended.

Last October, the Department of Labor sponsored a 75th anniversary banquet in honor of labor union pioneers in this province who, I think, without exception, have worked all of their lives to ensure that unions have developed in Saskatchewan, not only democratically, but in a way properly designed to maximize the contribution to the social and economic progress of our province generally.

I think it is fair to say that the efforts of these pioneers and their fellow unionists have been dramatically successful. Union membership in Saskatchewan during that 75 years has risen from nothing to close to 100,000 members, and unions have played a very positive and constructive role in the evolution of Saskatchewan's society. Individually and collectively, I think it has to be said that union members are contributing, in a real and dynamic way, to the affairs of their communities and their province.

Trade unionists have been instrumental, in large measure, in increasing levels of income, improving working conditions and raising standards of living not only for their own members, but for all other working people as well.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! What's the point of order?

MR. KATZMAN: — Once before in this debate, you asked members on both sides to stay to 11(2)(d), which is the amendment. I think once again we are straying off that, as you indicated to us before.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! Can I have quiet, please? Can I have the member state that again? I'm not sure I have a grip on it.

MR. KATZMAN: — Once before in this debate on 11(2)(d), you asked the members not to bring in unrelated subjects, and to stick to the amendment. I suggest that the minister is, as the member for Saskatoon Centre was, going on to other unrelated areas.

MR. SPEAKER: — The argument now is; that's the point of order?

MR. KATZMAN: — That's the point of order I'm making.

MR. SPEAKER: — Okay. The point of order that the member for Rosthern has raised has

to do with whether the minister is in order in discussing what he is discussing at this time. As I take it, we are discussing the closing of debate on second reading of Bill No. 19 - An Act to amend The Trade Union Act, and the minister may refer to anything that has been raised in the debate prior to this time. He may answer anything that has been raised by any member in the debate on this particular bill. I assume that's what the minister is doing.

I fail to see how a member can discuss an amendment without, in fact, discussing The Trade Union Act to some extent, because it happens that the amendment is part of the act. If the minister is keeping within those bounds, I'm sure he is in order. I assume that he is keeping within those bounds. I haven't been aware of his being outside of them.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am only too happy to comply with your ruling, and I'm also inclined to believe that I have not referred to any matter that is not strictly within the bounds of The Trade Union Act and the amendment thereto.

I was indicating, when I was interrupted by the hon. member, that trade unions have been instrumental in increasing levels of income and improving working conditions, and have played a very dynamic role in terms of our development over many, many years, Mr. Speaker.

It was for the purpose of facilitating the full participation of labor organizations in the development of Saskatchewan, that The Trade Union Act of 1944 was passed in the first place and improved in a very major way in 1972. It was, and I think it still is, a strong and effective piece of legislation. I think the same can be said of the amendment which is before us, Bill No. 19, despite the advertisement's protestations to the contrary.

The primary thrust of the bill which is before us is to guarantee that rational and orderly labor-management relations will continue for the benefit of employees, employers and the public as well.

Implicit somehow, in the kind of argument advanced by the critics of this bill, is the suggestion that somehow unions are anxious to run out on strike at the drop of every hat. Knowledgeable observers of the industrial relations scene will understand full well that this is certainly not the case. A strike weapon is recognized by labor, as well as by management, as a serious indication of failure on the part of negotiators to reach a satisfactory agreement. I suggest that it is not a step taken lightly nor is it regarded as such. After all, working people are only too well aware that their incomes cease the moment they walk off the job.

As evidence of this, one needs only to consider that over 90 per cent (and I think this is a significant statistic) of all collective bargaining agreements in this province are signed without any work stoppage. I think the preservation of this favorable industrial relations climate is the reason why we are anxious to redefine section 11(2)(d) to make the strike vote quorum perfectly clear to labor relations practitioners, to the courts and to the public. I submit that is what is being accomplished by the passage of Bill No. 19.

There are still some who feel in all good conscience that this section 11(2)(d) should be removed completely from the legislation. In that connection I can only repeat that there is no real consensus on this matter, even among trade unionists, largely because there is no major issue at stake. I am thoroughly convinced that the section can do no harm. At the same time, I think it would be reasonable and prudent for the government to

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continue as one of the ground rules for collective bargaining the provision that a strike vote by secret ballot should be held among the members of a bargaining unit before a strike can occur.

The bill does not interfere with a labor organization in any way with regard to the procedures it chooses to conduct its own affairs. I say again, substantively the bill does not change anything. What is now embodied in 11(2)(d) is, in more understandable language, what we believed section 11(2)(d) to say all along prior to the Judge Johnson ruling, and it is certainly what occurs in actual practice.

The provision that the outcome of a strike vote is determined on the basis of a 50 per cent majority plus one of the union members who actually vote is consistent with the democratic decision making process as it applies throughout the land. If an eligible voter chooses not to vote, not cast a ballot, then that is up to the individual. This is after all a free country. However, it has to be recognized, Mr. Speaker, that an abstention is just that by all recognized standards. A vote not cast represents neither a yes nor a no with respect to the question which is being voted on.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before the Assembly then represents a small but not an insignificant component of the Saskatchewan labor relations system as it is embodied in The Saskatchewan Trade Union Act. The bill is entirely in harmony with the spirit in the intent of the act as it has been extended and improved upon since 1944. That intent might very simply be described as the creation of an industrial relations climate which is conducive to the maintenance of sound and productive labor management relations with a minimum of government interference. The facts are, Mr. Speaker, that the factual and the annual time lost from work stoppages from strikes in Saskatchewan is habitually only half of that experienced in Canada as a whole. Surely, it is not too presumptuous to suggest that Saskatchewan's favorable industrial relations record is attributable, at least in part, to the role of The Trade Union Act in establishing a framework for orderly and effective collective bargaining in this province.

Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, I would move that Bill No. 19 be now read a second time.

MR. COLLVER: — Mr. Speaker, before the minister takes his seat, would you permit one very brief question about this?

MR. SPEAKER: — Will the minister accept a question before taking his seat?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Yes, certainly.

MR. COLLVER: — Mr. Minister, as you no doubt are aware, the Saskatchewan legislature, last year and over the years, has produced every-increasingly strong legislation regarding the rights of minority shareholders in companies which are organized in the province of Saskatchewan. These rights are very specific, and they are extremely strong now in the new act creating companies. Would the minister be prepared to tell me what rights have been put forward in this amendment or in the entire Trade Union Act on behalf of minorities within trade unions?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, I am not at all sure that I know the provisions that the member for Nipawin is referring to in terms of minority rights. I think it has to be recognized completely, Mr. Speaker, that in order to confer upon one group of people a

right, then a right must be taken from someone else. I question whether the member is on solid ground if he is suggesting that somehow or another the rights of a majority of 50 per cent plus one should somehow superimpose themselves on a minority group. I think the member is fully aware of the fact that in the event there are 100 workers in a work place, if 50 per cent plus one decide there shall be a strike, then the minority has rights that have been subverted. By the reverse argument, if 100 workers in a plant decide that they do not want a union to represent them, then the 49 per cent who desperately do want a union must bow to the will of the 51. You can't have it both ways. I think the hon. member has to appreciate that there are some absolutes in terms of rights that are conferred upon majority as opposed to the rights of minorities. Obviously, the courts of the land tend to protect the rights of the minority. The Trade Union Act is not designed for that specific purpose, but the courts of the land obviously are.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division, bill read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole at the next sitting.

YEAS — 30

Pepper	Kaeding	Snyder
Romanow	Smishek	Bowerman
Tchorzewski	Robbins	Skoberg
McArthur	Rolfes	MacMurchy
Vickar	Kowalchuk	Dyck
MacAuley	Engel	Byers
Cowley	Koskie	Matsalla
Lusney	Poniatowski	Johnson
Lingenfelter	Long	Nelson
White	Chapman	Miner

NAYS — 12

Berntson	Duncan	Lane
Taylor	Rousseau	Swan
Pickering	Katzman	Garner
Andrew	Collver	Ham

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 29 - An Act to amend The Automobile Accident Insurance Act

Sections 1 to 6 inclusive agreed.

Section 7

MR. LANE: — I would like to ask the minister a couple of questions. Would you explain the effect again of section 7 repealing subsection 23(6)? What effect is section 8(3.1) going to have, if any, on any worker compensation claim? Is it going to have any affect?

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HON. MR. ROBBINS: — It has no effect on any Saskatchewan worker's compensation claim.

MR. LANE: — On any other worker's compensation claim?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — I'm informed that the answer is no.

Section 7 agreed.

Sections 8 to 20 inclusive agreed.

Section 21

MR. LANE: — I just wonder why you need subclause (c) if you are giving yourself subclause (d). Is it a question of drafting? My second question is: are there any other provisions to be announced which will mean added revenue to SGI from any other sources of the Department of Finance?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — That is merely to take care of something that may arrive in the future. It really does not enter into the picture now at all because it was related, initially, to those people who were already disabled and receiving benefits on a permanent basis. It is (d) to which you are referring, is it not?

MR. LANE: — I just threw that out because of the drafting. You're getting all the moneys under The Fuel Petroleum Products Act. Under (c), that's where you get it. But then (d) gives you the blanket powers to receive all moneys from the Minister of Finance. All I am saying is that (c) is a redundancy and I just threw that out as a drafting. But then my next question is: what other sources does the minister foresee as coming into play here?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — None.

MR. LANE: — Will you give the assurance that the present subsidy being paid to SGI in terms of the three cents a gallon gasoline surcharge and the existing interest-free loan from the Crown investments corporation are, for the next two to three years, the only additional sources of revenue that SGI will receive other than its normal premiums and its investment income?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — What the member refers to, Mr. Chairman, as an interest-free loan is equity. It is no different from the equity held in private insurance companies and supplied by shareholders. Crown investments corporation is the holding company for SGI and other Crown corporations. That is equity provided to SGI in relation to its current operation.

MR. LANE: — You haven't answered my question. I asked you if you would give assurance to this Assembly that over the next two years there will be no other sources of public moneys being transmitted to SGI other than its premiums, and that there will be no further increases in the three cent a gallon subsidy to SGI. In other words, that the subsidies being given to SGI now, in addition to its premiums and investment income, are all of it. That's the cap on it and there will be no more.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Chairman, obviously I can't give assurances for two years in advance. How do we know what the claims record will be two years in advance? That's a silly question.

MR. LANE: — It's not a silly question. You have been giving the assurance that you are raising the premiums to take into account the loss record of SGI, and so you adjust the premiums. If that's what you have been doing in the past, you shouldn't need further subsidies, you shouldn't need interest-free loans, or "equity." The only difference between you and a bank on an interest-free loan is that you convert it to equity and don't want it back, and the banks seem to want it back. A loan is a loan is a loan, and I don't think there is much difference. A gift is a gift is a gift. In fact, I think by the very precise legal definition of "gift," the money you have given to SGI is in fact a gift, not equity. But, you have been raising the premiums and the rates, supposedly because (and I have very serious doubts) of the bad drivers, the need for great economy in Saskatchewan and because the front wheel drive vehicles are so expensive. I think that capsules the reasons.

What I am saying to you is: are you prepared to now put a cap on the hidden subsidies (the ones not directly attributable to the drivers), on those sources of income for SGI?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Chairman, certainly we are not willing to put a cap on. We do not know what the future will hold in terms of claims. The member talks about certain things he says cause the increases, but the fact is we had 30,000 additional claims in 1979 over 1978, at a cost of an additional \$26 million. The claims exceeded the premiums by a goodly sum before taking into account any of the expenses in relation to them.

Now obviously you can't predict two years in advance what the accident record will be. If it would go back to the 1978 level, I can assure you that the deficit in the automobile accident insurance fund would disappear in a hurry.

MR. LANE: — So you are not prepared to give the guarantee that you are capping and there will be no more hidden increases to the people of Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Certainly not. It would be like putting a freeze on all the power and Sask Tel rates. I think, Mr. Chairman, if those people ever came to power they could only operate in the wintertime because they want to freeze everything.

Section 21 agreed.

Section 22

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Minister, when was the last time (and this is basically a pretty good bill) the dollar structure was set by the corporation for compensation in that? How many years ago?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — In 1972, if you're discussing injuries to people, basically. The coverages were changed at that time.

MR. GARNER: — Does that include all of the ones we are covering in this bill - regarding the \$60 to \$150 and the \$35,000 to \$100,000?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — They were doubled back in 1972 from \$30 to \$60.

MR. GARNER: — Okay. Well, Mr. Minister, just one little reply then. You say that the opposition should only work in the wintertime in freezing the rates. How about this

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government's keeping up with the times? Add inflation to it and it's behind the times. There have been a lot of people running short because of this government's inadequacy in keeping up with the times. If you want to blame the opposition, shoulder some of that blame yourself. The \$60 in 1972 sure isn't a realistic figure and this bill is overdue. It should have been brought up-to-date in 1975. You have waited nine years before doing this. Don't blame us. It's a good bill. I'm not complaining about that. But let's keep up with the times. It's here now; it should have been here three years ago.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — I'd just like to make a brief comment if I may. I agree with the member. It perhaps should have been brought in sooner. But the fact remains that public liability and disability claims only constitute 14 per cent of the total claims; 86 per cent of those claims are collision and property damage and that's where the problem really occurs.

MR. GARNER: — Okay then. But we're still talking about 14 per cent of the people, whether they be disabled or injured. They are the people we are concerned about.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — There is no doubt that the increase was 100 per cent in 1972 and it's now 150 per cent. That's 250 per cent in total.

Sections 22 and 23 agreed.

The committee agreed to report the bill.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY CASH OUTFLOW

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION BOARD

Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 34

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Would the minister like to introduce his staff there.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to introduce Mr. George Todd, who is the chairman of the public service superannuation board.

Item 1

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Minister, there has been a lot of talk about pensions in Ottawa recently. Has anything come out of these conferences in Ottawa that would enable you to make some adjustments to public servants who have been retired for longer than 10 years, and who obviously must be feeling the ravages of inflation like everybody else in society on a fixed income?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I attended the national pension conference in Ottawa. It was dealing with pensions in the private sector and attempting to get some consensus from the private sector in relation to private pensions.

With respect to the second point you raise, related to the inflationary trends and the difficulties for people who are currently on pension, I must point out that over the last nine years we have given ad hoc increases annually and those totalled, I think, in the

range of \$4.25 million, which are incorporated each year in the individuals' pensions and continue on.

MR. THATCHER: — In terms of numbers, what would that be percentage-wise - the ad hoc increases that you just referred to?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — For instance, last year it was \$14 per year of service, computed on the basis that if a retired person had 35 years of service, you take 14 times the 35, which would be \$490 increase on his pension. If he were getting a \$4,000 per year pension, he got \$490 additional and, therefore, he got about an 11 per cent increase on his pension.

MR. LANE: — Is the minister satisfied that that is adequate? I'm sure all members are receiving indications of concern from public servants who have retired, say, more than five years ago, before the major increase in salaries. They're having a tough go of it. It strikes me, on the figures that you give, if someone gets an extra \$40 per month, that's eaten up in gasoline tax - increased by the same government. So it strikes me as being very inadequate and I ask you whether you feel it's inadequate, and what increases are you proposing for this year?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Chairman, I think the member perhaps fails to understand that that person got \$40 per month additional in 1980; he also got \$40 additional in 1979, that makes \$80; he got \$40 additional perhaps in 1977 (I don't remember all the rates all the way back). But many of the people at the bottom who are on very low pensions, admittedly, in the range of \$100 per month or \$200 per month, are receiving way more than double what they previously were getting, based on those ad hoc increases over the last nine years. There were some increases prior to that as well.

MR. LANE: — I understand that, but it's an absolute increase; it's not a percentage increase. So I suggest that it is simply not keeping up. I think, frankly, there is a very serious problem of people who retired - I used more than five years ago; the hon. member for Thunder Creek used more than 10 years ago. I think there is a very serious problem for many (and I suggest thousands) people in this province, who served the province well, who are having a tough go of it because at the time they worked the salaries simply were not anywhere near as high as today, nor was the concern there (and I think this is very important, Mr. Minister) about inflation, so it wasn't part of their planning.

I am wondering if the minister would agree that really what we should be doing is going back and having a public inquiry into the pensions of those civil servants and bringing the problems to the fore. Let's take a comprehensive look at the problems and not the ad hoc approach that's been taken in the past. I'm not saying that as a matter of criticism. I'm saying that as what I believe to be a positive suggestion to try to resolve it, because if we keep coming with the \$500 here or the \$40 a month here, the pensioners are uncertain. They go from one year to the next and they don't know whether an increase is coming.

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I believe we have a serious social problem that we should be looking at comprehensively and not on an ad hoc basis. I would strongly urge that there be a public inquiry into this particular problem to make sure that those civil servants, who served so well for so long, are not being constantly faced with the problem. Perhaps we can solve it once and for all.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Chairman, the member for Qu'Appelle raises some good points. Obviously, inflation is very difficult for people who happen to be on fixed incomes. Of course, that is why we have been attempting to correct it to some degree. We admit that it is weighted toward the people at the bottom level. That is why we do it on the basis of \$14 a month, as it was last year, in relation to years of service.

If the individual retired at a pension of \$12,000 a year, obviously he received only \$490. That is a 3 per cent increase. But if he was down to the \$4,000 level, he received an 11 per cent increase. If you look at the 2,598 people on pensions, you are right, a lot of them are in those lower echelons. We have more than doubled their pensions. Now, that still doesn't mean they have large sums of money. But those people also draw old age security which is indexed.

When we go through the files, we do not find many people who don't have a reasonably suitable income. We admit that some widows are not in a good financial position. But we are attempting to weight the thing in favor of the people at the bottom.

Now we do get representations from the superannuation association, which consists of retired public servants. People from Crown corporations, I presume, are also members of that voluntary organization. They are saying to us that they appreciate very much the ad hoc increases, but they would like to see it split (whatever money is available) into a flat payment, plus a percentage, because it is obvious that the people at the higher levels are going down in terms of the inflationary trends. But the people at the bottom have been the people who really suffer the most, and they have had increases above the inflationary trend. We think that is the best utilization of the money.

If I look at the figure for last year, we had pay-outs of some \$12 million to \$13 million. About \$4 million of that consists of the ad hoc payments. Now that money, of course, just comes out of consolidated revenue. There has been no provision made for it in advance. And admittedly, that is a weakness in the pension system. But I want to point out to members that you cannot correct the problems of the pension system quickly. Because in the final analysis, I don't care what anybody says, a pension consists of contribution, time and earnings. You have to have a long cycle to make that correction. If we could get matching locked-in vested pensions immediately, I think we would correct it over time.

MR. LANE: — We are not going to solve past problems with anything we do right now, other than looking at that as a particular social problem which has to be dealt with. I have some sympathy with what the minister is attempting to do now. Let's not fall into the same problem in future years. That is really the direction in which the minister is going.

Would the minister be prepared to tell me how many pensioners are receiving those ad hoc (and I use that phrase for want of a better one) payments?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — 2,598 people - all of whom are getting some ad hoc payment.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could give us the average pay-out to these 2,598 persons?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — The average pension is \$491 a month - a little over \$5,000. But remember that most of those people are also getting old age security in addition, and other payments as well.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Are all the payments made from the public service superannuation board in the consolidated fund or is any of that coming out of the statement that you have in the . . . Does the one flow into the other one and then out again? How does that work?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Remember this is the old pension plan, the public service superannuation board, and there is no particular fund for it. The revenue flows in from the deductions taken off current employees into the consolidated fund and payments are made out of the consolidated fund.

Just to give you a bit of information which might be of some help, in the current year (and of course, this is based on an estimate), we will pay out about \$6,657,000 more than we take in.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — That is coming from the consolidated fund. I don't follow that because you are allowing for \$16.5 million. You are paying \$6 million more than you are taking in. The \$16 million is coming into the plan. Are you saying you are paying out \$22 million or \$23 million?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Sorry, I gave you a bit of incorrect information. The total expenditure is in the range of \$21.5 million. The total revenue is roughly \$14.75 million, but that not only includes expenditures for pension, it also includes expenditures when a terminating employee leaves and withdraws his equity. There is a fair bit of money which occurs in that respect, because there are about 1,600 employees per year on average who leave, about 135 a month. Is that not clear? Well, maybe I will go through it again. I will try it a little slower. We anticipate revenue flows of \$14,737,000. Pardon?

AN HON. MEMBER: — Where does that show up?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — It is under page 8. It is not specifically identified. It is included in the miscellaneous revenue, \$18,429,700. But of that figure, \$14,737,000 is the estimated revenues from deductions from employees.

AN HON. MEMBER: — What kind is it?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Page 8, other owned source revenues, miscellaneous revenues, bottom line, \$18,429,000. Of that \$18.4 million, \$14.7 million is pension contributions in round figures. Is that clear?

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Where does the \$18 million come from, I guess is the question I am asking? Is that from the consolidated fund or is it revenue from the contributions?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — The \$18.4 million is money flowing into the consolidated revenue fund of which \$14.7 million consists of contributions from contributors - participants in the pension plan. Okay?

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MR. ROUSSEAU: — All right. Then \$16 million goes out according to . . .

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — It will be \$21 million next year - \$21,394,000 - if you look on the next side, budgeted cash outflow.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — That is including all your expenses?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — That is just the public service superannuation board, \$21,394,000, specifically shown under page 9, about two-thirds of the way down the page. That is an estimate, of course, for 1981-82.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — I am asking: is the \$16 million going out to the superannuation? For example, the refunds of contributions are \$4 million, estimated. So I am talking about the superannuation itself. You are paying out \$16,450,000?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — . . . (inaudible) . . . isn't all to pensioners. You are right; some of it is a refund.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Just one comment, Mr. Minister. The suggestion made by the member for Qu'Appelle I think is worth while considering. I would like you to take that into consideration. Regardless of the \$491 per month, I realize it really is not that great a pension for people, who have been employed for that many years, on today's standards. I would seriously advise you to consider upgrading it, not so much as an ad hoc commitment but as a permanent indexed plan, which you can come up with. This is not a satisfactory plan as it stands now.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Chairman, I would agree. That's one reason why we went to a new plan, which is covered under the public employees' superannuation set-up. But if you look at your public service superannuation board report and look at the people who were pensioned during the year under review, there were 102 persons who retired from the public service who had reached age 65. I went through that group and selected the ones I thought had an adequate pension. Of those people 16 out of 102 had pensions of \$10,000 a year or more. So, it is a clear indication that there are some problems there, admittedly. But if you then look at the next section, the table where there were people who retired at their own option at age 60 with more than 20 years service, from 70 there were 32 well over \$10,000. Some had very substantial pensions. There is one here at \$35,000.

Item 1 agreed.

Item 2 agreed.

Item 3

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Minister, the cost of living is going up. Why has that figure decreased when the cost of living is escalating? Is it that there are fewer recipients? Or what is the reason for that?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — This is just one of those funny little things which was stuck in the public service superannuation plan many, many years ago. It refers to the amount payable to widows to provide a minimum allowance of \$100. They can't fall below \$100 per month to age 65. Now that's just up to age 65. This amount steadily

decreases since no new bonuses are being paid. There is a minimal number in there; 32 persons get some help out of the 2,598. That is totally separate from the ad hoc increases which are paid annually anyway.

Item 3 agreed.

Items 4 to 8 inclusive agreed.

Vote 34 agreed.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY CASH OUTFLOW

REVENUE, SUPPLY AND SERVICES

Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 18

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — I would like to introduce my officials. To my left is Mr. Alan Carr, deputy minister of revenue, supply and services; Dan Cunningham, executive director of the support services division; to my right is Mike Barry, executive director for the revenue division; and directly behind me is Mr. Joe Vermeulen, executive director of the operations division.

Item 1

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Minister, I have here an outdated flying list (it's a year old), of the use of government aircraft. I would like an updated list of the use of government aircraft by cabinet ministers and civil servants on government business. I see that Jack Messerschmitt still leads the list, but I'm interested in who is second, third and fourth, etc. Would you provide us with that information, Mr. Minister?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — We can give you an up-to-date summary of the flights to February 1980.

MR. THATCHER: — I have them to March 31, 1980. Would the minister tell us, briefly, what your present policy is on the use of government aircraft? I notice that, particularly where the northern cabinet ministers are involved, Fridays and Mondays are the most frequently used days.

AN HON. MEMBER: — We use them for business.

MR. THATCHER: — Of course, I assumed that. I merely want it confirmed in terms of government policy and put on the record why the heaviest business, for the use of the aircraft involving northern NDP members, appears to occur on Mondays and Fridays.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — I don't think I can comment on that at all. I can simply give you the rule. A minister's office phones the central vehicle agency (CVA) and books a plane, giving the name of the minister and the number of people who will accompany him on the flight. This information is recorded on the requisition. Before take-off CVA records the route, passengers and their departments, and the legs of the flight which the passengers will fly, in the flight log. It is maintained in the CVA office.

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I should point out that the Ministry of Transport in Ottawa had directed that all airlines must maintain a record of the names of passengers on each flight. The CVA flight log is an internal CVA record that services this purpose. That's the general procedure.

MR. THATCHER: — What's the point of having the number of passengers without the names? If I asked you for a specific flight, would you be able to tell me not only who booked it, but who was with him?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — For our purposes all we require is the name of the minister or the senior official who books the flight, because we have to make a charge for it.

MR. THATCHER: — Would the minister not deem it appropriate to have the individuals who were on that flight? It would seem that they were using public money on these flights, so would it not, for audit purposes, make sense to have the names of all individuals on the flight?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — I said the Ministry of Transport in Ottawa requires the names of the passengers be recorded, but for our purposes, it's simply a billing to the minister or the senior official who booked the flight. And that's what we require it for in terms of making a charge to that particular department.

MR. THATCHER: — As you provide us with that updated list to February 1981, I certainly don't want to trouble you and send you back in the intervening years. Perhaps you could provide us with the names and the updated list of not only the individual who booked the flight but the names of the people who accompanied him on that flight.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — No, that's not government policy. It's just the number recorded on the flight.

MR. THATCHER: — Let me understand you. Are you saying that you won't, or you can't?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — It's not government policy.

MR. THATCHER: — In other words you refuse to divulge the information as to who accompanies these people on the flights on taxpayers' money. Do I understand you very clearly?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — It has nothing to do with taxpayers' money in terms of the recovery and the billing purposes of CVA. We want to know the minister or the senior official who booked the flight, and that's the basis on which we bill it.

MR. THATCHER: — Now, Mr. Minister, what sort of convoluted logic is that? It's not taxpayers' money? It's not taxpayers' money if the Minister of Health or the Minister of Social Services booked it? As far as you are concerned it's some intangible bureaucracy that somehow has created money out of thin air and it's not taxpayers' money. Now come off it. I want the updated list that you are committed to give us, and I assume tomorrow, I want the lists of not only who booked the flight but of the passengers on board. And I want you to be very clear in your refusal. Are you sure you're refusing?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — All we are concerned with is the billable use of the flight. We are not concerned with the names of the passengers on that flight. The flight is going

because the minister or senior official required the plane to go to a certain destination. We have to bill their department for that flight, and that's what we do.

MR. THATCHER: — You may not be interested but we are and we think the taxpayers are. You've indicated that there are records to that effect. The Department of Transport has them. You've never been short of people to fill desks and I'm quite sure that you have somebody over there who could probably pick up the phone. He might even borrow one of your cars, drive out to the airport and check the log records and provide us with that information. The information is available. It's not a question of what there is; it's a question of what you have to hide. I'm a little surprised at the minister's defensive attitude.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — I certainly can't speak for all the departments; they make their own decisions. I have nothing to hide in mine, I assure you.

MR. THATCHER: — If you have nothing to hide, then give us the list. It's simple to get. The Department of Transport has it; you have lots of people . . . I'm sure you have a secretary that would like a nice leisurely drive out to the airport to copy down a few names - the information is available. What are you trying to hide? I don't care what you're trying to hide personally. What are you trying to hide for the NDP?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — I'm not trying to hide anything personally. I said it was government policy not to divulge the names.

MR. THATCHER: — Do they have that recorded?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — The only reason the names are recorded at all as passengers is that it is required by the Ministry of Transport in case the plane is lost; they'd want to know who was on the plane.

MR. THATCHER: — So what? We want those names and we have reason to believe CVA (central vehicle agency) . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's a point open to some debate in some quarters.

Mr. Minister, it's not a question of regulations. We have reason to believe that in many cases CVA has access to those records before the plane ever takes off. I would cite examples of members on this side of the House, who have had use of the plane in the company of a senior official and checked with CVA to find out who else was on the plane. In most cases they always seemed to have that information - in most cases, not all cases, perhaps. But we think you have that information and if you don't have it you can get it very easily. I can't think of any reason why you wouldn't want to provide it, unless, of course, there's something irregular.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — All I can tell you is that the records are not kept in perpetuity. They are required by the Ministry of Transport in terms of the flight and it's not government policy to divulge the names.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Minister, let me refresh your memory. Two years ago this discussion and this debate took place in this legislature. At that time the excuse you gave (you'll recall this) was that the logbook couldn't leave the plane. I asked, at that time, that you send a photocopy machine to the plane, if necessary, or bring the plane here (that was another suggestion) or do whatever was necessary. If you will recall, you did exactly that. In fact, you didn't even photocopy; you took the copies, because they

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were in duplicate or triplicate or whatever. And you sent me a stack of the records of all the people who had been on those planes as recorded in that logbook, with the exception of when the election took place. That was the only time that you omitted to include names in the log of the flights of those aircraft, the period during your election. At that time you went from September of that year until after October 18 and there was a blank as far as the names of the people who were on those planes. But you did provide that information and you have it and you can still provide it today because you've done so before. In fact, if you like, I'll go to my office and bring them up and show you what you've done for that.

So I don't know why you are being obstinate with the member for Thunder Creek about this matter. I think, it's a simple matter of getting those records and giving us copies, whether they are photocopied or whether they are duplicate copies of the log of the pilot, showing the minister who commissioned the plane and showing the passengers who were on that plane at the time. So your logic is escaping both of us here, and your answers are insufficient and unacceptable.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — I would like to point out, Mr. Chairman, that aircraft are not used during elections at all. They cannot be booked. That is the information I'm getting from the officials.

Secondly, we provided the names of the people who booked the flights. That's what you asked for before. The logbooks stay on the plane.

MR. KATZMAN: — I'll refer to the one case that Mr. Thatcher commented on earlier. I rode on the executive plane to Saskatoon for a function there, representing the opposition, and Mr. Rolfes was representing Mr. Romanow (who couldn't make it at the time). When I first asked for a ride, it was feasible. They gave me the names of everyone who was going when I phoned government (where they booked the plane), and they said, "If one of these fellows cancel out, you can get on the aircraft." When I phoned back at a later time, they said, "Yes, there is a seat available, Mr. Katzman, you're on the aircraft." I flew down, and they knew everyone who was going to be on the plane, because the lady to whom I spoke told me who all of the passengers were.

Now, the other time, when I flew with the Premier for another function, representing the opposition in Saskatoon, once again the lady to whom I spoke to find out if there was room on the flight indicated that there was room and that there were only two or three other people going. Those were the two times that I have been on the executive plane representing the opposition at a function.

What we are asking you is: if she knew, in those cases, who was going to be flying, I would assume that she would know on each occasion when a minister books an airplane, because she gave me the names of all of the people who were going. I didn't ask her. She had it on her list, and she said that she always had it. So, I'm saying that you have a list of these people. Why won't you produce it?

HON. MR. ROLFES: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the reason that the hon. member for Rosthern could catch a ride was because the plane was going. A minister has to book that flight, and he had. Generally, a minister does not know who is on the flight with him at all. He may not know that at all. He books the flight, and they may add other passengers.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, my comment was that they knew who was on that flight,

therefore that information should be available to you to give to this House.

I've even been able to find out when the members for Saskatoon have been able to hitch a ride on that plane that leaves Saskatoon on Mondays to come to Regina after a cabinet minister has been there. I've been able to get those names when I wanted to. Obviously, a list has been available, and I don't know why you won't give it to us.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — A month after the plane has flown a flight, they couldn't care less who was on the flight. They don't keep that record at all. They have to know at the time the flight takes place because the Ministry of Transport requires the names of the passengers in case the plane crashes.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Minister, we are getting bogged down on what the Ministry of Transport has and the reasons they have it. We are interested for the obvious reason that we are the responsible watchdogs of the public purse. These airplanes are an open scandal, really. I could just go down the list here, take the dates, and look at the number that are on Monday and on Friday. The minister can scoff. I notice his name is down there occasionally. I haven't suggested anything yet, but you see these flights going north on a Friday on the same flight pattern. There are lots of them at random coming back on Monday. Well, call a spade a spade.

If you are going to truck the MLAs and the cabinet ministers home on weekends, say so. Maybe the public doesn't mind. I don't know whether it is right or wrong. It is certainly a valid argument, in the case of your senior cabinet officials, that perhaps it is not productive to spend long hours in a car. There is certainly an argument for that. But for goodness' sakes, call a spade a spade. We see these planes booked in the name of a cabinet minister, going to funny locations. The minister may or may not have been on the plane. We don't know. He booked it. There are all sorts of combinations that can be played.

If you want to take your northern members or your far western members home by airplane, put it out in the open and let the taxpayers judge you. There may be a case to be made for it. Maybe the public is prepared to accept it. Some of us are fortunate to be living very close to Regina, and it is just a short hop home. Far be it for me to pass judgment on somebody who has to go several hundred miles to get home for the weekend. But this is not the way to do it. This isn't the way to do it, in the back room under the guise of government business. I acknowledge that in the case of some of the distant members, there is no reason that they shouldn't be able to go home for a weekend. But call it what it is taking an MLA home for the weekend and bringing him back. Let the public judge whether it is right or wrong. But having all your flights under the guise of government business is nonsense.

Take for example flight 262 on March 18 last year - E.L. Cowley, six people. All right, I am not saying that that wasn't a legitimate flight, but I would like to know who the other five people were. If there were five MLAs tagging along with him on that Friday in order to go home, call it what it is and get the thing out in the open.

The former cabinet minister known affectionately by the press as Jack "Messerschmitt" always led the list of "for trips home." Frankly, I am one who never criticized him for it because he was a senior cabinet minister. He carried a pretty heavy load. In my view,

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frankly, with the load he carried, I am not sure I wouldn't have said, "To heck with it, I'm going home for the weekend. I work hard enough, five days a week. If they want to bring it up at the next election, fine and dandy, I'll face it." That's the attitude he took. Frankly, I don't find any quarrel with that. But I do quarrel that his trips to go home on the weekend were under the guise of government business. And they were not. I don't begrudge them personally. I don't blame him one bit. If I spent five days in this place in Regina, I would want to get home to see my wife and kids, too. I don't fault him. But I do fault the procedure being under the guise of government business. I say the same thing to the planes which take your MLAs home for the weekend. Call it exactly what it is, not under the guise of government business. Put it in the proper column and get it out of politics.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Well, Mr. Chairman, if it happens that a flight is going and it is convenient for an MLA to catch a ride, that's perfectly legitimate . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, it is. Mr. Katzman has caught rides on the plane. He admits it. Maybe we should make an extra charge for the extra weight. I don't know. But the fact remains that if a minister bills the aircraft, we charge him for that aircraft. We are not going to question why he takes the aircraft. It is not my responsibility to question the minister.

MR. GARNER: — Okay, Mr. Minister, it looks like you opened it up. If the plane happens to go and an MLA happens to catch a ride . . . Let's just get it clarified who is riding on these government airplanes: the NDP backbenchers. I am going to bring something else out in this Chamber today. The negotiations we had with you, regarding the MLAs on this side of the House were to use the government airplane and pay for it; there were to be no free rides. What, Mr. Minister, was your answer to me? "We haven't got enough planes." We have enough planes to fly the government members around. We don't have enough planes to fly the opposition MLAs around, who are willing to pay for the use of the government airplane. Let's call a spade a spade. The reason we led into this question was to find out how many backbenchers were riding free on the backs of the taxpayers. I have to agree with the member for Thunder Creek; I have nothing against cabinet ministers using the plane to go home. But let's have one set of rules, not two sets of rules. You have double standards in this province and you know it.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Tell them about Norcan Mike.

MR. GARNER: — No, just a minute. We won't get into Norcan Mike for a minute. Mr. Minister, the reason why we want to know who the other passengers are on these flights is to put the case to the people of Saskatchewan. As I stated, we have nothing against the cabinet ministers riding home. We, in the opposition, offered to pay for a ride to Regina. I'll give you the example: Maple Creek, Kindersley, Wilkie constituency and Meadow Lake - there were flight routes set up. But now, Mr. Minister, you have to agree that is not right. I have nothing against a cabinet minister taking other colleagues along.

I will give you an example of the new Minister of Highways. He flies out to Lloydminster; there is nothing wrong with that at all. If we can fill that plane with MLAs from either side of the House, there's nothing wrong with that at all. We are willing to pay for the use of that government airplane, not take it out of the pockets of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. That's the reason for this question. It is going to continue until you give us that list of names of the people who were on those airplanes.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I should point out to the gentleman who

just took his seat, that we did have a proposed schedule on which there would be charges to MLAs. The persons on that proposed schedule were the people farthest away: Long, Lingenfelter, Johnson and Thompson, on the government side of the House: McLeod, Andrew, Duncan and Garner on the opposition side of the House. We couldn't work out a satisfactory schedule without buying more airplanes. The members over there don't want us to have more airplanes.

I would like to point out the rules for the use of executive aircraft are very clear cut. They are established to make the most efficient use of the plane. If the plane is flying and it is not fully occupied, any MLA, with the approval of the minister who booked the flight, may catch a ride on a stand-by basis. And there is no differentiation between opposition members or government members in that respect. That's a pure figment of your imagination.

MR. GARNER: — Okay, this is just a kid's game you've started and you know it. I don't have a snowball's chance in the hot country of getting a ride home on a government airplane with one of the cabinet ministers. Don't you try to kid me, the media, or anybody else. Well then, tell me again what you said.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — I said if the minister has booked a flight and the plane doesn't have to go out of its way, an MLA can catch a ride on it.

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Minister, on that package and you know it (I'm willing to mention it in this Chamber) we are paying another airline company to give us a ride to the city of Regina on Mondays and Fridays, paying cash out of our hip pocket. I am simply explaining to you the reason why we're questioning it. It is because you're giving the freebies to the backbenchers on that side, and it is not available to members on this side of the House. You know it. That's fact, not fiction and you know that.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Vice-Chairman, that is incorrect. The plane does not go unless it is booked by a minister. If a plane were going from Regina to Saskatoon and an MLA wanted to ride on it, he could get a ride. It wouldn't matter what side of the House he sat on.

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Minister, for some time my colleagues have been questioning you to try and find out who is riding on these planes. If you will not disclose who is riding on them, obviously you are trying to conceal something . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, then why don't you give him the answer? You keep saying it's not government policy. I think to try and get this out of you now is like trying to get blood out of a stone. I would say to you: if you have nothing to hide, and it seems to be a considerable concern to many of us on this side . . . My colleague for Thunder Creek is absolutely right, we're trying to find out for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan who is riding on the planes that they are paying for.

My colleague here says it could be another backbencher. If you don't supply the list, it could be anybody in Saskatchewan who is riding around on those planes. I say to you, will you consider changing your stubborn and obstinate government policy so that you will supply to us, in this next year, the names of the people who are flying on the airplanes which are booked by the cabinet ministers?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Chairman, I repeat again, the plane only goes if it is booked by a cabinet minister. We are not required to maintain the records and we do not maintain them over any period of time. They are required at the time of the flight in case

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the plane crashes.

MR. TAYLOR: — Do you realize from the discussion which has taken place here this afternoon, that there are a considerable number of members on this side who would like to know who is on the planes? You've told me time and time again that it's booked by a cabinet minister. I accept that and I understand that. Do you not understand that we're asking for the people out there, who is on the plane with the cabinet ministers? It's that simple.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Chairman, the member for Thunder Creek said he picked one off the list. He said Cowley had six people on the plane. If he wants to know who was with Cowley on the plane, why doesn't he ask Mr. Cowley.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Minister, the member for Indian Head-Wolseley asked you to change your policy. I say to you that you have changed your policy, because you supplied that information. Now, why did you supply it a couple of years ago? Why won't you supply it now? I have it down in my office, it's available. Why won't you do it at this time?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — We did not supply it. We only supplied the minister or the senior official who booked the plane. That's all we supply.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Well okay. I'll tell you what you supplied. You supplied the copy of the log from the plane. The minister is ready to jump up on his feet to reply to that. Is that correct? They were sent to me and there was a stack that high of all the planes, the flights, the pilots, the official and the passengers, except when the election was on. Then that was void and that was blank.

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — The hon. member offered me a chance to speak. Maybe I should, before I leave.

I've been listening, Mr. Vice-Chairman, to the discussion that's going on and I'm not speaking for the minister, but as I listened to the discussion with regard to the persons who are on board an aircraft, I don't believe that there is any legal requirement of the Department of Transport Act that says that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, but if you got a list last year and if you get a list this year, that list may not be accurate. If the minister files the log, it may not be completely accurate with respect to who was on the aircraft, because they don't have to list them.

It should be done, perhaps, in the case of an accident, so that there is information . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, no, no, but listen. The fact is that if the minister tables in this House a Xerox copy of the log, then . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . All right, but it may not be fully accurate in the sense that it does not list every person who rode on the airplane.

Let me give you an example. The other evening I caught a ride with my colleague, the minister who booked the aircraft, Mr. Long, who was going to Lloydminster. I caught a ride on that aircraft at a very late hour. I may have been on the log; I may not have been on the log. I had a drop-off in Prince Albert. I was also going to be picked up on his way back from Lloydminster at 11 o'clock. But because they were unable to get out of Lloydminster at 11 o'clock, I was at the airport at about 12:15 and there was no airplane. I went in and talked to the man at the weather office; the aircraft was in the air;

the aircraft was diverted via Saskatoon to pick up someone else in Saskatoon on their way to Regina.

All I'm indicating to you is this . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I think it was Cowley; I think they were stopping to pick up Elwood Cowley. All I'm indicating to you is that if we give you that log you're not going to have an accurate account and, therefore, don't suggest that the minister is misrepresenting the facts to the House . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, but the point is that you're not going to have who is on the aircraft. You may not have had who was on the aircraft the other night, as I am indicating to you. I may not have been on there.

Now, if some of your people in Prince Albert saw me get off the aircraft, they could have reported to you that I was on that aircraft but it may not have been in the log. Therefore, the information which the minister may table in this House is not the actual people who were on the flight and, therefore, you can say it's a misrepresentation of the facts or he is misleading the House.

What he is providing to you and what the policy says is that a minister books the airplane and those who are wanting to fly - and the flight is going - can get on the aircraft, but that does not necessarily mean to say that they are in the log or that their names have been recorded . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, no. There's one they keep on the board as to who books the aircraft and how many people are going, but I wasn't on that board. I had my office call the flight office and ask whether there was an airplane going and room for me to get on. And they made arrangements; otherwise they would have flown straight to Lloydminster. But the fact is that there was room for me to get on; I went around by Prince Albert and was dropped off. I don't know whether that appeared on the board or not. I would doubt it did, and I would doubt that appeared in the log in the manifest.

So, all I'm saying to the hon. members is that I don't think you'll be able to get what you're looking for with any more accuracy than what the minister is attempting to give to you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, but all I'm saying is: if he gives it to you don't indicate that he's misleading the House. If somebody doesn't appear on that logbook, or in that manifest, it doesn't indicate that there's a misrepresentation of the facts. I'm sure that the hon. members, Mr. Chairman, are capable of that. I was going to leave the House when I got up. I will do so.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Chairman, I think it's fair to say that we've seen some all-time lows in this House. We've seen some all-time lows. I thought maybe the lowest thing was when I heard a minister of the Crown getting blasted in a debate on radio, and he pulled out another member's personal file and used it in that debate. I thought that was the all-time low, but we just saw a further one, when the Minister of Environment had to bail out the minister over there.

Now the Minister of the Environment I'm sure is a very capable minister, but one of the all-time great orators in this Assembly, I don't think he really is. Really, I think it's just a sad commentary on these estimates - some of the things that have been going on.

I, frankly, don't like the minister's attitude. I haven't liked very many things about the minister ever since he did the cheapest political thing that I've ever seen. He was getting the tar kicked out of him on radio on another subject, and then he delved into the private file of the member who was doing the kicking. That was the rock bottom.

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And today we have this horrible misuse of government planes, something that is an obvious scandal. It doesn't have to be because these planes have a role. They certainly have a significant role in a province of this size. Nobody's going to argue that. And they may very well have a role in carrying MLAs around this province, but not in the role that you are using the planes at this time. And it is an easy thing to clean up.

The arrogant manner in which this minister answered that this information isn't available, that they can't get it, is nonsense. He has provided it in the past. I just don't buy it coming from a minister who is relatively adept at going into cabinets and pulling out personal files . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, ho, ho, I have on many occasions. Now I'm getting legal advice. Let me tell you, I may have legal problems but I've never sunk to the level that I would have to go to a lawyer of your calibre.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, it is a totally unacceptable answer when the minister says this information isn't available. If you are going to operate your planes like that, then put the names front and centre of who was riding on them. It's a simple matter to get that thing out of politics. Get it where it should be. Trucking MLAs around the province - fine. Call it what it is and put it through this Assembly. Get it front and centre. But to sneak around like this, moving MLAs home for the weekend, cabinet ministers home for the weekend, throwing in the odd political hack - that's nonsense, unadulterated nonsense. When the minister says he can't provide that information it is total absurdity.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Vice-Chairman, I said the information was supplied from the billing list and it is. I've checked no personal files of anybody on that side of the House or this side of the House, or anywhere else. The information that the hon. member for Thunder Creek refers to was given to me by the member for Regina South personally, in my own office, in the first instance. In the second instance, it was given to me at the luncheon table downstairs with the Premier in attendance. It's a fact of life with regard to his own two accidents. I checked no files on Mr. Rousseau, or anyone else, at any time or any place.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — You and I have waited a long time to debate this. I was looking forward to doing it in Crown corporations, whenever SGI comes up. However, it's been opened up, Mr. Chairman, and I am going to reply to what the minister just said.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Well, hold it a second here. I am going to let you reply, but I want to get off this topic as quickly as possible. I was trying to cut off the member for Thunder Creek when he got started, but he kept going off and coming back on again.

The minister made a statement and I think it only proper that a short statement from the member for Regina South be forthcoming. Then, perhaps we can get back to item 1 of the estimates.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I want to correct you on many of the things you just said. First, I will produce for you the verbatim transcript of that radio show where you said, "I have checked your record." Second, when I saw you in your office (and you will recall the conversation), I asked you to check the date on my driver's licence. My driver's licence has absolutely nothing to do with my record or accidents on my automobiles. Third, I certainly at no time asked you to make public to the people of Saskatchewan my accident record on my automobile. I never did.

Now, Mr. Minister, I want to clear that and make it absolutely correct as to how it happened. We are quoting your words. I'll produce them for you. You said, "I have

checked your record.” Those are exactly the words you used, Mr. Minister.

Furthermore, and I reiterate, at no time did I ever ask you to make public my record. I don’t know whether Mr. Chairman will allow you to reply on that. We can go back into SGI and do it, or you can do it today, as far as I am concerned.

While I am on my feet, I want to come back to the list of aircraft and the names which have been asked for. I cannot understand your reluctance. It’s beyond me and it escapes me why you won’t provide a list, or a copy of the log. It has been done. I’ve told you that. I have them in my office, if I can find them. I’m sure I still have them. I recall getting the names of all the people who were on those flights. Now, correct me if I’m wrong, but, as I understand the system, what you have at the central vehicle office, or wherever it is that they’re logged, is only the name of the person who commissioned or requested that aircraft. I know that. It was told to us before. I also happen to know that what is requested in the plane by the pilot is a list of the names of all the people on that flight.

The argument the Minister of Environment gave a minute ago is invalid, for the very simple reason that if he picks up a passenger, he records it on the flight log. That is, I believe, the rule. That’s the law. I believe it has to be done on the aircraft.

When we asked for the list of names two years ago, and it was provided for me, it was with the understanding that you gave us the information from the flight logs. That’s where the information is available; that’s where it is recorded; that’s what we’ve asking for. I don’t know why you’re changing your policy. I don’t know why you’re being obstinate. I don’t know why you don’t provide the information that we’ve asked for.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Chairman, we did not supply to that member, or to any other member, anything other than the billing. We did not from CVA. What he’s talking about is DNS. It has nothing to do with us at all. We did not supply anything but the billing.

Secondly, I want to make crystal clear to everyone in this House, with respect to the so-called personal file, that I checked no personal file. I gave information solely on what Mr. Rousseau told me. He didn’t tell me I shouldn’t divulge it. I want to make it clear and I want to have this statement recorded so that everybody gets it correctly.

Mr. Rousseau came into my office and said that we did not treat all people alike in terms of their licences. I said we did. He said we didn’t. He pulled out his registration and showed me that on July 14, 1980 he had registered a bill and that the expiry date was . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order, order! I think the minister is kind of expanding the statement he already made on the subject, which I have already ruled out of order. I wonder if we could get back to item 1 of the estimates.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, I would like to correct a statement which you made earlier. Let’s get the record straight. The record is straight, but I said in both cases when I rode on the executive aircraft that I was representing the opposition at an official function of the province. But let’s talk about that. Let’s talk about last week when Mr. Lusney rode with the Minister of Agriculture while he was out speaking to a wheat pool. That wasn’t an official function. He was just called along because he was an NDP member from that area. Is that what it is all about? It is good politics to take the member from that area with him because he is going out to speak? Or are we talking about

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members who catch a ride on Monday morning because the cabinet office is open and somebody is there, and the Saskatoon members says, "Well, I want to jump a ride in that airplane to Regina"? Is that totally allowable? Is that what you are saying: that is open to everybody? Are you saying that if the Attorney General books the airplane to something, anybody can ride the airplane?

AN HON. MEMBER: — We don't want any of you guys in it.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, if that is what you are saying, let me inform you that on both occasions when I got a ride to Saskatoon I had to find my own way home, because a backbench NDP member was kicking me off the airplane. Now, let's talk about playing the rules fair.

AN HON. MEMBER: — It goes by weight.

MR. KATZMAN: — If it went by brains, you would never fly.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — The fact of the matter is it goes on stand-by. I am not going to check on any minister or who he takes on a plane with him. He books the plane. He gets billed for it. It is not my responsibility to find out who he takes with him - not my responsibility at all. What we are concerned with in CVA (central vehicle agency) is that the proper fee is paid for the use of that aircraft. It must be booked by a minister or a senior official. I hope, Mr. Chairman, I get a chance to answer Mr. Rousseau sometime during this debate today.

MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Chairman, just briefly, I think that the minister is probably quite right when he says that there is no legal requirement for the pilot to name all of the people he is carrying on his plane or who he picks up en route, etc. I think almost any professional pilot would do that though. I think that the minister is not being completely responsible if his policy dictates otherwise, because here we are with government aircraft trucking around the lawmakers of the province. I have been involved in a few search and rescue missions, and when that thing splats against the side of a mountain or something like that, identification is a little tough. Now, would you not agree that if your policy isn't such now that it should be for the pilot to keep a manifest of all passengers showing where they were picked up, their destinations, their routes and the whole bit.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — They're encouraged to keep an accurate manifest. I've said before, and I say again, that what we're concerned about is the billing for the aircraft. A minister must bill it or a senior official. We bill them for the cost of that flight.

MR. BERNTSON: — Are you responsible for the billing of the aircraft and the maintenance of the aircraft? Where does your responsibility begin and end? You say they are encouraged to keep an accurate manifest. I think the policy should be that they shall keep an accurate manifest, bearing in mind that we're trucking around important people like the Attorney General and the Minister of Health. I'm sure you've been on the plane once or twice yourself. This is information which is important in case of accidents for search and rescue people, insurance companies, and others. Would you not agree that it's important that these manifests be kept and kept accurately?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — We stress that. I'm on the plane very little, you'll notice, if you read the file.

MR. BERNTSON: — Maybe that's why it's not quite so important to you. If you're not on the plane that much, you don't really care whether they stack it up or whatever. You stress it. I'm saying: why don't you make it policy that an accurate manifest shall be kept?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — The fact of the matter is that they keep a manifest at the time of the flight but they don't keep it after the flight. Why should they?

MR. BERNTSON: — One very good reason for them keeping it is that you could then provide us with the answers to the questions. That's a very good reason.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Minister, I have a specific question about which you can ask your officials. The date is March 20 and the flight number is 272.

AN HON. MEMBER: — What year?

MR. THATCHER: — March 1980. I'm not clear what the code means. It says AA-(2440 Phoenix). What does that mean? Does that mean that you went over 2,000 miles to Phoenix?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — I don't know. We don't have the answer here. We'll certainly check it and get you an answer. I know that I wasn't on any trip to Phoenix.

MR. THATCHER: — Perhaps your departmental officials could check. Does it mean anything to you - a plane called Phoenix or anything? Is that a model number or is it a type of aircraft? Regarding flight 272 on March 20 of last year, I would interpret from that that the plane went 2,440 miles to Phoenix, Arizona. Would you dispute that interpretation?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — We can get you the answer.

MR. THATCHER: — I would like to know who the passengers were on that flight. There's no name given, for some reason. I want to know the purpose of it and how long it was there.

AN HON. MEMBER: — It could be air ambulance.

MR. THATCHER: — It may very well be. It may not have been air ambulance either. Since we're not going to finish your estimates . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Would you like the floor? Thank you very much. My thanks to the Attorney General.

Mr. Minister, we are not going to finish your estimates today. Mr. Minister, when your estimates come back in, would you be kind enough to bring that information? Who booked it? Who was on it? How long was it in Phoenix? The purpose, and everything about it? If it's air ambulance, wonderful.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — We'll give you all the available information we can on it.

MR. BERNTSON: — I noticed the minister indicated he would give all the information that is available on this. On that particular flight, I want to make sure the minister knows where to look. Because on any international flight, a manifest must be filed and a copy kept with the originator. I am sure you will have a copy of the manifest which you had to

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file with customs, for instance.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Chairman, if there must be one filed and must be kept, we'll have it, obviously.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Getting back to the records which we have asked for, you are right, it was a DNS file. It doesn't matter. The fact is that was the reason I got them because the records were available from the plane. I suggest to you that the same thing is available from CVA. I am asking you again to supply that information.

You indicated earlier that you would give us the up dated list (as the member for Thunder Creek has in his hands) up to February of this year. Can we expect that information here by tomorrow?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — No, Mr. Chairman, because it is a totally different process, in terms of DNS and CVA. We have no responsibility for anything but CVA.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — You missed my question. The information you indicated earlier that you would supply, will you have it by tomorrow?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — I don't know. We'll get it as soon as we can.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Well, what do you mean? Last year we asked for it and we got it this session.

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — My officials say we should be able to.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Have you purchased any aircraft this year?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — No.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.