

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
May 4, 1981

EVENING SESSION

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. SOLOMON: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly this evening, 23 individuals, many of them Cubs from the Regina Northwest 77 Cub Pack in the Speaker's gallery. They are accompanied by their leaders, Adam Kress, Eunice Stevenson, and Linda Dickson, as well as their driver, Dale Giles. I hope that you really enjoy the proceedings this evening. We are in what we call the committee of finance, going over some estimates for this year's budgetary expenditures. I look forward to meeting with you afterward for some pictures and refreshments. I ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming them to the Assembly this evening.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY CASH OUTFLOW

URBAN AFFAIRS

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 24

Item 1 (continued)

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — When we rose at 5 o'clock, Mr. Chairman, it was about the continuing request for some judicial inquiry. Mr. Chairman, just to perhaps capsulize where we are, may I remind the hon. members that I did meet with the town council of Kamsack personally in January 1980. We wrote to the council, setting out to them some of the errors they have made. We asked them to correct the mistakes. There is reason to believe that some of the practices that the council followed have been corrected, and they have complied with the law.

There was an election on October 22 of this year. All of the council members were elected by acclamation; many of them were previously council members; some were new members. All council members were elected by acclamation. There was a contest in the mayoralty. A new mayor was elected. Mr. Chairman, in March we had a request from the mayor and two council members that there be an inquiry. Following that, there was a letter from the mayor for a judicial inquiry. Since then one of the alderpersons who supported the idea of any inquiry changed her mind, and said she doesn't want to have any part of a request for an inquiry. We have, in the meantime, asked them to provide more evidence.

If there is a case to justify a judicial inquiry, then certainly we are prepared to consider its establishment. At the present time, the judgment of my officials is that there is no justification for a judicial inquiry. I have since met with SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association), and discussed the problem with them. I would like the Leader of the Opposition to listen, I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition is aware that there is a division within council. Five council members object to it. They certainly do

not support the idea of a judicial inquiry. That's a majority. The mayor and one council member are on the side of a judicial inquiry. Obviously council is divided. Tomorrow evening there will be a meeting called by the local chamber of commerce — by local people, not people from the outside. It is my hope that they will discuss the matter as citizens of the community. As I understand it, all the citizens are invited to that meeting. Perhaps they will come up with some solutions or recommendations that might lead to a possible solution. Following tomorrow's meeting, the council might get together on what is the best approach for their community.

As I indicated earlier, I have talked to SUMA. SUMA has told me it is prepared to help but we haven't asked it precisely what the help ought to be, because we think it is only fair that the citizens themselves give the matter careful consideration. If we ask SUMA to look into the thing, their meeting tomorrow might be prejudiced in some way. So I think it only fair that the citizens themselves give the matter thorough consideration. They might come up with some recommendations that will be based on the will of the citizens. Based on that, I am prepared to further review the matter with my colleagues to see whether there is good cause, and to establish some form of investigation that would help unite the community rather than divide it.

As I said, SUMA is prepared to help. At the moment I do not have a specific proposal. Based on tomorrow's meeting and the case that is pending in court at the moment, perhaps toward the end of the week we as a government can come up with a positive proposal which would help the community become united, as well as a mechanism that would try to resolve this problem. If there is a way to correct further any of the errors that have been made, I think we should give them an opportunity. I think it's fair, Mr. Chairman. I think it's logical. I do not know what further we can do. There are people in various camps of different political persuasions. Surely this legislature shouldn't force upon the people an opinion that is held by one or two members on the opposition. I think that the people themselves should be given a chance. I think we have a responsibility to help the people become united rather than create the cloud that I think you have created and divide the community as you have done.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Chairman, the defence put forward by the minister is probably the most savage indictment of the minister — far more savage than anything that I can say or anybody else over here can say. The fact that this meeting tomorrow night to which he has alluded on so many occasions this afternoon, and again this evening, is even taking place says it all. I can't add anything to it. That is the worst indictment that you as a minister can receive. That meeting is taking place partly because you, as a minister, refuse to enforce an act. That is what is at issue here. You refuse to enforce an act. I listen with amusement to the junior minister for Regina Lakeview chirping away. I would like to thank him for his contribution. It is about the level we have come to expect from him. It is interesting to note when his own estimates are up, he doesn't have a great deal to say but when someone else is up, we hear from him a great deal. Perhaps, if the junior minister could remain silent, we could get to the nub of this and move on to something else.

What we are talking about is a situation where the minister refuses to enforce an act. That act is, very simply, that land being sold must be sold at a fair market value or by tender. That's what is at issue here — purely and simply. There are several other things that are related to it, but that is the basic one that starts it all out. That is what has not been enforced. That is the provision that has been brought to your attention. That is the provision you will not act upon. The minister has said, "Let's leave it to the local people. Let's stay out of it. They're having a meeting tomorrow night."

That has to be a unique situation when a town like Kamsack has to have a meeting on something like this. It is very unusual that it has gone that far. Usually something like this would have been ironed out in council, or in camera or in committee. Goodness knows how it would have been hammered out. It is unusual it has gone that far. And it has gone that far because that minister refuses to enforce what is provincial law. That minister knows full well he has been requested to call an inquiry by the mayor and two duly elected councillors. Two of those councillors (and you indicated it was one) have signed a telegram to the Premier, since they couldn't even get an answer from you. They felt they had to communicate with the Premier in order to get a judicial inquiry. The reason that town is split is that you and your department sit there like bumps on a log . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . All right, if you wish to take the position that you are not going to do anything until the town has a meeting, fine; we accept that. I assume the automatic reply coming from the minister forthwith will be, "I'm going to stand my estimates until that meeting is held. I will wait for that announcement and we will move onto something else."

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, I do not see why we should be standing the estimates. What is the basis to stand estimates? Just because there is going to be a meeting? In the 495 urban communities and urban governments tomorrow night, there might be a half-a-dozen ratepayers' meetings. How do I know? We do not keep track of every meeting. Maybe that would be the way the Conservatives would govern. They would have somebody sitting and watching every urban government — how they function and how they make decisions — and they would interfere, tell them what they should do, and how they should do it. That's not the way we do things. That's not the way the local governments in Saskatchewan have governed since Saskatchewan became a province. Local government has been given a lot of freedom and a lot of right to make its own decisions. That's the way it should be. Our job, as a government, should be to help them financially, as we have, by providing revenue sharing, community capital grants and other unconditional grants through which, today, the local governments in Saskatchewan have become strengthened tremendously. They are able to improve their communities. We are also able to provide assistance to the communities by helping to rebuild their streets, their store fronts — a lot is happening in smaller towns and in some smaller villages in Saskatchewan these days. Those were good places to live, Mr. Chairman. I feel a little distressed when the members opposite are attacking smaller communities, are degrading smaller communities, are abusing smaller communities, are attacking the council members, are attacking the administrators, are attacking the small businessmen. Mr. Chairman, this is wrong; this is not democracy. This is the wrong way to strengthen smaller communities. This is the wrong way to bring people into smaller communities. Obviously, that's the Tory way; that's not the NDP way, Mr. Chairman.

We believe that local government should be assisted. Wherever we can advise them, we should advise them. We have four advisers to assist them in the department, as well as the departmental staff. Mr. Chairman, our approach is to give more independence, more autonomy, to local governments to make decisions.

I'm sure the member for Thunder Creek would be the first one to holler and scream if the federal government somehow decided that it should have some form of inquiry into Saskatchewan. He would say that we don't want Pierre Elliott Trudeau to stick his nose into provincial affairs. I believe he would say that. Now, who knows? Who knows? He's a member who is at times totally inconsistent. What he likes to do is abuse and attack people, as he has abused and attacked the people of Kamsack. I wish that he would

have the honor and the decency to leave the people of Kamsack alone and that he would retract his statement and apologize to them and suggest to them that they should work together to help resolve their problems. Mr. Chairman, I think he would be doing a service to the community of Kamsack and to other communities.

Mr. Chairman, before the evening is over, presumably he will be asking for an inquiry into Kenaston because they're proposing to sell land at \$1 per acre. Presumably he's going to be asking for an inquiry into Dilke because there is a difference of opinion between the mayor and a citizen.

Mr. Chairman, we propose to give him help, advice, but we do not propose to have inquiries or inquisitions against people who are trying to do a good job for our towns and villages.

MR. SWAN: — I'd like to ask a couple of question on this same subject. Mr. Minister, you indicated that there's going to be a meeting tomorrow evening in Kamsack and that SUMA has been asked to attend. Do you know the purpose of the meeting?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — I'm not aware that SUMA has been asked to attend; maybe they have.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Well, you made the statement.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — No, I did not make the statement; the records will show that I did not say SUMA has been asked to attend the meeting. They may have been, but to the best of my knowledge they have not; certainly I'm not aware that SUMA has been asked.

MR. SWAN: — Mr. Minister, there is a meeting in Kamsack tomorrow night and SUMA is going to attend, but SUMA is attending because of salary negotiations for one of its employee groups. That's what the meeting is about, Mr. Minister. If you would like to phone and check, you'll find those are the facts. So you're misleading us when you start raising that red herring about a meeting.

Mr. Chairman, I can tell the hon. members here that in my meeting with a SUMA executive — the executive director attended the meeting — he told me that he is going to Kamsack on Wednesday to assist with collective bargaining. That's on Wednesday . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . SUMA has been asked to assist in collective bargaining and Mr. Wankling, the executive director, told us, "unless the meeting has been moved till tomorrow — that is always possible." But, that meeting in collective bargaining has nothing to do with the meeting that has been called and sponsored by the local chamber of commerce. That's the meeting to which I'm referring. The meeting has been sponsored by the local chamber of commerce and all the ratepayers of Kamsack have been invited to that meeting.

MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Chairman, I spent some time this afternoon talking to some of the citizens of Kamsack . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Before I get into that, I want to correct something that the minister said just a minute ago. He said there is a division in council as it relates to calling for a judicial inquiry and he's quite right. But the division isn't between the mayor and one councillor. In fact, the Premier has a telegram, probably sitting on this desk some place, that was sent from the mayor and two councillors. And then there is the other side, asking for a judicial inquiry.

Now, let's get to the meeting tomorrow night. The meeting tomorrow night you say is

sponsored by the chamber of commerce. I don't know if they will agree that that's the case, or not. It was, in fact, called by Mr. Kiwaluk without the knowledge of the rest of the executive of the chamber of commerce and it was advertised as a chamber of commerce town hall meeting and a meeting where council and the mayor would deal with the issues to try to clear the cloud. That may or may not be the case. The mayor, Phil Mydonick, still hasn't been invited to it. That makes a whole lot of difference . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I suppose you recall the manipulations that were going on in the two R.M.s in your constituency that you were shuffling around back and forth.

I want to ask another question. The minister earlier indicated that he was not going to be at the meeting in Kamsack tomorrow night. I wonder if he will tell us whether any of the officials of his department are going to be at that meeting in Kamsack.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, yes. I have asked Charlie Wayling, one of the municipal advisers, to attend the meeting.

MR. BERNTSON: — And is he the only one?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Yes, unless there is someone else that may, between now and then, want to go. It is a public meeting. But, in terms of officially being there on behalf of the department, Mr. Charlie Wayling has been asked to attend the meeting.

MR. THATCHER: — The rhetoric that we have listened to from the minister outlining the NDP philosophy toward local government and the wonderful things that you have done etc., etc. is something that we can debate at another time.

What we're dealing with, at this particular moment, is a situation in the town of Kamsack. Mr. Minister, it would appear the appropriate thing to do would be (since you hang your hat on this public meeting tomorrow night about the wonderful things that are going to emanate from this meeting) to pull your estimates and let this meeting take place. Let's find out exactly what does come from that meeting, then your estimates can come back and we can perhaps proceed with this thing at a much accelerated pace. Now, I don't think there is anything wrong with pulling the estimates. We viewed the spectacle on Friday morning of the Attorney General calling Sedco (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation) and then, when the minister was going to be subjected to a couple of innocent questions and he pleaded with the Attorney General, saying, "I can't answer them," the Attorney General obliged and pulled his estimates.

The minister has indicated that many wonderful things will be determined tomorrow evening. Mr. Minister, in the interest of expediting things through this Assembly, I would suggest that you ask your House Leader to pull your estimates for this evening. We could move on to something else. And perhaps after this meeting, if what you say is true — that the possibilities that you suggest can happen and do happen — we can probably polish your estimates off with a heck of a lot more speed than we're going to this evening. Obviously we are just going to around and around in circles.

Now, we think that what took place this afternoon is about as far as we can go. We put forward a fair amount of documented evidence, you have scoffed at it. We don't think that you scoffed at it with good reason. All right, let's let the meeting happen and see what comes out of it and what the people in town say. You can monitor it with your government officials; I think it's quite possible that we may monitor it with some people from our office. Then, you can bring your estimates back and we can probably deal with

them in a very short period.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, first of all I am not trying to hang my hat on tomorrow's meeting. I do not believe that tomorrow's meeting is going to be the end-all and that it is going to resolve every difference of opinion in a community of 1,000. I'm sure that there are some people who may still have some questions. All I am saying is that this is a meeting called by the community people, and it is true that I have received an invitation. It's not a meeting that is called by the town council; it's a meeting that's called by the chamber of commerce. That's my understanding and that's what the invitation would indicate.

Let me restate that. As I said earlier, the meeting may come up with some solutions or some recommendations for possible solutions; I don't know. Let's wait for the meeting.

Now, Mr. Chairman, in terms of the estimates in the case of the department, surely we can deal with those. The expenditures of the department for administration or for revenue sharing or the capital grants or municipal water assistance, whether we deal with them now or tomorrow, the figures will be the same. Those figures will not change between now and tomorrow. Members will want to perhaps discuss and debate them in the same way.

Incidentally, Mr. Chairman, I was just given a copy of the letter which I received this morning, dated May 1, 1981. It's addressed: "Minister, Department of Urban Affairs, Regina, Saskatchewan." It's a stock circular saying:

Dear Sirs: The Kamsack and District Chamber of Commerce have called a special public meeting on Tuesday, May 5, 1981 at 7:30 p.m. at the Kamsack Junior High School auditorium. Mayor Philip Mydonick and Councillor Larry Koturbash have been asked to attend and present publicly all facts pertaining to the present allegations surrounding the affairs of present and former councillors. You are being asked to attend this important public meeting. Yours truly, Eugene Kiwaluk, President.

It's on Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce letterhead. That is the letter I received. I don't know who else received it. Now, Mr. Chairman, I'm not trying to scoff at things. I'm trying to explain what we have done as a department, what I have done as a minister, and what we have done as a government. I don't think that anything new will be added.

I am prepared to repeat what we have done and what we have tried to do from now until 10 o'clock. I think it would be unproductive. I suggest to the Leader of the Opposition that perhaps he might use his influence, if he has any in his caucus, to get on with the estimates. Show some leadership. Show what you are able to do. Show your caucus that you have some say, that you are prepared to lead instead of being dictated to by the member for Thunder Creek.

MR. THATCHER: — I might equally suggest to the minister who has taken that big fall from grace that maybe this is his big opportunity. Maybe you're missing it because you can't see behind you. Please don't leave! I'm just building you up. Your boss, who kicked you out after you blew the budget, was in the back row. You had a chance to perform. You had a second chance. When he heard that little diatribe from you he left. You blew it again!

Mr. Minister, very clearly we have a situation in which the municipal act has been violated. It has been brought to your attention and your department refuses to act on it.

Very clearly you have a situation where land has been sold by a town council without going through the proper channels as dictated by statute. That has been brought to your attention.

All right, Mr. Minister, you told us about the meeting in Kamsack tomorrow night. I already told you that the fact that meeting is taking place is the most savage indictment that can happen. I won't go into that again.

If you think we are going to let your estimates go through this evening, and have a meeting occur tomorrow where certain events may or may not occur with your estimates through safely gone and you beyond reach . . . You can call that unproductive if you wish. We don't happen to call it unproductive. Make no mistake — your estimates are not going to go through this evening. I think that is unfortunate because we are going to spend two and one-half hours going through the same things. I repeat again, the logical thing is to pull your estimates for 24 hours or 48 hours, a precedent clearly established by your House Leader last Friday. So we're not breaking any new ground. Let's see what happens. Let's go through some of the events again.

It is required by any council, or by the municipal act, that any land within the city limits (of that town) be either disposed of by public tender, or at auction, or at fair market value. Fair market value is the key point.

Now, Mr. Minister, if you want examples of what land sells for within the limits of Kamsack, they are easily obtained. We have an example of some swampland barely inside the city limits which sold for about \$745 an acre way back in 1977 — swampland. It had no services on it. It was almost a slough. That thing brought in \$745 an acre, and there are more. There are cases galore which can be cited.

It is interesting to see who ends up with the land. Ultimately, the land is sold to a company or an individual, corporately, for \$1. The interesting thing is the allegations which were made. Only a public inquiry will support the veracity of them. The allegation being made is that the company which received the land for \$1 is owned by an individual who has very close business ties with some of the council members. Basically, this is the undercurrent of the feeling up there. Whether that is true or not, it is why your department has been called in. That is the nub of it. Has the law been followed? This is basically what the mayor wants you to ascertain. Has there been a conflict of interest on the part of some councillors? That is what it is all about.

Mr. Minister, it becomes rather clear (and I say that at the risk of prejudging what a judicial inquiry may find), that the act has been violated by these councillors. Now, how serious a breach that is, is up to an inquiry to find, if in fact it has been breached. But I think it is fair to say that there have been some irregularities, either deliberately or otherwise. Again, that is for the judicial inquiry to ascertain.

All right, you can argue that what I am saying is not true and that you are not going to call an inquiry. Mr. Minister, we would be one great opposition if we were to say, "Okay, we give in; your estimates can go, and we will see what comes out of it." Obviously, if we were to do that, we would earn your scorn on that side of the House, and rightly so.

Mr. Minister, you should seriously consider pulling your estimates for 48 hours. Let's do something else tonight. We have lots to do. There are lots of people who would like to get out of here, and I head the list. We could move on to something else and be productive, then come back to your estimates. Perhaps some things will be clear by that

time. Again, I put that to the minister for his consideration.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, let me make a brief comment in respect to the hon. member's accusations, insinuations, and attack on me, personally.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Have I?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Yes, you have before we rose. You have in the last while. Mr. Chairman, as a member of this legislature for 17 years, I have tried to make a useful contribution. As a member of the Executive Council in the last 10 years, I think history will record that I did some things which the people of Saskatchewan appreciate. One of the first things which I did was remove deterrent fees, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — I see he is running away because he was a supporter of deterrent fees. He said that in this House. Mr. Chairman, I think the people of Saskatchewan appreciate that.

The people of Saskatchewan appreciate the drug plan which was introduced when I was minister of health. They appreciate the dental plan and the numerous hospitals which have been built. I believe that I need not apologize to the hon. members opposite for my contribution to health services in this province, and during my period as minister of finance, for the numerous programs that were introduced. I'll tell you, Mr. Chairman, that in 1978 when we had an election — and we well remember that budget — the Tories said that we would be wiped out. What was the situation? It came within a hair of all of them being wiped out themselves. Give us another chance and they will be.

I make no apologies for my actions as a member of Executive Council and a minister of the Crown, including a number of things that we are trying to initiate in urban affairs. We are developing new parks in urban communities and trying to develop new programs for housing, downtown revitalization and urban infill. We are providing more money to finance local government both in terms of operating grants and capital grants. We are running municipal water assistance programs. Mr. Chairman, I feel pretty good about what the Department of Urban Affairs is doing, and what I am doing. In fact, I am getting a fair bit of satisfaction in this new Department of Urban Affairs. I can tell you that the urban governments are certainly appreciating it. Talk to the municipal councils. Talk to the villages, towns and cities. What is the story? They say that we are doing a good job in helping out the urban governments. And I agree with them.

The member says that he is getting fed up. He gets fed up very quickly; we have seen that. If things don't go his way, he picks up his ball and bat and walks away for a week or so . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right. He is saying, "I want to get on with it," because he might somehow be beyond reach. I intend to be here. I wonder whether the hon. member intends to stay here for the rest of this session. We are prepared to discuss the estimates until 10 o'clock, and then we will rise. There's a lot to do.

I believe that the Kamsack issue could be put aside for the time being. There is always the question period which you have used up for the last week. You can continue to ask questions. There are other ways, and I can assure the hon. member that we will be getting reports of what happens tomorrow and Thursday. The session, as I understand it, is not going to prorogue between now and Friday at the rate the members opposite

are dragging it out. That's fine, that's their right.

Where is their urban affairs critic? He has apparently gone. He left me with the impression that these were his estimates. I don't know whether they lack confidence in him and have brought in the member for Thunder Creek to come and disrupt the hon. member for Arm River — muzzle him. Obviously he doesn't want to hear the hon. member for Arm River. He thinks he knows it all. He thinks he is the man of wisdom. He is telling the Leader of the Opposition what to do. He's telling Mr. Devine what he has to do and where to go. Mr. Chairman, this is the man. I don't know why you people don't decide to name your leader. We would like to have him as a leader; then every Tory in Saskatchewan would be kicked out in the next election.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order. I wonder if we could try to get back to the estimates.

AN HON. MEMBER: — I note the timing of your cutting off the minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Well, I point out that the minister was at times out of order.

AN HON. MEMBER: — You can give me the same warning when I'm finished my speech, and we'll get along fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — No, I think he was amply baited by the members opposite. Maybe we could get back to the estimates and try to stick as close as we can to urban affairs, and issues concerning urban affairs.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Chairman, on this side of the House we couldn't agree with you more. Mr. Minister, I've been sitting opposite you long enough to know that when you don't have a great deal to say, you go into this pointless, mindless, and ludicrous rhetoric to which we have just listened.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Rhetoric is the way you pronounce that.

MR. THATCHER: — I like rhetoric. You can claim to do an awful lot of things, but neither counting nor using the English language is one of your virtues or attributes.

Mr. Minister, we have listened to this pointless, irrelevant nonsense from you and, from the point of view that you are a minister in charge of a department and someone with political experience, I am really shocked. Look in *Hansard* tomorrow at some of the things you have said. I don't think you will be particularly impressed with some of those comments either.

The issue is not that complex. It isn't that complex at all. This town has come to you and asked for something, and for some strange reason you are refusing. We can only conclude that you are afraid to look at it from the point of view of a judicial inquiry. Maybe this appraisal from the Department of Industry and Commerce of \$220,000 is more serious than what we thought. This individual (and I have his name written here which I won't bother giving to you just yet) appraises it at \$220,000. One month later, Sedco is into the picture with some \$330,000. A few months later they come up with another \$150,000. Then this funny little quirk of fate happens that the original employee goes to work for Kamsack Manufacturing.

Is that what you are afraid of, that this is going to come out? I don't know. I'm not making allegations here. I'm just pointing out a situation. But, for the life of me, the situation does not appear to be that complex, not that hard to deal with. And to end the thing, all you have to do is say that you're going to investigate it and make it public. If there is no wrongdoing, hang the mayor out to dry. If there is some wrongdoing, then somebody else is going to be hung out to dry. That's the way it should be. That's what your job is. That is the job of your department.

If it turns your crank to make personal references about people on this side of the House, go ahead. I'm sure you are aware that long ago the credibility that you have with us on this side of the House or the credibility on that side of the House is so far down, it really doesn't bother any of us. If you want to do that until 10 o'clock, go ahead. I am afraid the judgment on those sorts of tactics will be rather obvious. Proceed if you wish. If you are not going to look at this tonight (and you have made reference repeatedly as to what will happen in Kamsack tomorrow), I again ask you, on behalf of the people who are paying the bill for us to sit here, to pull your estimates and let us do something productive.

We rang the bells for some six hours a couple of months ago. Let me tell you that time was spent more productively ringing those bells than what it was listening to that garble from the minister tonight and this afternoon. I think the people of Saskatchewan received more value during the time when those bells were ringing and this Assembly wasn't in session, than from the garbage we've had to put up with from this minister, who has been around long enough, who should know better and does know better.

Again, I implore the minister — and perhaps I should make my comments to the House Leader, since apparently the bulk of the comments are going over the minister's head. We're going nowhere, and we're not going to go anywhere. You have other things you want to get through, and so do we. I'd like to pose my comments, my requests to the House Leader. He pulled estimates after 30 seconds on Friday; for what reason, I don't know. Surely, you can see what's happening today. You have things on that order paper to get done. I'd like to ask the House Leader if he will consider pulling those estimates. Either put up bills or put up another set of estimates. We're ready to go on then.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, will you people let me again refer to the figures of . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I am aware of the procedure that at one time was followed where there was a particular item in estimates on which there was a difference and that particular item was allowed to stand. I do not object if the first vote, the administration vote, is stood and we carry on to the next item, in case the hon. members somehow fear that it would prevent them from talking about Kamsack later on. Now that's standard; that's normal we can proceed with all the other subvotes that are there and come back to the first vote.

If the hon. members want to make progress (and I do), surely there is a way to consider all the items in the estimates. But I'm prepared to stand vote 1. The member for Qu'Appelle knows the rules. It has been done before — for a particular item to be stood and to carry on with the rest of the estimates. I pose that as a possible approach. I have no fears in the case of Kamsack. I want to assure the hon. members that I am not protecting or trying to hide anything. Mr. Chairman, I don't know the council members, except a couple council members that I've met in this current council. Mr. Chairman, perhaps that might be a way to consider this thing.

MR. LANE: — I'm prepared to accept the proposal of the hon. minister.

The hon. minister just made a proposal that we stand subvote 1 and proceed with the rest of the items, and we're prepared to accept that.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Vice-Chairman, I want to make a comment on this. I think it was on Wednesday or Thursday of last week. The issue all evening during the course of industry was that the Department of Industry and Commerce should table the important reports respecting Kamsack and that the opposition would go on strike by filibustering unless and until the Minister of Industry tabled the reports which he could not find. That was the position of obstinacy on this issue at that time. He comes in with the reports the next day. This is great from the opposition's point of view, 'We'll get through this man's estimates and get on to urban.' Except all of a sudden one of them wanders in from the opposition's lounge and decides he wants to talk about questions on Sedco and he digs in on Sedco. So now they ask us to stand; so now we stand industry because we are ready to go to urban. Now we call urban; they call for a judicial investigation. He has said that he does not rule out a judicial investigation but he does not accept it at this stage of the game. How long can they go on like this?

The pitch of the opposition is: stand this item; let's get on to someone else's estimates. What's going to happen to the next estimate, Mr. Chairman? It will be fine, until somebody gets another wild card idea, and they get obstinate again, and House business is stopped dead again until something gets unclogged in their thinking. Mr. Chairman, that is the way that opposition has been operating. You are asking us to stand again, until it satisfies you people, something on vote 1 and move on to the other estimates. I think everyone will say (they may not say it, but this session round for sure) that we have been co-operating as much as we can with the estimates.

AN HON. MEMBER: — So have we.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Well, you have been but . . . In any event, Mr. Chairman, I would like to consider my options with the Minister of Urban Affairs and see whether or not we do stand vote 1 and go on to the other votes. I would like to discuss it with the minister. I will take my chair and someone else can rebut.

MR. TAYLOR: — The Attorney General makes reference to the other night in this House when he jumped immediately from his chair. You were in the chair; you saw him move it from industry and commerce to urban affairs because we wanted to question the minister about Sedco, which was a subvote that you called in this House. We had no recourse. He said, "It my prerogative to move on it." This he did. Tonight his minister on that side of the House says, "Let's stand subvote 1 and move onto the other ones," to which my colleagues on this side of the House agreed. And he tries to blame that on us. Which way are you going to do it, Mr. House Leader? We co-operated this session; don't ever say we didn't.

You were shielding that minister the other day (the Minister of Industry and Commerce), who obviously didn't have the answers for this House. You moved it to another estimate, and tonight the Minister of Urban Affairs certainly has that answer for my colleagues again. Are these the tactics of the government opposite? I would like the press to know that. Every time it gets in trouble, "Let's shift to another point; let's move to another estimate." That's their answer in every case in this House.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — I guess this is something we will have to discuss at a private House leaders' meeting, so-called. I want to make it clear why I pulled the last vote of industry and commerce. In the 14 years I have been here, it has only been in the last couple of years, under this current opposition, that a statutory vote has been questioned. Essentially a statutory vote is exactly what the words mean. It is voted on by statute, and in the case of almost all of those statutory votes there are other forums (such as Crown corporations) in detail to grill the minister. I won't say that the opposition did this knowingly or wilfully, but on Friday they got into detailed questions under a statutory vote on Sedco without the minister's officials being there. I say it is against the rules of the House to argue in detail on a statutory vote, and it breaks the custom and the way the House has been operating. On that basis, I pulled the vote. We're now in urban affairs.

What we see here is that the opposition is not satisfied with the answer the minister has given them. That may be the case. Maybe they aren't satisfied with it; that's up to them. I am only saying, Mr. Chairman, that the fact is we all have to accept that we may not get what we want in answers, or in productivity or inactivity. He takes one position; we take another position. I don't know what can be gained by this forever kind of (how can I describe it) macho-confrontationist tearing off the jacket and the shirts and, "We're going to show your government; we're going to waste this time until 10 o'clock; we are not going to move by this." All of these kinds of things are going through the whole routine. I, honest to goodness, Mr. Chairman, don't know. You don't like what happens and you all walk out and the bells ring for six and one-half hours and the member for Thunder Creek threatens us again, "Oh, my goodness, this was more productive and we're ready to do it." The member for Regina South gets up and says, "Yes, we're going to do it again." I mean, look, I know that we're at each other and we disagree philosophically and politically.

But there have to be some ground rules for the debate here or the whole thing stops dead. I haven't been paying attention even to the debate. My plea is that the ground rules are being ignored willy-nilly by the minority. Surely to goodness, is that an irresponsible plea to make? I don't think it is an irresponsible plea to make. I just don't know where we go from here. We may go through these estimates. Where do we go from there? I guess we fall into education.

I think the Minister of Urban Affairs has made the offer, and it's probably an offer that under all the circumstances the government has no other choice but to accept. But I do want to indicate as Government House Leader, who still has officials — tens of officials with every ministry that we call . . . I don't know how many times we've stood the Department of Industry and Commerce for some reason or other. How many times have urban affairs people been around? They have Ottawa commitments and a variety of other departmental commitments. I realize a bit of this is necessary and they're here to serve us. I realize that. But surely we have to have some means of operation if we're going to do the people's business with dispatch.

That's my objection to agreeing to postpone it until the next estimate comes up and something else gets into your thinking, rightly or wrongly, and you dig in again and the shirts come off again. It's natural. "This guy is that, and he's incompetent" — what a weak explanation — all of that kind of routine. Nobody gains incredibility in that regard. Will you just give me one minute and I'll talk to my minister about this, hear his arguments and we'll make the decision.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Chairman, for the second time in, I guess, two sitting days, I've

seen something which, as a politician and a member of a political party, I don't like. Both incidents have happened on that side of the House. I saw the Attorney General on Friday embarrass one of his ministers by pulling his estimates. You know, I felt some sympathy for that minister who had his estimates pulled. It had to be a pretty embarrassing situation. But I think the most embarrassing moment or the grossest indignity that I've ever seen a cabinet minister take, in the years that I've observed this in this Assembly, has just happened. We have reached an impasse in regard to urban affairs and we've made some suggestions that the minister didn't find acceptable. Then the minister made a very valid and very sensible suggestion, which we acceded to immediately. We agree with him. We were prepared to do it. Then we witnessed what was the most disgusting way for a House Leader to treat either a cabinet minister or a member. You know, if I were a cabinet minister across there and you did that to me, either you or I would be gone, forthwith, right off the bat. Frankly there are people over there who, if that were done to them, would be gone; they wouldn't put up with that.

You pulled some estimates on Friday for a very obvious reason. Tonight, the minister offers to end an impasse. He makes a valid, sensible suggestion to which we quickly agreed. He made a suggestion which would allow us to move on to the balance of his estimates and would enable us to come back, at some future time, to deal with the specific, narrow area in which we were involved. You have the gall to suggest that we're slowing things down. You have the nerve to say that we're obstructing things. Very respectfully, I would like to pose a question to the House Leader. Who is obstructing tonight? You have embarrassed the minister in the worst fashion that a minister can be embarrassed. Even though I have crossed swords with that minister on many occasions, I must say I do feel some kinship with him tonight, because I wouldn't take that from you. The fellow right next to you wouldn't take that from you. The fellow second from the back wouldn't take that from you. The one for Regina Lakeview — the one who natters all the time — would take that.

I'm not quite sure where we stand; we would like to move to item 2. We would like to take the suggestion posed by the minister, and come back to it. So I'm not sure where we stand now. Are we going to move on or are we going to stay with this silly, useless, unproductive rhetoric? I recall the Attorney General at the time the bells were ringing for six hours. Some of the positions of the rookie minister for Regina Lakeview, with the job he's doing, must be in peril. He'll go down as one of the all-time great natters.

I guess my question now is: where are we? Is the minister's suggestion still valid, or are we under the dictatorial auspices of the Attorney General? In other words, who is calling the shots in these estimates? Is the minister calling his own shots in regard to urban affairs, or does he have to hold his hand up and say, "Please, may I do such and such"? Therefore, my question to the Minister of Urban Affairs is this: is your offer still valid, or have you been overruled?

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Chairman, the hollowness of the Conservative opposition laughter is louder than the laughter itself. The problem with the hon. member for Thunder Creek when he says he wouldn't take it, is that he doesn't take anything from anybody, in any form. In a democracy you have to take a little bit, including your own caucus. I'm simply saying that you are not. You people are not doing this the right way. I'll worry about my relationships with my colleagues as you will undoubtedly worry about yours, but I tell you that what you people do is equivalent to a tyranny of the minority, by the minority. It has frightening implications. Walking out and digging in your heels because it doesn't come your way has a frightening implication. You obey nothing. You are going to dig in. You have contempt for the House.

Now I say to you, Mr. Chairman, that's just not cricket. I'm simply saying to you that under those circumstances we have to get ourselves reoriented here. Maybe it's prorogation time and we are acting like this. I don't know. I would like to think that it might be, because there can't be any other reason. In any event, Mr. Chairman, in light of all the circumstances in front of me, as the Government House Leader I see no other choice but to accept the offer, and to concede and agree with the suggestion made by the Minister of Urban Affairs to stand item number 1. I do so with reluctance. I tell you that honestly. I do it with reluctance for all the reasons that I have articulated. Mr. Chairman, under circumstances, I would propose that we stand item number 1 and proceed with item number 2. I'd ask if you'd see if the members of the House would agree to that.

MR. LANE: — I want to make a comment to the Attorney General because I was terribly shocked. You know, we've seen the government opposite don the garment of the Trudeau Liberals time and time again. The arrogance with which the Attorney General is acting is further proof.

We've seen the government opposite model it after the way it covers up in Crown corporations, the way it fell into bed in the constitution, the way it handles the operation of the House and the operation of government. It's very interesting that the Attorney General has just fallen back on the phrase of Pierre Elliott Trudeau when he said "tyranny of the minority," referring to the actions of the official opposition in Ottawa when it attempted to give time to the provinces to fight their constitutional battle. It was the very phrase which the Trudeauesque Attorney General opposite used. It's very interesting that he had to use as his defence the actions of Trudeau and his operation of parliament. We all know in Canada how Trudeau operates parliament and what he thinks of parliament. It is very interesting that the Attorney General would use Trudeau's exact phrase.

It's interesting as well that the Attorney General, as House Leader, has managed to ignore the precedents of this House where, for the past three years (since approximately 1978) under the Department of Telephones, we were able to break open the cable TV scandal, which we couldn't get because of coverup and because it was not in the year under review under Sask Tel. So there has been ample precedent, Mr. Attorney General. I am sure the Attorney General, if he had thought of it, would have done exactly the same thing. The fact is that \$28 million may be a statutory estimate, but the precedent was established in this House some years ago about asking questions in this Assembly. It was accepted by this Assembly, by the government and by the Speaker. That's why the last person I would go to for rules about anything, including dress, is the hon. member for Kinistino, for heaven's sake. I don't know why I would go to him for House rules. I would like to accept the offer of the minister responsible, and I would like just to refute further the statement of the Attorney General.

I note that the director of Sask Housing is in the Assembly to answer questions that may arise from the estimates and, I'm sure, on any statutory matter that may come up under the Department of Urban Affairs. So I welcome the Attorney General's statements and the minister's. I just asked the minister if he would have his officials from Sask Housing here when it comes up. I asked you last year about the list of all the properties purchased by the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation for its infill housing program. You did not supply it to me at that time. I assume that you'll have it for estimates this time. Could you give me that assurance when we move on to item 2?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — When we come to the housing portion of it, I'll be glad to discuss that. I don't know whether we'll have the information with us; certainly I see no reason we can't provide it.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: — It appears that we move to item 2. We are standing item 1.

Item 2

MR. LANE: — I just have questions on the Qu'Appelle Valley and also on the urban planning study that you are doing on the areas surrounding Saskatoon and Regina. If the minister wants to consider those now, or at a further appropriate time, it doesn't matter to me.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, could you explain the increase in staff? Under vote 2 you have moved from 54 to 60.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, it's really reorganization. If the hon. member notices, in administration we have fewer people. We have more people in municipal management and finance. Also, the property improvement grants rebate program used to be (I think) under that vote and it is now under a separate subvote. It's really reorganization. If the hon. member adds the figures, our staff is about at the same level as it was.

MR. KATZMAN: — I realize we have a problem because your department has been split. I assume it was municipal affairs that had 261.1 man-years; now you show 164.3 man-years. Are you suggesting the difference will be found in rural affairs?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — No. That will be the case with the assessment authority, which we will come to on page 82. We will come to it because we are proposing to establish an assessment authority. That is the reason.

MR. KATZMAN: — So, you are saying that the 105 under the Saskatchewan Assessment Authority should be added to 164.3. I have to add those together to compare it with last year's figures. Is that correct?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — The total is 269.7; that will save you the adding.

MR. KATZMAN: — Okay. So, you are actually saying there is an increase of eight people. Okay, could you tell me why we have the increase? Is your department shifting from place to place, and that's why I see the additional six here? Are you saying that you're shifting the responsibility of each department and that's the reason?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, we come to the assessment authority. We've already indicated to the hon. member that taking the department and the assessment authority we have a total of 269.7. Last year there were 261.1. Really, this year we are adding 11 people — new people — to the assessment authority. It has an increase and the rest of the department there is a reduction.

MR. KATZMAN: — Excuse me, Mr. Chairman, I apologize because I think we are actually handling number 5 on urban affairs, where you show 96.2 that is now moved over to become 105. I'll leave the rest of my questions to that point.

Item 2 agreed.

Item 3

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, at this point are there any moneys here? Are these the people who assist municipalities in doing the planning? Where do you show the money to cover the group which is doing the study around Saskatoon for the municipal planning?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — That is item 8.

MR. LANE: — In community planning, does that include the special planning commission?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — No. We will cover the implementation of the Qu'Appelle agreement next.

MR. LANE: — That is where the special planning commission is met?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — That's right.

Item 3 agreed.

Item 4

MR. LANE: — Obviously there are problems developing over continuing under the implementation of the Qu'Appelle agreement. There are concerns, for example, among the native people in reserves along the Qu'Appelle Valley. They are concerned about flooding of the valley. Upstream, of course, they are concerned about ensuring a better channelling of the water. Could the minister advise as to what the status of negotiations is in this particular regard, and what involvement the provincial government has?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — I gather that the particular question you are zeroing in on is the native concern; our department is not involved in those negotiations. It is the Department of Environment which deal with that aspect of activity. It does the negotiating. That is not in our jurisdiction.

MR. LANE: — Have you made any recommendations to that department?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — In the case of the Department of the Environment in the agreement, it is responsible for the channel improvement and flood control. Our jurisdiction is over the land use and in advising and working with municipalities on the land use.

In that area of flood control (which I know the native people are concerned about) and the channel straightening out and improvement, those are matters that the Department of the Environment deals with.

MR. LANE: — Do you want to discuss the land use now or under item 8? If I can ask all my questions on the Qu'Appelle implementation land use in item 8 that's . . .

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Why not proceed in item 4, because it fits in better under that one than under regional planning.

MR. LANE: — Okay. What proposals do you have on regional land use for the various planning commissions in the Qu'Appelle Valley?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, as the hon. member knows, there are six area commissions. We have heard from five of the commissions. All of them have written to us that they want to continue in the land use involvement. The precise area of their responsibility has yet to be concluded or defined. The sixth commission, we have not heard from yet. But, based on the five, they are really representative of the municipalities, all except Flying Creek; that one we haven't heard from.

MR. LANE: — Would you table the letters?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — We'll be glad to provide the hon. member with copies of those letters.

MR. LANE: — This session? That's one of the members you wouldn't trust, right behind you. Don't listen to him, I advise the hon. member. I wish he'd run in Qu'Appelle again. The people were very happy.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, we'll be happy to give the hon. member the copies right now. Do you want them tabled in the legislature or do you just want copies?

MR. LANE: — No. That's fine; copies are good. I'd like to raise with the hon. minister - and I've used the employee's name in the House in the past, and am quite prepared to again - the case of a former employee of yours who got involved in a new development, or proposed development, north of Regina. He was involved in community planning studies within the department and subsequently left the department to set up and operate the development that was proposed. Now, it strikes me as a dangerous conflict of interest. I'm going to advise the minister that I suspect he's going to be very politically embarrassed in the near future over that particular one. I just wonder if the minister can tell me what the guidelines are for departmental officials who are involved in regional planning and then become involved in their own projects after they leave the department or, particularly, ones that they are heavily involved in planning.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, in the case which the hon. member raises regarding potential conflict of interest, the employees of urban affairs, as well as all the departments, come under the same rule that has been established in the public service commission regarding conflict of interest for these public service employees. I think that the member's reference to an employee - we did discover that he (and I think we are talking about the same person) had some interest in a development. When we found out about it, the deputy discussed the matter with him and by mutual agreement the employee resigned. To be honest with the hon. member, we thought there could be a conflict of interest. Once we discovered it, the employee severed his employment.

MR. LANE: — I am aware of what happened. I did raise it in estimates a couple of years ago about the particular individual involved. It was kind of sloughed off at that time as I gather things were in a very early stage of development. If there is one department which is getting very, very involved in the economic life of this province, it is certainly the Department of Urban Affairs. I say the same of Sask Housing as a function of that. If there were ever a department that should be very, very careful about the need for and the advisability of conflict of interest, and the desirability of conflict of interest, I

suggest it is the Department of Urban Affairs. I am sure the hon. minister would agree with me on that.

As I say, I expect some political embarrassment for the government opposite on that particular matter because it did go on, in my view, far too long. I do commend you for taking action. I understand that the option was given to either be in or out. At least it was given, and for that part I commend you. I would caution the minister to have his officials watch that very, very carefully. It is a matter of concern for many, many people in the riding. They are wondering about it. They don't have any allegations to make now, nor do I. I do suggest that the minister handle that matter very, very cautiously, because I think it is going to blow up.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, I am inclined to agree with the hon. member that it is very important we stay on top of the situation. When we became aware of this, the deputy and I had a discussion about it and we acted forthwith. The public service commission's publishing its conflict of interest rules will be very helpful. I want to extend my thanks to the hon. member for Qu'Appelle in recognizing that we in the Department of Urban Affairs are involved in many ways in the development and promotion of economic life in this province. In the last while, we feel we have made some very substantial moves in that direction. For that reason, it is even more important that we be vigilant in ensuring that no employee gets the government or people into difficulty.

MR. LANE: — I didn't for a moment say it was all well and good or that there weren't other alternatives. On the special planning commission, I'm integrating with the land-use study that was around the province. I would like to obtain from the minister a complete unexpurgated edition and collection of all the information material that the land-use study developed, including copies of its advertising and its informational advertising. I gather it was mainly print, but I could be subject to correction on that. If it were radio or something like that, a copy of the script would be fine. I'm sure that the department has all that information.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Just so that I'm clear, you are talking about the regional planning and not the land use?

MR. LANE: — At this point I said that I wanted to integrate my questions with the land use, particularly with the land-use study which has been going on for about four or five years.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — It is not under our jurisdiction.

MR. LANE: — Whose jurisdiction is it under?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Department of the Environment.

MR. LANE: — Why would that be under the Department of the Environment? You're involved with land use, particularly with the special planning commissions. That's a pretty vital function. Could you obtain that information for me, even though it may not be your responsibility to manage?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, the reason for that in the case of the land-use policy is that it's a broad policy affecting the total province, for example, the regional planning studies in Regina and Saskatoon. In Regina, there are approximately 18

municipalities — rural and urban — with which we're working on regional planning. In Saskatoon and surrounding area, I think there are 25 municipalities with which we're working. That is the extent of the regional studies which we have undertaken of land use under the department's overall provincial study which, I think, has been going on for four or five years.

May I say this to the hon. member. In the case of the regional studies, we'll be glad to provide you with the reports that we have.

MR. LANE: — Would you file all reports which have been filed? Will there be a comprehensive general report about Regina and Saskatoon? If so, when can we expect it?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — We are expecting the reports to come down this summer.

MR. LANE: — Will they be made public when they come down?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — I expect so, Mr. Chairman. I don't know exactly when. We have not received the reports. Remember that there are 18 municipalities which are involved. They have every right to have access to those reports. It's their study. Once the committee has the reports, they might want to refer them to the municipalities which they represent before they are released to the press. Certainly, my intention is to see that they are made public.

MR. LANE: — And probably this summer. Now, has the minister undertaken a study as to the problems, and I suggest lack of public acceptance, of the Flying Creek special planning commission? If so, would you table any studies?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, I am not sure whether that is the impression I had on whether there were any reports by the Flying Creek special planning commission. The answer is no, if that was the question. We are aware of differences. Certainly, the commission itself supports the idea of land use development. (I am just trying to find out how many municipalities there are.) There are seven members on the commission representing three rural municipalities, Craven, the conservation officer, the wildlife federation, and the farming community. We are aware that certain farmers and gardeners have differences. Our role has been to work with the commission. But we are aware that there are differences and the commission is trying to deal with them. How successful they will be, only time will tell. There is no question that there are some differences. It has been in the press and we are aware of them.

MR. LANE: — I asked you whether you had done any studies as to the problems with and within the Flying Creek special planning commission, and, if so, would you table any studies which you have done pertaining to the particular problems with Flying Creek? I am not talking about reports from Flying Creek. I am talking about what your department has done to analyse the problems.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — No, Mr. Chairman, as a department, we have not undertaken any studies. The commission, as far as we know, is united. The difficulties and the differences are outside the commission, but we have not conducted any independent study.

MR. LANE: — I think, just to clarify the record, that the differences are with the people.

They may not be with the commission. The city of Regina dumps sewage which flows through the town of Lumsden, which has its own problems. The bulk of them deal with planning. If we go outside Lumsden, we are into the Flying Creek special planning commission. It doesn't have a great deal of acceptance or support out there yet. Further down the valley, we run into the question of the Indian reserves and their natural lack of desire to have their valley flooded. As we work our way around, we see very little support through that area for some of the planning which has come out. It mainly centres around water, but around Lumsden to Craven it deals with land use. So, I suggest to the minister that those problems are somewhat integrated, and they do go beyond the Flying Creek special planning area. I don't know what the answer to solving the problem is, but I suggest, for a start, that the minister and his officials review the whole question of the Flying Creek special planning commission, including its existence. If its existence is deemed desirable, then actions should be taken from there by the commission, because I think they are all fairly much related and there isn't a great deal of support for the operations of the commission.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — It's the member's constituency, and he is familiar with many of the people and, no doubt, has heard from them. I would really welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter with the hon. member to see whether he can give us any advice or assistance, because this is an area where there are all sorts of differences on whether there should be some kind of joint municipal planning approach, or whether everybody should be on his own. We know that when you are dealing with problems of flood control, land use, and those topics, having everybody acting on his own is not going to resolve the problem. I agree it is important that we become fully familiar with the problems and assist the commission, individual municipalities and individual people to try to come to grips with the problems. To the extent that he can be of any assistance to the department and me, I welcome having his views.

MR. LANE: — I am quite prepared, at a suitable time, to sit down with the minister and any officials that he may designate in that regard. My views may not be acceptable because, I think, we are basically at a start-over position. There were a lot of mistakes made at the outset that caused a great many problems. Now, I'm prepared at a suitable time, on or off the record, to sit down with the minister and his officials (preferably after the session) and discuss it with him.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — We'll make it a point. We'll drop you a note and, perhaps, we could get together.

Item 4 agreed.

Item 5

MR. SWAN: — I'd like to ask the minister if he's been able to sort out the problem in his assessment department that is creating the extremely high changes in downtown areas, such as Moose Jaw last year and other cities and towns. The reports that I get from the towns in my constituency are that they are finding the new assessments have no rhyme or reason. Have you taken a good hard look at your assessment program to see why?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, I'm sure the hon. member is aware that it is the assessment times the mill rate that determines the actual tax. It is important, I think, from the standpoint of an individual and everybody to see that the assessments are as much up to date as possible. And in this period of inflation, there's no question that

properties have been going up in value. It's the role and responsibility of local government, as the assessment goes up, to adjust their mill rate to ensure that there is a fair rate of taxation.

Now, I might advise the hon. member that, since becoming the Minister of Urban Affairs, I do not know of any direct representations that have been made to me about the problems of assessment. I know there might be a single example. I know of receiving a letter from a citizen who complained that the assessor wasn't as polite as the citizen would have liked. I investigated the situation and wrote to the person. But in terms of the overall assessment, there haven't been any real problems.

Now, while we're on this subvote, Mr. Chairman, I guess I should mention (before somebody raises the question) that not only is there this subvote of \$880,000, there is also a further vote for assessment purposes on page 82 where we are proposing to establish an assessment authority which will be called the Saskatchewan Assessment Authority. The money that's here - \$890,000 - is for the period between April 1 and June 30. It is our hope to have the new authority operative as of July 1. It will not be responsible, incidentally, to either the Minister of Urban Affairs or the Minister of Rural Affairs or the Minister of Education. At least that's our intention. I have discussed the matter with SUMA, which endorsed the idea that we are proposing. I can tell the hon. member that the bill is, at the moment, at the printers and I should be giving notice of the bill in the next day or two.

MR. SWAN: — Mr. Minister, I'm somewhat surprised when you say that you haven't had any complaints about the reassessment of properties in cities. I think the papers were full of it last year as Moose Jaw faced the concern. When we met with SUMA, they raised it as a major concern. When I talk to the people in the towns in my constituency, they are raising it with me as a concern. I'm a bit surprised that they are not raising it with you. I would expect that it is being raised and not getting through to the minister's desk, and perhaps he should be talking to the people.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member has any particular complaints in his community, I'd be happy to look into them. In the back is the director of the assessment branch. Just ask him whether there has been any real complaints other than the odd local situations that may arise. But there is no general problem. In fact, I can tell the hon. member that I just met with SUMA on Friday afternoon for a period of three hours, about one of them was spent on the topic that we discussed earlier. The question of assessment never came up. We dealt with all of the resolutions that were dealt with at the SUMA convention. I have copies of them and I don't recall a single resolution that deals with the problems of assessment.

MR. KATZMAN: — Item 5 on page 95: the money on page 82 which will be voted indicates a \$600,000 increase in funds over last year's vote. There are not that many additional people. Could you indicate why there is the large jump? Are you going to have a new minister or new executive assistants for the minister, or something? What is the reason?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, I can give the hon. member some specific information on the new positions which are going to be added: nine agrologists for a total of \$156,150; industrial assessor, \$17,360; research officer, \$23,260; salary increases of \$157,000. Then there are related expenses because of additional positions. There is the central vehicle agency (because our people do a fair bit of travelling as the hon. member will know), telephones, and all that adds up to that figure

— so salary increases plus additional funds for the appeal board.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Chairman, if you read correctly, you are saying that for every dollar you are increasing the budget for salary, you are putting in three dollars for other expenses to make it \$600,000. You said \$157,000 was the total for wages and so forth, but there is about \$600,000 difference, so you need about \$450,000. That's about three to one - \$450,000 versus \$157,000 - that's three dollars for every dollar of wages, unless I'm missing a figure somewhere.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — I'd be glad to give the hon. member the details. I have about \$197,000 for new positions and \$157,000 for salary increases.

AN HON. MEMBER: — You didn't give me the \$197,000 before.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Because I gave them to you individually. I added them up and I think it's \$197,000 for new positions; \$157,000 for salary increases. Then there are the other expenses for travel.

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Minister, I have a question on the topic of assessments. It has been brought to my attention that the assessment on stone and brick dwellings in the rural areas of the province has increased dramatically - in some cases tripling, in fact. Could you give me the reason why these assessments on stone and brick dwellings would increase so dramatically?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Are you referring to farms or hamlets, villages and towns?

MR. TAYLOR: — You're the Minister of Urban Affairs. I am referring to hamlets and towns.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, as far as the director is concerned, there should be no special reason. If the member can give me particular cases, I'll be glad to look into them. It might be a peculiar situation, but not because of stone or brick.

MR. TAYLOR: — I will give you more than the particular cases. I will give you the nonsensical reason that was given by your department to the people who have contacted me. These are stone and brick dwellings in the towns of Wolseley, Indian Head and Grenfell. You know (you may not know this, but I'll tell you) that there once was a brick plant in the town of Wolseley and a lot of those buildings are made of brick. A lot of those buildings were built before the First World War in the early 1900s. They're older buildings. Many of them, when the first Scottish croppers and so on came to this country, were built of stone. Those buildings, those older homes and hotels have had dramatic increases.

I'll supply to you, Mr. Minister, the assessment notices that they have been given. I'll also give you the reason (which was brought to my attention, and that is why I raised it with you) that was given. The department said that the rebuilding and reconstruction in stone and brick would be very expensive. Now you know, as well as I do, that nobody in this day and age builds in stone. You know, you may get a little bit of stone fronting, but that reason (you know that is poor reasoning to say that you're going to reconstruct that building in brick or stone) isn't the case. If one of those homes were lost or something, it would be, certainly, replaced by frame and, maybe, with some stone fronting as we now realize. I would like you to look into this. I would like a better answer than that. I would certainly supply you with documented cases of these assessments actually tripling.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, I gather from the hon. member that those communities had a complete reassessment and based on the information that he has been provided with in the case of the stone and brick houses, the reassessment caused the much larger increase. Fine, if you could give me the information and the particulars, we'd be glad to check into them.

MR. TAYLOR: — I will take that. I just want to point out to you that I couldn't understand it because people came to me who had stone and brick dwellings of that vintage - 1918 and before - who had a dramatic increase in assessment. I know of other dwellings where stucco was removed and siding was put on and, if you could believe this, the assessment went down. So, I'm getting these questions and I will be glad to give you the examples. I expect that you will give me some credible answers as to the reason.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — You've created a curiosity in me. I happen to have a brick-finished house. I'm going to check to see if the municipal assessment would have been less were it cedar finished.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, I assume we will not handle the vote on page 82 today because we don't have the bill yet to create that department. Will we handle it today? I'm asking so I know whether to ask questions.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — My hope is that we can deal with it. I haven't any strong feelings. It's there. The legislation will be brought in but I haven't even thought of it.

MR. KATZMAN: — The only reason I ask, Mr. Minister, is that I remember last time we had a department being created, we couldn't have a vote on it until the bill had gone through third reading. So, I can ask my assessment questions when we get to this one.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Go ahead.

MR. KATZMAN: — Do it now? Okay. Mr. Minister, I understand that farmers' buildings of all types will now be assessed, where farm buildings up until presently had not been assessed where the major occupation was farming. Therefore, they didn't assess the home or any of the improvements.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — I would like to know where the hon. member got the understanding because he certainly didn't get it from the government or any of our officials.

MR. KATZMAN: — It is being suggested in the rural area around Saskatoon. It's being said out there quite frequently now that buildings will be assessed.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Is the hon. member talking about bona fide farmers who farm and not a farmer who has five acres of land and wants to . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Bona fide farmers.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — In the case of the bona fide farmers I can assure the hon. member that there has been no consideration. There is the problem of people with small holdings (now that is a separate issue), who purport to be somehow exempt from

assessment. They want to be assessed just for the land because they have five acres of land and claim to be farmers. In that area we have a little bit of difficulty.

MR. KATZMAN: — No, I'm referring to the bona fide farmer whose net income from the farm is more than his other income from all other sources.

MR. HARDY: — I have one question. The member for Rosthern raised this point. I know in my community we've had a lot of problems defining a bona fide farmer. Since you brought it forward, I'd like to ask you this: what is a bona fide farmer?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — I don't think there is a simple definition of a bona fide farmer. There is the problem of the small holdings as the hon. member is aware. I know the Department of Rural Affairs has been looking into that question, and I know that SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) has been involved because there are peculiar problems in that area. I don't have a definition of a bona fide farmer. Perhaps you should ask the Minister of Agriculture whether he can give you an answer or the Minister of Rural Affairs.

MR. HARDY: — I was asking for assessment purposes only. I notice that a lot of the towns are being reassessed, and the rural communities. Could you tell me how many are complete and how many are left?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Vice-Chairman, the whole question of reassessment is an ongoing process, as the hon. member is perhaps aware. We will be expecting to get the urban reassessment completed in 1984 and for the information of the hon. member, the cities of Regina and Saskatoon do their own assessment and reassessment. In the case of the rural, we are expecting to complete the reassessment by 1990.

MR. SWAN: — Are you dealing with rural assessment as well under this subvote?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Yes.

MR. SWAN: — Okay. Can you tell me what you are going to do in rural Saskatchewan when one R.M. is reassessed and the next three or four around haven't been reached yet? The education budget is established and it goes across the piece; every R.M. is established at the same mill rate, education-wise. Are you going to have a revised assessment, or are you going to charge them for three or four years at a higher rate in one municipality?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Vice-Chairman, in that case the old value is used until all the reassessments are done.

MR. SWAN: — Have you advised the rural municipalities that is the route to go? Because they are certainly saying in my area that they were going to use the new assessment and there has been a lot of fuss raised by the farm people.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — There was some misinformation, but my officials tell me they are automatically indexed to the old level.

MR. HARDY: — Just to clarify that, are you saying that where there are two or three municipalities in one school unit, if one is reassessed, it waits until all the other municipalities are assessed within that unit? In other words, it's controlled by the unit board. Is that what you are saying.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Vice-Chairman, for education purposes we provide them with the information, not the local school unit.

MR. HARDY: — I don't really understand what you mean. Are you saying that a rural municipality would have to make up two sets of assessments each time, one for the school and one for the rural municipality, if it is in a new assessment area?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Vice-Chairman, if there is a municipality where there has been a reassessment, and it is in a particular school unit, and for education purposes we have a system for that school unit. Until all are completed they have the old rate that applies to the whole school unit. When it's completed, the municipalities will have the new assessment rate for the total school unit come into effect all at the same time to prevent the kind of situation that the hon. member just mentioned previously.

Item 5 agreed.

Item 6

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. minister, is there any further fund that goes for this purpose under any other vote? I'm concerned that three staff bodies plus \$78,000 does not perhaps give us the protection we need with all the hazardous chemicals being transported around this province.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Vice-Chairman, in the case of hazardous materials (as the hon. member perhaps knows), the Department of the Environment is involved. Our job is one of co-ordination and assistance, but local municipalities certainly have their emergency measures organizations. We help to sponsor seminars, provide certain information and the necessary co-ordination. For the information of the member, the Department of Health has a special unit set up as an emergency hospital. They have people who are trained and able to provide services. I forget how many. There are several emergency hospitals that the Department of Health manages, administers and can put into operation.

MR. KATZMAN: — There have been two train derailments within my constituency. One of them had chemical cars which, fortunately, were empty. The other was strictly grain cars. I understand from the officials who were at the second wreck that it took a long time to find out if there were chemicals in the cars and, if so, what procedure to follow. The volunteer firemen were, of course, on the scene and did the best they could. They found it was very difficult to get information. Fortunately, the city of Saskatoon firemen were handy and slipped out and gave them directions because they were better trained. My concern is that they had nowhere to go for quick information. You say the Department of the Environment is responsible. The minister for the Department of the Environment passed it to you when I asked the question in the House. That is why I'm waiting to talk to you on this estimate.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, with regard to overall emergency measures I don't know, precisely, what questions were asked of the Minister of the Environment. In cases of chemical spills, they have people who are much more knowledgeable than ours. I can tell the hon. member, for example, that last year through EMO (emergency measures organization), we helped sponsor two seminars in this particular area. We brought in knowledgeable people to help and advise the local government authorities

— people like firemen, policemen, and so on.

We are also, at the present time, having a complete review (in fact we have a consultant doing a study) of our capacity and what may be needed. I can tell the hon. member that there was a meeting scheduled for May 8, 1981, in Ottawa, called for by the House Leader, Mr. Pinard. There was an invitation to all the ministers who have responsibilities for emergency measures.

The question of chemical spills, I think, is on the minds of everyone. There is no simple solution to that question and the question of transportation of these chemicals. What is beginning to develop is a national information exchange, particularly relating to the transportation of hazardous materials.

I think it would be dangerous for, say, one province to establish one set of rules and another province another set of rules, because the people who are responsible, whether it is the railways or the truckers, wouldn't know whether they were coming or going. So, things are happening at the national level with a view to try to co-ordinate. We have hired a consultant for our own study to see what we should be doing.

We can also tell a pretty good story in Saskatchewan. While we do not have a big staff, over the years we have developed with municipalities a fairly effective system. All that one has to do is look at the Swift Current situation when we had that terrible accident where some 20 young men were killed. People were on the scene - the police and firemen. Our own people were there helping and advising. Then last year just before Christmas, in the case of the terrible fire in Moose Jaw, I can tell the hon. member that the Moose Jaw council and their people deserve a great deal of commendation. As well, they were appreciative of the assistance which our department provided with respect to that particular fire.

MR. KATZMAN: — I just have one more question on this. I assume you are referring to the national standards of signing and so forth, which I understand are coming into effect on July 1, or this summer anyway. A national code for all symbols will be the same across Canada for signalling dangerous chemicals, and so forth. That is a federal suggestion. I assume we are accepting that proposal.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — I understand the highway traffic board is dealing with that. I think they have endorsed the idea. It is not our department.

MR. KATZMAN: — That is for signals for dangerous chemicals which are being transported, and the sign which tells you what kind of chemical you are handling. Is that highways or environment? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, it is also on railroad cars and everything.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, as I understand it, it is a federal responsibility. Our liaison is the Saskatchewan Highway Traffic Board for the sign portion of it.

MR. KATZMAN: — When the signs come out, will your people take over and send to all local fire departments and emergency measures organizations the symbol which means this or that, or will the highways people do it?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, for the information of the hon. member, there are really three agencies in that area which are involved. We are involved, and the Department of the Environment and the highway traffic board are involved. I am not

sure at the moment who is going to be responsible for the distribution of signs. My feeling is that it will probably be the highway traffic board. It is responsible for the other signs which appear on highways and so on. But I could check that out in more detail. We don't think we will be distributing the signs.

MR. KATZMAN: — Are you responsible for passing out the information to emergency measures organizations on what each sign means?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — We run the seminars and the other agencies get involved.

MR. PREBBLE: — I just want to make a couple of brief comments on this estimate. They are primarily concerns I have about representation which I feel we need to make to the federal government in the area of emergency measures. Also, it is one point which I think we need to look at in terms of provincial policy.

I have two concerns. One is similar to the concern raised by the hon. member for Rosthern. I'm also in a constituency where large numbers of chemicals are being transported every day, particularly through Alberta to the tar sands, and are passing very, very close to large numbers of homes. I'm concerned, Mr. Chairman, about that fact. First of all some level of government should establish guidelines which will restrict apartment development and high-rise development along railway tracks. In the event of a serious chemical accident along a railway, evacuation would be extremely difficult from these apartments and highrises. I think they are ill-placed when they are located next to a railway track.

Mr. Chairman, we ought to make representation to Ottawa to reduce the speed at which trains travel through our cities. I think something which increases the risk of an accident in the cities is that often trains are travelling too quickly. I think speed restrictions ought to be placed on them.

Finally, I'd like to urge the minister to make representation to the federal government with respect to the need to improve the frequency of inspections along the rail lines. I think that one of the primary causes of accidents along our railways is the fact that track inspections have been poor. The number of staff allocated to inspect tracks has been consistently decreased by the railroad companies over the years. There is certainly no excuse for this on the part of the CNR. And similarly I think the federal government needs to apply pressure to the CPR to improve the frequency of inspections and the number of inspectors.

I also want to raise with the minister a point that I have mentioned before. I think it would be very advisable for the provincial government to establish a special team in the province, working out of either the EMO or the Department of the Environment, that is especially equipped to handle chemical emergencies and can quickly fly to the scene of a chemical emergency to provide back-up support and expertise. I think this would greatly improve our ability to assure local municipalities that assistance is available in the event of a crisis.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I want to raise a matter which I have not heard discussed in this House for many years. Certainly I don't hear it being discussed often in public. I raise it really for that reason. It is the preparation of this province or any province in the event of a nuclear war. I think that probably the reason we don't talk about this is because none of us want to think about it, and for good reason. I think it is widely held that the kind of devastation that would take place in the event of a nuclear war would be so horrendous

that in the end it perhaps little matters. There is no winning side and no matter where you live you are going to be dramatically affected. But, I think, Mr. Chairman, this should not take away from the need for the provinces and the federal government, particularly the federal government, and also our provincial EMOs to direct more attention to this matter than has been done in the past.

One of the reasons I say that is that in the event of a major strike either in the province or directly to the south of us, the preparation of people in Saskatchewan would have a great deal to do with the likelihood of large numbers of people surviving or not.

The point I want to make is that members of the House will know that there are at least five major nuclear arsenals located within 75 miles of the Saskatchewan border in the United States. And one of the questions that arises is what the implications would be of a strike on one of these arsenals. Obviously, they would be very serious. The health implications and the radiation exposure for the Saskatchewan public would, in part, depend on the actions that the Saskatchewan public would take in the half-hour to an hour after the accident occurs. The winds usually blow in the direction of Saskatchewan from the U.S., as was demonstrated after the eruptions at Mount St. Helens last year. My concern is that Saskatchewan residents know a little more about what to do in the event of such a disaster taking place than they presently do.

For instance, I'm not aware that the federal government has pointed out to people recently where the shelters are for safekeeping in the event of such an emergency. None of these shelters are designated. I know that the public in Saskatoon is generally not aware of where these shelters are located. It's well-known that people in trailer courts and in apartments, who are a large portion of my constituency, would not be able to stay in the trailer courts or apartments in the event of such an accident. And yet there is no public designation of shelters despite the fact that they've been identified.

In the same way, while we do not want to alarm the public, there is room for a very low-key educational program to bring to the attention of people things that they ought to have on hand in the event of such an emergency. For instance, one of the basic things that everyone should have is a battery radio in their house. Yet I venture that 40 or 50 per cent of the people in Saskatoon may not have a battery-operated radio in their home. That's a basic requirement in the event of any kind of an emergency along these lines.

Similarly, Mr. Chairman, I am concerned that the federal government has done nothing to stockpile food in the province in the event of such an emergency.

Now, we naturally don't want to spend a lot of time thinking about such a gloomy subject, but I think that the federal government, particularly, should be pressured to do a little more than it's doing now with respect to making the public aware of the steps which need to be taken in the event of such an emergency arising. In case we think that this is a risk that's unlikely to occur, we should just remember that there were at least two (if not three) serious computer errors in the last year on the part of the United States' computer system that's tied into their nuclear weapons program. At least on two occasions, the United States' computer system informed the U.S. defences that a nuclear missile had been launched by the Soviet Union, and the United States was in fact prepared to launch such a missile. So I think, Mr. Chairman . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — State your point of order.

MR. THATCHER: — My point of order is very simple and very relevant. I'm sure that all the member's comments are very worth while in the proper medium. But I would respectfully suggest to you that the item we're supposedly dealing with at this point in time has not a great deal of relevance to what NORAD is doing or what Soviet missiles are doing. Now, there may be an analogy that you can find, Mr. Chairman, but it's escaping me and I think it's escaping everybody in the Assembly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Well, I don't agree with the hon. member for Thunder Creek. I think that under item 6, emergency measures organization, the hon. member would have a chance to comment on possible things that might happen in that area. So I think he's in order.

MR. PREBBLE: — I just want to urge the minister first of all to look at what the emergency measures organization provincially might be able to do with regard to the points I've made, such as designating shelters within the province so that the public is aware of where they're located, and, equally important, to press the federal government to do a little more in this area because I think that much of the responsibility here is the federal government's. I believe that they're not living up to the expectations that the Saskatchewan public ought to have in this regard. Thank you very much.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, I don't know exactly where to begin to try to reply to the hon. member. I'm not sure whether it was a question or a statement of his belief. I will agree with the hon. member that the question of nuclear war is a matter which should be of great concern to all of us and I would hope that all nations of the world through the United Nations would take measures to prevent a nuclear holocaust. I can honestly tell the hon. member that the Department of Urban Affairs has not considered, nor have we recommended to government as a priority item, the building of nuclear bomb shelters. I can tell the hon. member that there is a conference being called in Ottawa on June 5 where this matter will be considered. It's an item that I think is properly within the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada. Hopefully, out of the meeting we'll be able to find out what Ottawa has in mind. With respect to the Government of Saskatchewan, up until now we certainly have not turned our minds to the possibility of nuclear war and the kind of shelters and the kind of measures that we would be taking to try to protect, as much as possible, our population.

With respect to the rail accident, transporting hazardous materials, the matter of not building apartment homes close to the rail lines, I will tell the hon. member that what we, in Regina, have been trying to wrestle with in the last few years is the relocation of the rail lines through the cities. I think that is, perhaps, the most effective measure that could be taken to prevent possible rail accidents involving the transportation of hazardous materials.

I think in the matter of zoning, particularly in our big cities for residential purposes, local governments have a responsibility and I think they are turning their minds to it. We can advise and assist but local governments equally have a responsibility to plan their residential areas in such a way that they will not be close to the rail lines.

Can one ever be safe? Transportation vehicles move through various parts of the city and could create an accident of major proportions, whether it be from hazardous

chemicals or even fuel. An oil tanker could explode and cause tremendous damage.

MR. PREBBLE: — I just wanted to clarify one point, and that is: it is not the construction of shelters that I am advocating, but the fact that they have already been identified by federal and provincial officials as potential locations. They are not publicly labelled and no one would know where to go. In some cases, not even the owners of these facilities are aware that their facilities have been tentatively designated. I think that ought to be information that the public should be aware of.

Item 6 agreed.

Item 7

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Mr. Minister, would you prefer that I ask water questions on this item or back on item 1? Which would you prefer? Is it in place here? Have you any plans to assist the city in this carbon filter it is installing at Buffalo Pound? Was there any discussion between the city and the cabinet at all in assisting in this carbon filter? I remember asking this question in the House about a year ago? You said you hadn't had a request. Have you had a request from the city for assistance?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes, we have had the request from the cities of Moose Jaw and Regina to assist in the financing of the proposed charcoal filtration plant. At this stage we have not made a decision. I can assure the hon. member that the matter is receiving active consideration and a very thorough review. Also, our officials are working with the two cities, and I would hope that in the near future our answer will be given.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Did your department agree that this carbon filter might help with the odor and taste?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, we have not reached a final and firm conclusion. We are getting the best possible information to help us reach that conclusion. I can tell the hon. member that I have had representations from both sides from knowledgeable people. There is a difference on the matter of whether that would be an effective system and whether that is the solution. Certainly, the two cities have concluded that's the best technology available. We are reviewing that with the people who gave them that information and other people, so we can also help in that decision. This is a large expenditure, as the hon. member knows. By the time the filtration unit is constructed, we are talking \$15 million to \$18 million, and one would want to make sure with that kind of expenditure, that it's going to be an effective system. We have not reached the final conclusion, but we're giving the matter careful consideration.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — I agree, Mr. Minister, that's a lot of money, \$15 million to \$16 million. But are you trying to make the decision in your department whether this is a good move, are you leaving it up to the city officials to decide, or are you trying to decide for them? I just didn't understand your answer. Who's making that decision? Are you going to be satisfied when the city has made the decision to make this move? Are you satisfied that they are right, or are you doing further research?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, my information is that the cities have made the decision to proceed with the designing of the plant. In the case of our involvement and determination of whether we will assist the cities financially, we are reviewing the request and the technology to be certain. The cities felt that they have to make some

decisions, but I can tell the hon. member that both the Department of the Environment and the Department of Urban Affairs are working very closely with the two cities. I think that there was a time when we had some difference, not on the problem of providing good water for the cities of Regina and Moose Jaw, but in the processes that we started in assessing the situation. But I can assure the hon. member that we are working together, and I am hoping that in the near future we will get all the information together which would help us make the best decision.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Well, I would suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that if the decision of the city of Regina is that this is the move to make, this isn't going to help at all to improve the drinking water in the city of Regina which, I am sure you'll agree with me, has to be about the poorest drinking water of any major city in the whole of Canada. That statistic has already come out. Those figures have come out. Now, Mr. Minister, let's say that the cities of Regina and Moose Jaw and intervening towns go ahead with this carbon filter as planned. Why would you just not jump right in with some money to help and not even consider it? Because \$5 million to \$10 million, even a third or a half to assist Regina to improve this water, would be only a small part. We know that this carbon filter is not going to improve the quality of water; it's going to mainly improve the taste and odor. But that would be a great move to do something so that people can drink this stuff. We know that it's at its best now, but you know what is going to happen in June or July of this year as there has been no run-off. People pretty nearly panicked in Regina last year.

So I say you people, as a government, should be taking a really good look at assisting. This year the Buffalo Pound water source supplies approximately one-third of the population of the province of Saskatchewan including Moose Jaw, Regina, the air force base and intervening towns. I don't think you should be studying too long. The cities have made their moves. Get in there with some bucks. Goodness knows this government squanders enough millions of dollars, you can surely come up with a few million dollars to help the taxpayers in these cities, especially after the budget came down. People are very disappointed with their taxes having to go up and they are going to have to go up more to cover the water. So you can surely move in there and help.

I think the member for Regina South wants to ask a few questions on this.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, I can assure the hon. member that it is a matter of concern not only to me and my colleagues who are representing Regina constituencies, but also to my colleagues in cabinet. I want to advise the hon. member that the matter of cost sharing of the so-called charcoal filtration plant has come to us very recently. Now, it's not an item that we have had to consider for a long period of time. I think that the hon. member probably would scold me if I said that we are going to help out.

Then the next question is: what kind of an assessment did you make and did you assure yourself that's going to be an effective system? Now, Mr. Chairman, I want to make sure that the system recommended is going to be an effective system; it's a double-check. The cities have concluded that is the answer; we want to double-check whether it is going to be the answer and then we're going to decide the extent of our financial assistance to the cities of Regina and Moose Jaw.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — I have another question, Mr. Minister. I asked the Minister of Environment and he said it wasn't his responsibility; you might remember that evening when we had that little discussion. Mr. Minister, it was about the request I had from the people in the upper Qu'Appelle where the water is taken from Buffalo Pound. I

understand from these people that it comes from a dead spot in the lake. I would like you to check into this. They say that if you take the intake from Buffalo Pound, about two miles further down there is good clear water. The cattle are drinking good clear water. Close to where the water is coming from is where the dogs died last year from drinking water in that area. I think it is just common sense that you take a good look because people who live in the area are the ranchers who knew the area before the water was ever there and they say that the intake is sucking right off the bottom of the lake, which is a place where there's absolutely no moving water. Would you look and see if these people are right?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the cities have certainly looked into about moving the intake. Based on their assessment and the advice they have, they have concluded that would not affect substantially the quality of the water. This is what I am told. Our officials have checked with the cities and this is the information they give us.

MR. LANE: — Were you aware of the allegations about the dogs dying? Was it in that particular area? Is that why you checked the intakes?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, we are aware of the allegations; we have read them as well. My information from the officials is that the cities have studied the matter. They have had technical people look into the situation, including the prospect of damming a particular area to take the water from a different point. They have concluded that it would not substantially improve the quality of water. That is why they have reached the conclusion that the new filtration plant is the solution.

MR. LANE: — I really don't think the government opposite is too concerned about Regina water. I say that by looking at the PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl) spill that was covered up by the Department of the Environment for a couple of years. I look at the fact that it required the two cities to take rather dramatic and expensive action before the government opposite decided to react. What is the government opposite's reaction? "Well, we don't think you should do that. We are not satisfied with the proposal you have come up with."

If ever there were a need for a justifiable expenditure from the heritage fund, it is for a long-term solution to the water supply in the cities of Regina and Moose Jaw. The hon. members opposite are concerned about it. I wouldn't want to be hit with the stuff either, much less drink it; although we are forced into it. The fact is that it is terrible water. One of these days the people of Regina are going to wake up (they are asleep at the switch) to the fact that they have put up with it for so long. Any other city in Canada that had water like Regina would have been raising absolute hell years ago. I think the people of Regina have been asleep at the switch on the water, and it is time they started to get angry. It is not necessary that they put up with that poor water in the two cities. I would have hoped that years ago the Department of the Environment and the Department of Urban Affairs would have had a combined task force between the city and the government looking specifically at the problem of the supply of drinking water for Regina and Moose Jaw. It hasn't been done.

You sit back because you know the people of Regina are sitting around with their heads in the sand prepared to take lousy water and live with it as a fact of life. I suggest that the government opposite doesn't care. I just read the newsletter. I may be one of the few who read it. The member for Regina Lakeview doesn't even mention the lousy water in

Regina. He doesn't think it is worthy of consideration. He doesn't want any action taken. The only one who made any mention of it, occasionally (and he didn't do much when he was in the position) was the former mayor. But the government opposite is taking the people of Regina for granted when it comes to water.

I suggest a task force between the government and the cities of Regina and Moose Jaw, funded by the provincial government, to immediately study the sole question of an adequate and decent water supply for the cities of Regina and Moose Jaw, that it be implemented absolutely immediately, and report back within a couple of months so action can be taken. I suggest as well that the government opposite be prepared to commit significant funds out of the heritage fund for a pipeline (if that's the decision) or whatever it takes to supply decent drinking water to the two cities.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, perhaps if the people want to have their meetings out here, they could move to the back so that I can try to answer the question that the hon. member for Qu'Appelle raised.

I might inform the hon. member that a year ago now (it was in April of 1980), I met with the mayors of Regina and Moose Jaw and my colleague the Minister of the Environment. They asked for a meeting for us to discuss and consider the whole matter of the quality and quantity of water in the cities of Regina and Moose Jaw. At that meeting we agreed to have a committee established jointly between the two cities and the two departments to come up with an idea of how we ought to proceed with the assessment of both the short-term and long-term water needs in Regina.

That committee reported to us (the two departments and the two cities) and recommended a structure of a technical committee to undertake an assessment of the water quality and quantity on a short-term and a long-term basis. We agreed to establish, following that meeting, the technical committee which is made up of a person from Moose Jaw, Regina, the Department of the Environment and the Department of Urban Affairs. We also included the federal government and the PFRA (Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration). That technical committee was established. We were asked to fund 50 per cent of the cost of the work of the committee, which we agreed to. We also agreed to establish a policy advisory committee to be representative of the deputy ministers of the two departments and the city managers of the two cities. That was all in process and established in December of 1980.

There is a report and I'd be happy to provide the hon. member with it. One of the conditions that we agreed to concerned the fact that in the meantime both cities had their own technical studies. We agreed that any reports that Regina or Moose Jaw had, or were receiving, should be referred to that technical committee composed of the five agencies. That was in process. In fact, I can tell the hon. members that there were some speculations or guesstimates that a filtration plant, as was being talked about (the charcoal filtration plant), would only cost in the neighborhood of \$2 million. Those were the initial figures that were being bandied about.

My understanding is that the cities were really surprised when they received the consultant's report and the figure was up to \$12 million, as I recall it. Shortly after the first of the year, before the technical committee even had a chance to start doing any work and the policy committees had not met, there was an announcement that the cities were proceeding with building or commissioning the construction of a charcoal filtration plant without even going through the meeting of the technical committee and the policy committee that we agreed to.

This was an agreement. I'll show the hon. member the report. That took me a bit by surprise and I said so publicly. Now, we had a couple of meetings since then and I want to assure the hon. member and this legislature that we are deeply concerned about the quality as well as the quantity of water. In Regina for the next 10 years our problem isn't the quantity, it's the quality. In Moose Jaw, it is both quality and quantity even on a short-term basis. In the establishment of the committees and the report that we received, we also said there should be a two-phase study - short-term meaning the supply of water up until 1990, and the long-term study of supply of adequate water for both cities beyond 1990. Now, those were the processes we agreed to. We have worked with the two cities. We are continuing to work with the cities. I want to assure the hon. member that it is a matter of serious concern to our governments, as I know it is a matter of serious concern to our cities.

MR. HARDY: — I'd just like to ask a few questions on sewage systems within the hamlets and villages and small towns. I understand that there is a grant system and of that grant system, I see that very little was used last year. I just wonder if your department has considered increasing the amount of grants to these small communities of 200 or 300 or less. They are having many problems financing capital expenditures. Would you consider additional assistance through grants to help these smaller communities put in sewage systems?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, that issue is addressed in subvote 12 on the next page. The answer is yes, we are increasing the funding this year by 50 per cent, from \$2 million to \$3 million to assist smaller communities. That amount does not apply to the cities. I wonder, before we rise, whether we can agree on item 7, urban development?

Item 7 agreed.

Item 8

MR. LANE: — I think we'd agree on item 8 if you supplied those reports in the information that I asked for earlier about regional planning.

Item 8 agreed.

Item 9

MR. LANE: — What is that particular branch doing now?

HON. MR. SMISHEK:— Mr. Speaker, the social planning secretariat is the agency that deals with co-ordination of government activities and assistance and development of programs to assist native people. We have a small staff at the present time. I believe our staff is six. We are looking at a staff of nine. It is the central co-ordinating agency in the development of programs for the urban native people of Saskatchewan.

MR. LANE: — Would you be prepared to table all studies that particular branch has done in the last year with regard to problems and how it prioritizes the problems?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Chairman, there have been some internal studies. The answer is that we do not table the internal papers and documents that have been submitted. Those documents, studies and reports that are made, which are available to the public, would be tabled. I will examine, Mr. Chairman, those reports that are public.

As for providing the hon. member with a copy of those reports that are internal, certainly as he knows, the rule does not . . .

MR. LANE: — Well, I don't want to get off the subvote then until you . . . Please supply me with the names of the personnel on the committee or on the secretariat, any and all grants made, all consultants hired and the amounts paid, and if an agreement was made with consultants or outside agencies of any kind and copies of those agreements. I'd like to know how they're approaching the problems, what their priorities are and, basically, an outline of where they're going. That's what I'd like to have and I'd like you to bring that information back. I would prefer not to vote on this at this time. I'll give you time to bring them back.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:04 p.m.