

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
First Session — Twentieth Legislature

Tuesday, November 23, 1982.

EVENING SESSION

MOTIONS

Resolution No. 4 – Student Employment Program (continued)

MR. WEIMAN: – Mr. Speaker, again it's an honor and a privilege to be able to speak in this House. I realize that it's an infrequent occurrence, but that is mainly due to the numbers that we have here, and I am sure it will become more infrequent in the future as we gain another member in the North very shortly.

Before I begin my comments I would like to make some certain assumptions in clarification of terminology in the resolution. Not knowing the thoughts of the hon. member for Regina Elphinstone, whose absence I note, I can only surmise what types of thoughts he had in his head when he made the resolution or came to basic assumptions. If I may read the resolution and stop halfway through, the resolution reads:

That the Government of Saskatchewan act immediately to implement a comprehensive student employment program . . .

If the hon. member whose absence is noted meant by the word "immediately" the way that our government acted upon the elimination of the gas tax upon forming government, then I would have to agree with him with the word "immediately." If he was asking what the word "immediately" meant and was making reference to the mortgage interest reduction plan which we initiated immediately during the first sitting this summer, then I have to be in agreement with him also.

As to the word "comprehensive," because it seems to be pivotal in the resolution moved by the member for Regina Elphinstone, if the hon. absent member was meaning to say by the word "comprehensive" a program that would involve all the varied participants in a democratic way that is well thought out and mutually beneficial to the people of this province, I think even the hon. members on this side of the House and the hon. members to your side would also be in total agreement.

It is when I come to the second half of the resolution that I am disappointed with the phraseology used by the hon. member for Regina Elphinstone – the hon. absent member for Regina Elphinstone. Again, I would like to make reference to the actual words of the resolution:

That the Government of Saskatchewan act immediately to implement a comprehensive student employment program in Saskatchewan, providing full-time summer jobs for Saskatchewan high schools . . .

I wasn't under the impression that Saskatchewan high schools needed jobs. I suppose then that it must be typographical error.

As well, if you will read the resolution, hon. member opposite, you will see that it says "Saskatchewan high schools." As for the phraseology "seeking employment," surely one doesn't encourage or create jobs for those people who are not seeking

employment, I was a little disappointed, at the stature of the hon. member, that he would use such ambiguous phraseology. Contrary to past practices, this government does not intend to create jobs for people not seeking employment, that is (and I want to clarify): we are not here as a government to create government positions to perpetuate government existence. The preference of this government and the vast majority of the people who elected us and concurred in our thinking and our plans is that we create a proper atmosphere in this province that will build confidence in the private sector – an environment that motivates job creation.

The absent hon. member for Regina Elphinstone also made reference to this past summer's employment for students. Traditional jobs, he mentioned, were not there – traditional jobs that are labor intensive in the area, particularly, of construction – jobs that would have been there, I might point out, had not settlements this past summer been hampered by a piece of legislation that was passed by the previous government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. WEIMAN: – That piece of legislation that I allude to is formally known as The Construction Industry Labor Relations Act commonly known as Bill 88. Not only have the previous government and the members in the opposition, and particularly the leader of that party who is absent this evening, alienated the students who could have found jobs this summer had not that bill been implemented but they have also alienated the fine union workers of our province, so much so that those fine workers of this province, this past summer, picketed and demonstrated in the Legislative Assembly. They did not picket this government that stands here before you today. They picketed and demonstrated against the previous government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. WEIMAN: – I'm dismayed totally, particularly coming from the constituency of Fairview, which is in the west end of Saskatoon, a constituency that embraces a great number of these very people that we saw here this past summer. I was astounded when I found out the identity of that deputy minister, that deputy minister who was responsible for, and drafted, Bill 88 – that infamous bill.

I can assume the people of Saskatchewan, and particularly the four members of the opposition who are present, but I am sure they will pass on my comments to the Leader of the Opposition who is absent this evening, I can assure the people of Saskatchewan that we as a government will not act as rashly and as irresponsibly when we deal with our job-creation program.

The key words, and I want to remind you of statements that I have used previously, “are well thought-out programs,” and programs that are mutually “beneficial to the people of this province.”

When I first became elected, I heard another terminology bandied about: the terminology of left/right. There are those people who are on the left and have a certain type of mentality, a certain type of philosophy. And then there are those who are right. Being right not only makes me proud, but gives me a very warm feeling, because the word “right” has the connotation of correctness. The people of Saskatchewan expect correctness in the dealing of this government, and we shall meet that goal.

I am sure that the hon. members opposite will pass on my comments to the original hon.

member who is not there who brought forth this resolution, when he asks for immediacy and comprehensiveness in a program to create jobs. I want to remind that absent member of a ministerial statement that was made yesterday by the Hon. Paul Schoenhals in this very House November 22, and I quote to you:

I wish to take this opportunity to inform the legislature of another step this government has taken to fight against unemployment. I will be striking a committee comprised of officials representing the Department of Culture and Youth, the Department of Labor, the Department of Industry and Commerce, and the Department of Government Services. The purpose of this committee will be to develop, in consultation (a rarity in this province) with individuals (a rarity in this province) and groups such as the Premier's youth advisory council, a student employment program for the summer of 1983.

In order to accomplish this task the committee will seek input from employer groups, such as provincial government departments and agencies, municipal governments, and the never thought of and most important private sector.

Seeing that the resolution put forward by that hon. absent member of the opposition is redundant in the light of yesterday's ministerial statement, I move an amendment to the motion, seconded by the hon. member for Humboldt:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after "That" where it appears in the first line, and substitute therefor:

this Assembly commend the Government of Saskatchewan for its performance in identifying full-time summer jobs for Saskatchewan high school students and university students seeking employment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DOMOTOR: – Mr. Speaker, I concur with the amendment from my colleague for Saskatoon Fairview, and I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: – The member has asked for leave to adjourn debate. Is leave granted?

AN HON. MEMBER: – No.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Agreed, agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: – Debate continues.

AN HON. MEMBER: – What do you mean that debate continues? Everybody agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: – No. He said no.

AN HON. MEMBER: – Who said no?

MR. SPEAKER: – Ask him.

HON. MR. BERTSON: – Well, Mr. Speaker, if the debate continues, I would like to inject a few words into this debate. And since we have now opened the debate up again and since I've added so much to it already, I would now beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Resolution No. 13 – Royalties and Taxes on Energy

MR. GERICH: – In addressing the motion, Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that we, the Saskatchewan government, strongly voice our concerns to the federal government. The agriculture sector in this province is the single most important industry and factor that relates to Saskatchewan wealth and growth. When the agricultural sector is in good economic times – by this I mean the crops are good, grain and cattle markets are bullish, and we're getting a fair return for the products we sell – the people in the province of Saskatchewan benefit.

Mr. Speaker, I said when the agricultural sector is in good economic times. We are not in that position today. Today the agriculture sector, the farmer and rancher, is in the most depressed economic slump that it has ever been in in depression years. The federal government is not doing anything to help this economic slump. In fact, they readily raised the energy royalties and taxes on energy fuel to bring in more revenue to fund their whims and wishes in purchasing Petro-Can and Petrofina. Through taxation such as this, they are directly hurting the agricultural industry in Saskatchewan. They are taxing the very people that produce the food. How long can the food producer be overtaxed for his efficiency and productivity?

Mr. Speaker, the energy cost to the agricultural industry is a major concern to the producers. It is imperative that the federal tax be removed or lowered on farm-use fuel. That will greatly help the agricultural sector.

Mr. Speaker, the agricultural cost to the agricultural industry is a major concern to the producers. It is imperative that the federal tax be removed or lowered on farm-use fuel. That will greatly help the agricultural sector.

Mr. Speaker, the agricultural sector's real income in 1982 will drop by 28 per cent by 1982. Only good yields and high deliveries of grain will keep the incomes from falling short. The farm prices for grains dropped below the cost of production late in 1981 and remained there for most of 1982. When the income for 1982 is adjusted for inflation, farmers will earn only slightly more than they did in 1971, the lowest year of earning in the last decade.

Mr. Speaker, for the 1982 calendar year, the gross income of the agricultural sector prairie farmers will be down \$0.068 billion while costs are up to \$0.64 billion. Therefore, we realize a net income for 1982 will be down \$0.708 billion as compared to 1981. Taking inflation into account, farm income in 1982 in deflated dollars was \$0.678 billion. That was \$0.337 billion down from 1981 and, as mentioned, the lowest income in deflated dollars since 1971.

Compare the purchasing power of today's dollars to the deflated dollar. What a farmer could buy for 37 cents in 1971, he buys for \$1 in 1982. Mr. Speaker, I will give you some fuel cost figures comparing the year 1973 to 1982. In 1973, for the price of one bushel of wheat you could purchase 18.4 gallons of diesel fuel. In 1982, for the price of one bushel of wheat you can only purchase 2.4 gallons of diesel fuel. Mr. Speaker, as you can see, the cost input of inflation in the energy field is truly hurting the agricultural sector.

I would like to inform the Legislative Assembly of the farm fuel used in Saskatchewan

for November 1, 1980 to November 1, 1981, as given by the farm credit corporation agricultural statistics. Again I say farm fuel: 140,800,00 gallons of purple diesel, 107 million gallons of purple gasoline were used in the production of food for the consumer. On the 140,800,000 gallons of diesel fuel with the 54.8 cents per gallon federal tax removed from farm fuel, it would put \$77,158,400 back in the farmer's pocket. On the 107 million gallons of purple gasoline, with 54.8 cents per gallon federal tax, it would put \$58,636,000 back in to the farmers' pockets. The total of the two fuels is \$135,000,794. I'm sure the farming sector can use and put this money to good use. This money would stay in Saskatchewan, be spent in our local towns and districts, and in keeping the money here a multiplier effect would result stimulating the agricultural economy.

Mr. Speaker, more machinery would be sold, Saskatchewan-built machinery. Set-up crews would have jobs, mechanics would be working, the repairs would be sold creating more jobs in the agricultural sector. Fertilizers would be on the move and sell. Irrigation sales would improve. The cost of transporting grain to market would also be cheaper. Less cost to the farmers would be less cost to the consumer. The spinoff and multiplier principles that relate to a buoyant economic state would show in everyone's daily life in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that the Saskatchewan government urges the Government of Canada to lower royalties and taxes on energy to provide a reasonable cost structure to the producers of the food in Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. DOMOTOR: – Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague on urging the federal government to lower royalties and taxes on energy for producers of food. It is essential to that the cost of energy be reduced to our farmers, since over recent years this has not only increased production costs, forcing farmers into cost-price squeeze, but has also increased costs to the consumer and the general public. A reduction in costs to the producer can result in more productivity throughout the whole economy. If the Government of Canada would follow our government's lead with respect to the drop in the tax on fuel and royalty reduction, which is help investor confidence, then Canada's economy would also benefit and a resurgence in investment could be initiated.

Since the consumer in Canada is enjoying a reasonable price for food (Canadian per capita spending on food is one of the cheapest in the world), then it is only logical that the producers of this food should be able to have a reduction in the price of their fuel by having the federal government lower its taxes. This tax rate would allow farmers that extra cash that is so desperately needed now when the price of grain is relatively low compared to a few years ago.

I would like to refer to the "Farm Energy Management Program" of March 1982, published by the Saskatchewan Research Council. On page 20 it has energy price forecasts. From table 2(3), forecast fuel and electricity prices for 1986 were exemplified with average 1981 prices used for comparison. Diesel fuel was running approximately 28 cents per litre, and in 1986 the forecast made was that it would amount to 64 cents per litre, an increase of 18 per cent average annual increase. At 64 per cents per litre this would amount to approximately \$2.88 per gallon.

Grain News has also forecast, for 1986, amounts to approximately \$2.98 per gallon for

diesel. This kind of cost the farmer cannot absorb. These costs contribute to a large percentage of his input costs. There is also a lobby among farm organizations for a tax rebate from the federal government, particularly on natural gas used in fertilizer production. I refer you to page 36 in *Grain News*, May 1982, for reference. We cannot expect producers to pay higher energy costs when their produce that they sell is on the down side. On page 37 on a graph in figure 2 in *Grain News*, the forecast energy costs on a 1,280-acre grain farm in southeastern Saskatchewan would be \$25,575 in 1986 compared to \$10,420 in 1980. This energy cost includes fertilizer, gasoline, diesel and electricity.

Part of the problem, Mr. Speaker, is that the federal government has become too involved in its national energy program and it cannot see the needs of its own citizens. The energy program discouraged investments and chased some of the risk-takers out of the market and has left us with limited explorations. To obtain more money, the federal government has continued on a royalty tax and increased costs to attempt to bail out such companies as Dome, Petro-Canada and other companies at the taxpayers' expense. This has resulted in larger deficits and has left producers bearing the brunt of additional costs.

When the federal government sees fit to allow incentives for exploration for oil in Canada, the result would be that we would be closer to self-sufficiency, less reliant on imported fuels, our budgetary deficits would be reduced and this general saving would be passed on to the producer and the consumer alike. Such a step would give producers the stability needed, the long-range planning, and allow the family farm to remain since they would know tax reduction and one of their highest costs would be lowered. This saving would benefit other communities since farmers would be able to spend any extra money saved in the purchase of items in those communities.

We can take this step a little further, Mr. Speaker. One of the major reasons for inflationary spiral began with the jump, the increase in energy costs. These costs had a total impact on the economies of the western world where a guarantee of a cheap source had been taken for granted over the years. We soon found ourselves in reduced supply, indeed, in almost a shortage. Canada, with its vast energy source, should never be in such a position.

These unexpected increases in costs meant additional expenses to the business communities, who in turn had to increase their prices. As a result, particularly since we in western Canada are basically agricultural, the effect of these costs was quickly handed down to the producers. What he had to pay previously for parts for his repairs soon doubled. Sure, his price of grain had gone up, but only temporarily. It did not take long thereafter for the export price of this product to be reduced. But he still had to pay the higher costs for machinery, fuel and repairs.

Here, Mr. Speaker, if the foresight of the Trudeau administration could have been used, the producer could have been saved this unnecessary additional expense. The administration in Ottawa chose to ignore the agricultural community and instead laid its heavy hand of taxation on one of our abundant resources, and that is oil. Who paid? Well, I tell you who paid. The Canadian public, by and large – those on fixed incomes, the workers, the employees, and this simply translates into the people of Canada who have been manipulated and used as pawns in the game that has so skillfully been used by the bureaucrats in Ottawa.

A reduction in the royalty and tax structure implemented now would result in savings to

farmers of thousands of dollars. An emphasis should be placed on Ottawa to reduce energy costs to all producers, and the general trend would then lower costs for everyone. The effect of this, Mr. Speaker, would be to lower the inflation rate and this would improve investor confidence and at that same time lower the interest rate.

Exploration incentives should be given so that we can achieve self-sufficiency in the next few years. This is not impossible if we are willing to roll up our sleeves and get on with the job that needs to be done. Insulated from the need for importing fuel, our budgetary deficit could be rapidly reduced and even eliminated. The people in Canada would have security of energy. The costs of energy could be down and inflation could be wrestled to the ground and our dollar could thus have the value it once commanded.

MR. MAXWELL: – Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and no to the member from Moosomin, I was not expecting a standing ovation, but I'll accept his rapturous applause none the less.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. MAXWELL: – Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to join in the debate on this extremely important topic. I'm also extremely happy to see the Leader of the Opposition has joined us this evening because I did want to say that I greatly enjoyed his delivery this afternoon and his participation in the debate this afternoon. I always look forward with great anticipation, Mr. Speaker, to the participation of the Leader of the Opposition because he does have a tremendous delivery and a tremendous style when he speaks . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . As opposed and in contrast to the style and content and delivery of the member for Regina Centre, Mr. Speaker. But I thank him for his timely intervention in giving me pause to consider my next couple of remarks because they are still with the Leader of the Opposition.

I was going to say that as a rookie MLA, Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and a privilege for me to occupy the seat I occupy because I have the opportunity to study some of the great debaters in the House, both opposite on the government side and of course to my immediate right in the form of the leader. And once again, I sincerely say I do appreciate his comments. I think his delivery is terrific, although the content is usually gibberish.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. MAXWELL: – At which point I see our somewhat somnambulant opposition has taken heed of the remarks, Mr. Speaker, I must say that the preceding participants in this debate did an admirable job of addressing themselves to the topic. I heartily agree with what they've said, and in doing so I think most of it has been said, so I take some pleasure in begging leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

Return No. 1

MR. YEW moved, seconded by Mr. Thompson, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 1 showing:

With respect to construction projects in northern Saskatchewan announced

in the legislature in March, 1982, including the DeTox Centre and the Crisis Centre in La Loche, the Training Centre and the Crisis Centre in La Ronge, the Dillon Road, the Beauval-Pinehouse Road, the Cumberland Weir, and construction on Highways 102, 106, and 155:

- (1) for each project, whether approval has been given to proceed;
- (2) for each project, whether tenders have been called;
- (3) for each project, the amount of the provincial grant which has been offered;
- (4) the formula used as the basis for the calculation of the provincial grant.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: – Mr. Speaker, I stand to be corrected; I think the motion is in order in every respect, except as it relates to having a seconder. I didn't hear that there was a motion put or that there was a seconder. If I am wrong, I stand to be corrected. I don't have a monopoly on intelligence, as a lot of people think, I am prepared to carry on.

AN HON. MEMBER: – Freddy seconded it.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: – That's fine with me. I am not going to say a great deal in any event, except to say that we will be providing the information that the members opposite have asked for as it related to item 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. I think I was right in the first place. Maybe I do have a monopoly on that, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, the point I want to make is that all items under motions for returns (debatable) have to have the language, cleared up just a little bit, so that it is clearly understood that these in fact were not approved projects, but were in fact a shopping list of the party opposite prior to going in to the last election. And we are going to clean up the language to make that clear and when we bring the amendments in next private members' day to clear up that language, we will also – and I can give that commitment now – be providing the information . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . What are you talking about?

AN HON. MEMBER: – Nothing. I was talking to myself.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: – We will be providing the information that we will be required or obligated to provide under the amended motion for return.

With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, until I have that amendment ready on time, return 1, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Return No. 2

MR. LINGENFELTER moved, seconded by Mr. Shillington, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no 2 showing:

With respect to the hospital construction projects at Lloydminster, Yorkton, Cut Knife, Melfort, Nipawin, Maidstone, Indian Head, Davidson, Regina and Saskatoon announced in the legislature in March, 1982:

- (1) for each project, whether approval has been given to proceed;
- (2) for each project, whether tenders have been called;
- (3) for each project, the amount of the provincial grant which has been offered;
- (4) the formula used as the basis for the calculation of the provincial grant.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: – Mr. Speaker, the same applied to return no. 2 as applied to return no. 1 and I therefore beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Return No. 3

MR. LINGENFELTER moved, seconded by Mr. Shillington, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 3 showing:

With respect to construction projects for special-care homes at Biggar, Shaunavon, Birch Hills, Fillmore, Saskatoon, announced in the legislature in March 1982:

- (1) for each project, whether tenders have been called;
- (2) for each project, the amount of the provincial grant which has been offered;
- (3) the formula used as the basis for the calculation of the provincial grant.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: – I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 39 – An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act

MR. SCHOENHALS: – Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce an amendment to The Urban Municipalities Act to permit the extension of store hours in urban municipalities during special events. This amendment is another concrete example of our government's commitment to having Saskatchewan open for business. I would like to take just a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, to outline the background to the provisions of this bill.

Urban municipalities annually hold a number of special events which attract visitors from other parts of the province, the nation, and indeed the world. Well-known examples include Agribition, Buffalo Days in Regina, Pioneer Days in Saskatoon. On an international level events such as the Silver Broom, to be held in Regina in 1983, attract many visitors in these and other communities, and, while smaller in scale, they are no less important to the community involved.

At the present The Urban Municipality Act permits urban councils to pass by-laws to allow stores to remain open until 10 p.m. one day per week which must be either a Thursday or a Friday. The act also contains provisions for special hours of business for confectioneries, convenience stores, garages, and other selected establishments, Mr. Speaker, these provisions are not adequate to accommodate the influx of visitors wishing to shop during special events of the type I just mentioned.

This government believes that a greater opportunity must be provided to our merchants to participate in the interest and enthusiasm generated by special events. Accordingly, the amendment before you today will give urban municipal councils the authority, if they so desire, of designating a maximum of two special events per calendar year during which stores may remain open until 10 p.m. A maximum total of 10 days per year can be designated for extended hours under this amendment. Thus the municipality will have the freedom to, for example, designate one special event and 10 days of extended shopping hours or two special events, one with three days of extended shopping, the other with seven, or any other combination.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment respects and reinforces the local autonomy of our urban governments. Whether or not any special events will be designated are decisions that the councils will make. As well, the procedure a council must follow to designate the special events and extended store hours under this amendment has been streamlined. A simply majority of council is now sufficient. The procedure for other store closing by-laws currently in the act remains unchanged.

The streamlined procedure for by-laws under this amendment will allow the city of Regina to designate this year's Agribition as a special event. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure members are aware of how important this event is to Regina and, indeed, to the province, but we make it clear that this amendment to permit a limited extension of shopping hours during selected special events does not replace the current provisions regarding store hours during selected special events does not replace the current provisions regarding store hours in The Urban Municipality Act. Rather, it supplements those provisions. Thus, there are no changes with regard to the current provisions for Sunday or holiday shopping, nor are there provisions for extending store hours beyond 10 p.m. The amendment would, however, permit stores to open where normally there is Monday or Wednesday closing during designated special events. As well, if the special event occurs in December this amendment would make it possible for the council to extend late-night Christmas shopping beyond the four extra days now promised in the current act.

The government is aware, Mr. Speaker, that the entire issue of store hours need to be assessed. This review is long overdue and will be addressed in the major rewriting of The Urban Municipality Act that we are now engaged in. However, we believe it is in the best interests of Saskatchewan's communities and its economy to proceed with this

special events amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members to support this bill, in view of the opportunity it provides to our urban communities to assist in strengthening the provincial economy.

MR. SHILLINGTON: – I have a few remarks to make which will be almost, but not quite, as brief as those of the Minister of Urban Affairs. I want to say that I have had an opportunity to raise this with a number of people. I'm sure my colleague across the way has as well. I got much more mixed reaction than I expected I would, and I'll deal with that in just a moment.

I understand from my discussions with civic officials that the impetus for this came from Agribition and Mexabition, the two big Regina shows.

AN HON. MEMBER: – And the chamber of commerce in Carievale.

MR. SHILLINGTON: – Yes, it might have been in Carievale. It wasn't the chamber of commerce in Regina. I'm going to get to that in a moment.

I gather that those who are in charge of Agribition feel that they need to make the show competitive, that the show is being courted by our cities, and that night shopping is one of many things they have to do to keep this show attractive. I'm not convinced that's accurate. I'm not saying they're not being sincere, but I'm not convinced that judgment is sound. Each year it seems to be a different city. Last year it was Calgary with their new convention centre which I gather was turned down by the voters. This year it's Edmonton with a \$38 million centre, and I'm not sure which one it will be next. I'm not sure their judgment's accurate, although I don't in any sense question their sincerity.

But we have an objection to the expansion of night shopping just on principle; it is never in the interest of the employees. The Saskatchewan Federation of Labor has a long-standing policy of opposing the extension of night shopping, and that is simply the reflection of their members' best interests – the members who work in those stores. It is never in an employee's interest to work nights or to work shifts. That interferes with people's relationships with their families; it's that much less time to spend with their families.

It is not in the interests of the independent businessmen. When we were in office the retail merchants association presented a brief to us in which they opposed any extension of night shopping. I understand that they provided a similar brief to the current members of treasury benches. In fact, when I contacted them about this bill, I said, "What's your position?" The answer came back: our position is that we are opposed to any extension of night shopping. They represent the small businessmen.

There is a reason for that as well. The small businessmen are normally mom and pop operations. The small businessmen are managed by mother and father, and there's nobody else to do it. There are probably a few clerks, but nobody who can lock the door at night. When you extend those hours there is no question of staggering the shifts for the management. That just means the owners of the business are back there for those extra hours. And, I think the vast majority of independent businessmen, the mom and pop operations, do not want any extension of night shopping.

You people might try listening to the businessmen rather than listening to each other.

If you did, I think you would find this matter is not nearly as clear-cut as you think . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . We seem to have a number of experts over there. I'm glad they have learned so much by talking to each other. As I say, you ought to try talking to the real folk out there.

I also contacted the chamber of commerce, and their position is that they take no position. They will readily admit that a lot of small businessmen do not want night shopping extended, but that some of their members do.

The people who night shopping really benefits are, of course, the chains. They can stagger the management, they can stagger the employees, and extra hours are really not too difficult for them to manage. There is something about night shopping that seems to attract people to the larger stores; they don't seem to like to go from one small store to another. They want to go to one big spot and stay there. Statistics will show that night shopping, in terms of who gets the bucks, tends to favor the larger centres – the chain stores and the malls. And for those reasons as well, the independent businessmen are not in favor of this.

I am not convinced that this creates one single, solitary job. As the people I spoke to at the retail merchants association said: there are no more bucks; you must spread them a little thinner, and you make the independent work a little harder to make the same dollar.

There is one other argument as well. I don't know whether it sits well coming from a Regina member, but I think night shopping, particularly in conjunction with these exhibitions, tends to draw money in, from out of Regina, a lot of it from rural Saskatchewan, and I'm not sure Saskatoon will make any use of this. I'm not sure that the city should be drawing business away from the smaller communities. I'm not sure all Regina businessmen think they should.

For these reason, Mr.Chairman, we will be voting against the bill in second reading.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division, bill read a second time and by leave of the Assembly referred to a committee of the whole later this day.

Yeas – 32

Birkbeck	Andrew	Berntson
Lane	McLeod	Klein
Katzman	Duncan	Schoenhals
Boutin	Hampton	Weiman
Bacon	Hodgins	Sutor
Sveinson	Sauder	Glauser
Parker	Smith (Moose Jaw South)	Hopfner
Rybchuk	Young	Gerich
Domotor	Maxwell	Embury
Dirks	Hepworth	Folk
Myers	Zazenlenchuk	

Nays – 6

Blakeney
Koskie

Thompson
Shillington

Lingenfelter
Yew

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 39 – An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act

Clause 1

MR. SCHOENHALS: – I would like to introduce to the House Mr. Don Koop, grants branch of the Department of Urban Affairs.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: – Mr. Chairman, I have here a copy of the bill with an explanation provided to me by the House Leader. I read the explanation and I want to read it so that everyone understands what we think the bill says:

The purpose of this proposed bill is to provide authority for urban municipalities to pass by-laws permitting stores to remain open during special events including fairs, exhibitions and other events designated by council. There is a limit of two events per year and a total of 10 days, including the Christmas shopping period, that may be designated for extra shopping hours under the bill.

That's what the explanation says. I'm not sure the bill says this, but if that is what the bill says at least we know what the intention of the government is. I am puzzled by what the bill says as to the number of shopping hours: whether it is the number we now have plus 10, or the number we now have plus 20, or the number we have now have which adds up to 10, including the Christmas ones. That's what this says, that it adds up to 10, including the Christmas ones. There is no other way to read that. There is a limit of two events per year and a total of 10 days, including the Christmas shopping period, that may be designated for extending shopping hours. We all know that the bill now says, the act now says that there are four Christmas shopping period days which may be designated for extended shopping hours. Now, I would be curious to know what the minister feels the bill says.

MR. SCHOENHALS: – The copy you have in your hand was a working draft that we were dealing with earlier. The intent of the bill is to allow 10 extra days of shopping above and beyond the four that are already allowed as pre-Christmas shopping.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: – I am constrained by reading what the government offers . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It may well have been. If you explain this to mean 10 plus 4, it certainly is confusing. You have certainly succeeded. The House Leader has admirably succeeded in mudding the water if he has said that this means 10 plus four, and I assert that that explanation means 10 in total. However, I understand from the minister that the intent is 10 plus 4.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3

MR. SHILLINGTON: – I trust the Clerk has provided the minister and the House Leader with copies of the amendment.

When we read the bill, the bill was quite capable of the interpretation of 20 days plus 4 for Christmas. That is an eminently reasonable interpretation of that bill. And as used to be said to me when I was responsible for legislation, don't tell me what you think the bill means, tell me what is the worst interpretation that could be reasonably put on it. I read the amendment. As I read that amendment, that current amendment is capable of meaning 10 extra days in a period 20 days before the special event, and 10 days in a period 10 days following the event – a total of 20 days . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well unfortunately for the member for Souris-Cannington, it's often lawyers who are responsible for interpreting this legislation and I know that's nothing but trouble for the other 99 per cent of the population who are eminently reasonable and use their common sense. But unfortunately it is lawyers and I say that's quite a reasonable interpretation.

I took it upon myself to lend my assistance, knowing it would be welcome, to the Minister of Urban Affairs to clarify his bill. I want to say that I've made a mistake. I know now that the only conceivable way to know what the government is doing is to get the ministers in the corner and ask them. Don't read what they say. The Leader of the Opposition has already read to you that opening paragraph. That opening paragraph clearly says a total of 10 days including the Christmas shopping period. Assuming that was your intent and assuming that you were not going to accept our suggestion that the bill be defeated, we drew up this amendment in order to ensure no one will interpret this to mean 24 days. We thought it was 10 and that's what my amendment clarifies – four days at Christmas plus six additional days. That's what my amendment says, because I made the mistake, as I say, of reading what you people were courteous enough to give us on Friday.

Now you tell me it's 10 plus 4 days; it's 14 days. That may well be what you intended. I will say this to the minister: I think an additional six days is really all they reasonably need – that's three extra days for each event. They've already got Thursday night shopping; three additional days would give them Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Surely that's all they reasonably need extra days per event. If the minister, however, feels that they absolutely have to have five extra days per special event, then amend the six and change it to 10 days, but please, I urge the minister, do not leave this bill as it is because you're going to find an extra 20 days available for special events; I think that's an interpretation that could be reasonably put on it.

I can appreciate that this bill may have been drafted somewhat hastily. I have a suspicion because I know the routine. Three days before the session opens, somebody shows up on your door and he's absolutely got to have a bill. Will it wait for the new year? No, it won't. It's an emergency. So you draft it up and you bring it in before you really have a chance to consider it; I know the routine with these things. I think the drafting of this thing needs to be improved. I have offered you my suggestion. I think what we have put forward is eminently reasonable. I urge the minister opposite to consider it and adopt it.

MR. SCHOENHALS: – It seems a little strange that anyone could come up with a 20-day interpretation when it says in the bill (and I understand the pages delivered you a copy of the bill) “may specify not more than 10 days per year.” The intent with the

20 days is to allow the councils to determine the days on either side of the special event they wish to specify.

I agree with you on Christmas shopping. I think the amount of time you've indicated is plenty. But I have enough confidence in the municipal councils around the province to expect that they will make intelligent decisions in this regard. And I am prepared in this bill to let them make those decisions. The intent is to allow 10 days additional shopping at the discretion of the councils, with no more than 10 days total additional shopping.

MR. SHILLINGTON: – Perhaps we're just beating in a dead horse. I really don't see why the minister doesn't clarify this. I ask you to look at it sincerely. The existing subsection 3(b) is simply not clear. It can be reasonably interpreted to mean 10 days before the special event and 10 days afterwards That is not an unreasonable interpretation of that bill. I suggest to the minister it should be clarified.

MR. CHAIRMAN: – The amendment reads:

Amend section 3 of the printed bill by striking out clause (b) and substituting the following
...

Is the amendment agreed?

Amendment negatived.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clauses 4 and 5 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 39 – An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act

HON. MR. BERNTSON: – Mr. Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division and bill read a third time.

Yeas – 32

Birkbeck	Taylor	Andrew
Berntson	Lane	Sandberg
McLeod	Klein	Katzman
Schoenhals	Boutin	Hampton
Weiman	Bacon	Hodgins
Sutor	Sveinson	Sauder
Glauser	Parker	Smith (Moose Jaw South)
Hopfner	Rybchuk	Young
Gerich	Domotor	Maxwell
Embury	Dirks	Folk
Morin	Myers	Zazenlenchuk

November 23, 1982

Nays – 6

Blakeney
Koskie

Thompson
Shillington

Lingenfelter
Yew

The Assembly adjourned at 8:19 p.m.