

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
December 15, 1982

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

QUESTIONS

Nipawin Hydro-Electric Site

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like, Mr. Speaker, to address a question to the minister, the chairman of the board of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. The minister was in the House on November 26, 1982 when I directed some questions to the Attorney General. During the questioning on a security contract at the site at Nipawin clearly the Attorney General indicated that the contract had been awarded to the lowest bidder. I want to say, Mr. Minister, that I have information here which indicates that the contract was awarded to Fort Security Services Ltd., for \$361,700. I want to also indicate to you that one of the unsuccessful bidders had submitted a tender for \$316,603.84. I'd like to ask the minister how he squares that with the information we received from the Attorney General.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, the figure that the member opposite gave for Fort Security was \$361,000. The other bid I was made aware of yesterday, or on Monday, in Saskatoon. We are looking into the reasons with the Saskatchewan Power board. I wasn't in attendance that day at the board meeting of Sask Power. I have instructed them to give me the reasons for the difference. There was something in the estimated values. I'll get that for you and bring it back. I take notice.

MR. KOSKIE: — I'm advised that in fact you met yesterday, or on the 13th, with the unsuccessful bidder, the one that was much lower than the contract price that was awarded, and that you indicated that in fact the other company's bid was indeed lower. I ask you again how you explain the Attorney General's answer on page 1068 where he says:

The contract was awarded to the lowest bidder and also to a local Saskatchewan company from the area — individuals.

That is the quote from the answer of the Attorney General. You were sitting here at the time. Are you saying that you have no knowledge at all? Have you no procedure in respect to the awarding of the contracts?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I've told the member opposite that I'll get the information. There are some other outside facts that I'm not aware of at the present time, as to why the difference in the acceptance of the one bid over the other one, but there was something there and I'm looking into it, as I suggested to you earlier.

MR. KOSKIE: — You indicate, Mr. Minister, that there is some factor which you aren't aware of. How do you know there is another factor if you don't know the factor? What are you trying to tell us? Are you going to look for a way of answering the differential between a low tender and awarding it to a high one? Is that what you are going back to

find?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I've taken notice of the question, and I will bring an answer back to this House tomorrow.

MR. KOSKIE: — On a supplemental, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister would be prepared to file with this House all of the tenders that were submitted for the contract at the Nipawin site, in order that any doubts can be clarified, to know that, in fact, this contract is on the up and up, because there were other substantial irregularities which I brought to the attention of the members of the government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, we were recommended by the Saskatchewan Power management that this be the bid that we accept. As I say, I checked with the lady who contacted me last Monday, who had me for an answer, and we're looking at that for her also. We'll let you know in due course.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. Would you kindly indicate to this House what your policy is with respect to the acceptance of tenders, and whether or not you as chairman are advised when tenders other than the low tender are recommended for acceptance?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, our general policy as far as Saskatchewan Power is concerned, is the low bid. There are times when we see the Saskatchewan content. If there is marginal difference we will give it to the Saskatchewan company, but the general policy of Sask Power is low bid.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, one brief supplementary. When a recommendation is made that you accept a contract other than the low bid, are you as chairman and minister advised?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — In this particular case, I've been missing a number of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation meetings because of other commitments. I have been in and out. In this particular case, I was not aware of anything until a person in Saskatoon mentioned it to me last Monday.

Remarks by Member for Canora

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Premier. In the absence of the Premier on Monday and Tuesday we have been directing questions to your minister, sir, with respect to the matter of the remarks of the member for Canora before the public accounts committee. I ask you quite simply: is it your intention to ask the member for Canora to leave your caucus, or is it your intention to sit with him in the Progressive Conservative caucus?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I have already made a statement with respect to the new member's comments. I have quite clearly stated that it does not represent my position or the position of the government, and I have removed him from all legislative committees until I am satisfied with his attitude. And, the action has been taken.

Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier. In view of the

approach taken by the Premier in this case, in view of the election campaign procedures followed by the Progressive Conservative Party in the Regina North West by-election a couple of years ago, and the Pelly by-election, and in the general election in the constituency of Prince Albert, all of which raise grave doubts as to the position of the Progressive Conservative Party with respect to the relationships between natives and non-natives in this province, the question I ask you is this. Are you prepared to assure this House that your government is fully committed to protecting human rights in this province and is fully committed to supporting the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission in that work?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Absolutely.

Nipawin Hydro-Electric Site

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I put a question to the Attorney General. It is clear, I think beyond any argument, that the information you gave this House on November 26 is not accurate. My question to you, sir, is: were you shooting from the hip or is there some more sinister explanation for the information you gave us?

HON. MR. LANE: — The information that I gave on November 26 was information that I had received from officials within SPC.

Water Report

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I have a question for the Premier. It has to do with the so called “Muirhead report,” the report on Regina’s much talked about pipe line. We were told when Mr. Muirhead was established on a committee of one that we would have the report in a month’s time. It then became convenient, I suppose, to postpone it past the civic elections in Moose Jaw and Regina, and they were two months ago. Can you tell us now what event you are postponing it beyond now? Why are we still stalling on this report?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I have received the report from Mr. Muirhead. Coupled with that is a fair amount of financial analysis with respect to alternatives in addressing the water problems, in terms of taste and odor particularly, in the Regina and Moose Jaw area. As a matter of fact, we met with a cabinet planning meeting all morning on that particular report. It will be going to a fuller meeting of cabinet within days, and we’re working on it on a continual basis. I don’t believe that I can release any more before we’ve finished our analysis because it would be unfair to give any further position without us doing our homework.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Will you undertake to at least attempt to have a decision made before this session prorogues, whenever that may be?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, I can’t promise that we can have all analysis finished by Thursday or Friday or Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday or before Christmas. It’s a very important report with very important analysis which has major implications to people not only as consumers, but obviously to industry in the province. So, we’ve made a commitment to resolving the water problems in the province of Saskatchewan. We don’t plan on sitting on it for 20 years like the members opposite did.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — And I'll stack up our analysis over the past three or four months with Mr. Muirhead and what he's been doing, against the 20 years of the former administration any day . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . When we come out with our proposal to the public, I'm sure that they will respect the fact that we have done a great deal of homework, and have received the views of some very expert people.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Premier with respect to the Regina water quality study. He's indicated that he has received a report from Mr. Muirhead, and he has indicated, at least inferentially, that it was a very good report that dealt with a great number of aspects of the matter, and that it is being considered by his government.

In order that all other people who may be affected by that report and the decision which will be forthcoming in due course may know what the recommendations are, would the Premier now release that report to the public so that all persons interested in this very important subject may know what has been recommended to you by Mr. Muirhead?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — I would just like to say, Mr. Speaker, that will be ample time for discussion by all members of the public. I don't believe that now is the time, within the next two or three days, when we are examining the report in detail in terms of the financial alternatives, and there are many alternatives examined by Mr. Muirhead. The public will certainly have its capacity and ability to fully review them so there should be no fear about that.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, a further question with respect to this. A great number of the public are very concerned about this because they are looking forward to the possibility of a pipeline being decided upon and an order being placed at IPSCO with the resulting number (some several hundreds) of jobs being created thereby. They wish to have an opportunity to discuss the matter intelligently, and in order that they may do so, they need as much advance information as possible. My short question is to you. I am not asking that you reveal your decision now; I am asking you to reveal what Mr. Muirhead has recommended to you. If you won't give that to the public now, would you please tell us why you won't give that to the public now?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the report was done at my request to provide information to cabinet and to this government, along with a financial analysis, so that we could look at, and realistically look at, the alternatives for solving the problem. Now, we are in the middle of that process. The public will have full access to the information just as soon as we have, if you will, got our head around the information and report ourselves. I don't think that's unrealistic — to expect us to look at it, examine it, and understand the report and its dimensions before we release it holus-bolus to everybody.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, a new question. I'm puzzled by the proposition that the public couldn't consider it at the same time you're considering it, but that you must see it first and have your reaction to it before even the details of the report are made to the public. The question which I am now asking you is: are you now giving an undertaking that you will release the full report received from Mr. Muirhead at the time that you release your cabinet's reaction to the report?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, to back up a little bit, in terms of answering the question. We're talking about solutions that cost millions of dollars: 50 million, 75 million, 100 million, 125 million. It's pretty important that this government look at those alternatives

carefully. There may be federal participants, provincial government participants, city participants; Lord knows who may be involved.

That financial analysis is being reviewed carefully now, and it's important that we do go through that.

Now, your second question: are we prepared to release the Muirhead report? Yes, we are prepared to release it, and we'll release it when we think that it's an appropriate time; when we've done our homework to look at the solutions, so that we can talk credibly and well informed about the financial alternatives that have been proposed to us. We don't want to talk about it when we haven't finished doing the homework, and say, "Here's solution a, b, d, d and e, and we can't talk about the last four because we haven't reviewed it." That wouldn't be very acceptable to the public when we've spent some money doing the report. It just behooves us to understand the alternatives that have been presented to us. That's what we're doing.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, one further question in this regard. The Premier must realize that other people will need to study it as well; people who have concerns about the environment, the city, other people, business people, other people who are going to be vitally affected. They too need time. My plea to you is to release the Muirhead report as soon as possible, even though you haven't fully considered your reaction to it.

My question to you is: is it a policy of your government that whenever a report is prepared you will not release it for public knowledge until you have fully examined it, fully examined all the alternatives, and are able to give a government position on it? Surely, this means that the public are going to be deprived of access to information which they also need during the entire period when your government is reviewing matters.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the public in Regina and Moose Jaw have been deprived of good water for 20 years. That's the problem. Now we're looking at a solution, and along-run solution. I find it a little bit difficult to listen to the opposition saying, "Well, my gosh, you don't have it here by Thursday or Friday. You just received the report," when they sat on potential solutions for 20 years. Now we're going to be providing . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — We'll provide the report and the analysis when we're finished with it, and it won't take 20 years. It will take, maybe, another 20 days, or as fast as we can do it, and do it right, and then provide the public with the information.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, one further question. It may well be, as the minister says, that this water question is an old problem. The question of 1,000 people unemployed at Ipsco is a new problem. It came here with your government, and my question is: when are you going to start acting in order to solve this problem, and are you going to use the Diefenbaker-to-Moose Jaw-Regina pipeline as a method of solving the unemployment problem, which is a very new problem, Mr. Premier?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — The alternatives, Mr. Speaker, are wide and ranging in terms of resolving the problem and I'm sure that you've all heard about several of them. So it's our responsibility to look at them all and that's what we're about to do. So you can't just isolate on particular part of this entire water problem, and say that's justification for releasing all the information.

It's an important decision to make with respect to economic development generally, and development in the province of Saskatchewan. It's much broader than just the city of Regina. The entire province is looking at this solution and says, "I want it to be consistent with the kinds of things we want to be." Lord knows, there's so much more we can be."

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Misuse of Government Stationery

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier and I welcome him back. It's a tough question period when he does come, because we have all these questions saved up.

My question deals with a letter I have here, on government stationery, from a Ric Barnes, press officer of the PC caucus office, which invites people to meet Sarah Band who is running for the leadership of the national Progressive Conservative Party. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is very serious. Does the Premier condone this use of government stationery to promote the federal Conservative Party in Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — I stand to be corrected, Mr. Speaker, but I believe as far as I know that was a notice to caucus members and the gentleman does work for caucus. He is a research or publications officer or whatever for caucus, and I suspect that he wrote it to the caucus members.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I note that the Premier says the note was to members of the caucus. My copy says: to the press gallery. I say again that this is a blatant misuse of the public's money in promoting the federal Conservative Party, and I want to know whether the Premier condones the use of taxpayers' money to support Sarah Band for the leadership of the Conservative Party.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I respect the difference in the responsibilities with respect to differentiating between party and government. I will bring it up with the member to make sure he uses the right paper under these circumstances. I'll take notice and report back that I have brought it up with the member.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the Premier advise us whether they have now changed plans of supporting Joe Clark and now supporting Sarah Band for the leadership of the federal Conservative Party?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that the lady mentioned is not running for leadership. She is running for the presidency of the party. And if I could take this opportunity to respond to the member, because he said that I haven't been here in the recent days. I want to point out that, as a result of a new image coming out of Saskatchewan that we're open for business, by popular demand from people all across

Canada, from Ontario, Winnipeg, British Columbia, Calgary, and the United States and even Prince Albert-Duck Lake with 1,700 brand new memberships . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — . . . have been keeping me relatively busy in the sense that I've been speaking to thousands of people a day telling them about the brand-new Saskatchewan.

PSC Workers' Environment Board

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to address a question to the Minister of Labor, the minister responsible for the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. On numerous occasions, Mr. Minister, you have in your speaking in public talked about need for co-operation between labor and management.

My question is the same one that all the three unions certified at the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan asked publicly yesterday, If you believe in labor-management co-operation, why have allowed the management of PCS to scuttle the worker's environment board that was established at PCS?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, the reason that we had done that is that we are already in the Department of Labor covering the inspection of potash mines, uranium mines and so on, that we have the inspector in place. It was duplication in our minds, and we have brought it back within the Department of Labor.

MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Minister, the workers' environment board, as you know, was a first in labor-management relations in North America. And the purpose of it was to allow the worker to have input into occupational health and safety and have some input with management in respect to decisions affecting the workplace. This was a first, and without any discussion with the workers you have scuttled it. What is your policy? Is your policy one of confrontation rather than co-operation? Because every action that you've been taking in respect to the potash corporation leads us to believe that.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, our doors are open. We have union members, we've had striking members, we've had people coming into our offices. They've been telling us it's the first time in their lives that they've ever been able to come and talk to a labor minister. Our doors at the Department of Labor are open and these workers are coming in and talking to us there. We don't need a whole bunch of boards and commissions to get the job done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Andrew that Bill No. 44 — **An Act to amend The Department of Finance Act** be now read

a second time.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, the debate is on Bill No. 44, An Act to amend The Department of Finance Act, and shortly put, this is a bill to make it more difficult for members of this House to know how the government is spending money.

Shortly put, this is a bill which is designed to make it more difficult for the press and for members of this House and for anyone else except someone who sits on the treasury benches to know what's happening to the money.

Shortly put, this is a bill which says this: that notwithstanding what this House may vote, the cabinet may pass special warrants (and we all have done that in the past), and special warrants may state the purpose for which the money is required (as they must) and these special warrants shall be available to the press and to the opposition (which has been the custom); but that notwithstanding that, some money may be provided by special warrant for, let us say, the Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan in the Department of Health. Money may, once provided by special warrant, be moved away from that purpose and over to another quite different purpose (let's say mental health) by virement, which is a document which is not available to this House, and not viable to the press, so that nobody knows where the money is spent; no public trail at all as to where the money is spent.

Now this has not been the practice in the past and we have done pretty well without it. There is no rational reason for it. No case can be advanced for this bill. There is simply no reason why, if you want money for the purpose over at the Department of Health, you can't raise another special warrant. If you need money for mental health, take out a warrant — special warrant — for mental health. Then we'll all know (at least those of us who can look at the orders in council will know) what you're spending the money on.

Keep in mind this is money which isn't voted by definition it isn't voted. And the power of passing a special warrant, spending money which has never been voted by the legislature, is a wide enough power. But members opposite want to expand it to say, "Not only do we want to have power to raise money by special warrant, but having taken some money by special warrant for, let us say, the Department of Social Services corrections branch, we want to move it from corrections over to child health or child care without any trail." Without any trail.

Yes, there's a virement, if anyone knows where the virements are. But they're not public documents. And therefore, when we pass a special warrant, you can be sure whatever we want to spend the money on in the Department of Social Services, we will pass the special warrant for, let's say, senior citizens' services. Who's going to quarrel about senior citizens services? And then we will vire it out for whatever we need, vire it out for the minister's office. We don't want to take a special warrant out to say that we need more EAs in the minister's office. That's only going to get us into trouble. Take a special warrant out for senior citizens' services and having done that, and having created this nice record saying we're going to spend some more money on senior citizens' services, vire it, pass a virement sending it out to the minister's offices for a few more EAs. Someday somebody might find it, not by anything appropriated in this legislature, not by anything passed by special warrant, but a virement which we can only get by asking for it in this legislature — and we all know how much information we get when we ask for it in this legislature. We simply, we can put things on the order paper and nothing ever comes back.

So I, Mr. Speaker, think that this bill, no case has been made for it. We think that it is one further erosion on the financial controls that the legislature needs to exercise and is elected to exercise, one further tendency that we have seen in other bills of removing the control of the provincial auditor. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I propose to oppose the bill. I understand that some of my colleagues may wish to say something further on it, but I will now sit down, and we will then see whether members opposite have any defence of this bill, because I haven't heard any.

MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Speaker, I want to go into further details in respect to the debate on this, and I therefore beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 51 — An Act to amend The Workers' Compensation Act, 1979

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, we have before us today a bill to amend The Workers' Compensation Act. Before proceeding to describe the features in this bill which will help injured workers and survivors, I think it useful to reflect on the importance of the workers' compensation to the workers and employers of this province.

Prior to the advent of workers' compensation, those injured at work had only one method of attempting to recover their financial losses — a negligence action in the courts. For those workers who could not prove negligence, and for those workers who could not afford a costly lawsuit, the remedy was useless. Those workers representing the large majority got nothing for their work injury. Employers in the province were equally dissatisfied with the court remedy of compensating for work injuries. While protected in the majority of accidents from a lawsuit, one serious injury could have resulted in financial disaster. Clearly, both the workers and their employers were unhappy with the situation prior to workers' compensation.

The original statute bringing into effect the system of workers' compensation was assented to in 1929, and came into force in 1930. It was patterned on the recommendations of a government-appointed commission, which was convened in 1928 to determine the most equitable method of compensating workers for work injuries. The present legislation is based on the same principles as were recognized in 1929: that employers were collectively liable for the cost of work injuries in return for freedom from lawsuits, and that workers are guaranteed compensation for work injuries without regard to fault.

This system, Mr. Speaker, is a time-tested system which is as true today as it was 50 years ago. Workers' compensation must therefore always be seen as a bipartisan issue. Just as principles on which workers compensation is based receive the active support of both employers and employees so changes to the system should also receive that support.

When we were in opposition we recognized that truth very well, Mr. Speaker. The member sitting opposite, those who are left, may well remember that when a new system for compensation was introduced in 1979 our party supported it. We might further point out that when amendments to the act were introduced in 1981, we also

supported them.

We gave this support because we were satisfied that the issues raised had been adequately described and debated in another forum. The Workers' Compensation Act review committee. This does not mean that every recommendation ever made by that committee is one that has been or will be implemented, nor does it mean that we intend, as a government to ignore our responsibility to review and decide on the merits of recommendations made by public committees of inquiry. No government would ever abdicate its responsibility in that manner.

But I think it does show what our government's attitude is toward workers' compensation. It is in light of that attitude that we wish to introduce to the legislature Bill 51. I believe that many of the members opposite will be familiar with many of the provisions included in this bill. Just as we agreed with its principles in opposition, we believe in its importance as government. With this in mind, let us turn to some of the specific provisions of the bill.

What is the purpose of the bill? Mr. Speaker, The Workers' Compensation Act of 1979 provided a new approach to compensation which protected workers injured from January 1, 1980 and onward. It protected them against many of the worst effects caused by the combination of inflation and the loss of income caused by a work injury. Yet that only partly solved the problem. This bill will extend many of those rights and benefits to workers injured prior to 1980 to workers injured in the 1970s, the 1960s, the '50s, and even the '40s.

Mr. Speaker, many disabled workers are losing a great deal of income because of a work injury. We believe that provisions contained in this bill will correct that injustice. One amendment of this bill calls for a review of all disabled workers receiving a pension and who are still below normal retirement age. The review will require several steps. I would like to explain those steps to you, Mr. Speaker.

The first thing we have to do is even out the maximum wage rate which was used to establish a workers' compensation claim. The 1982 maximum wage of \$26,000 per year is one and one-half times last year's average industrial wage. We will therefore set the maximum wage rate for 1960, as an example, at one and one-half times the average wage of 1959. This step thus provides a uniform compensation coverage over time for all injured workers.

After having created a uniform coverage of all workers, Mr. Speaker, it is then necessary to bring past wages up to today's level. Therefore, the next step is to increase a worker's earnings at the time of injury by the increase in the average wage since the year of injury. For instance if someone was injured in 1960 we will be comparing the average wage in that year with the average wage in 1979. It so happens that the average wage in 1979 is over three and one-half times what the average wage was in 1960. This means that \$100 a week earnings in 1960 will be treated as over \$350 a week in 1979.

I mentioned that there were several steps in the process, Mr. Speaker. We are not yet through them. Once we have brought the old earnings up to modern levels, the next step is to index these earnings annually by the increase in the consumer price index.

Just to quickly summarize these three points, we will first set a new income ceiling where applicable. Then we will raise the earnings at the time of injury by the increase in

average wages from the year of the injury. And finally we will correlate these increased earnings with annual increases in the consumer price index.

Once these three stages have been completed disabled workers will be reviewed annually until they reach normal retirement age, and they will receive 75 per cent of their lost income caused by injury. Just so we do not miss the significance of this review, Mr. Speaker, I have had a few calculations made on specific disabled workers' claims. In many of them, the impact of the review will be profound. Indeed, some injured workers who are presently receiving around \$700 or \$800 a month will see their benefits rise to the level of \$1,600 a month, and see that amount increased annually by consumer price index increases until they reach normal retirement age.

It will not be practical, Mr. Speaker, to review all the disabled workers' pensions at one time, given the several thousand reviews required. Therefore, under provisions of this bill the workers will receive their pension review on the anniversary date of injury in 1983. If as a result of this review it becomes apparent that a worker will not be receiving an increase, we will give him the option of taking his pension as a lump sum.

As a final point on disabled workers, the minimum compensation rate for wage loss to disabled workers is being both increased and tied automatically to increases in average wages. Therefore, in future the workers' compensation board will be setting the minimum compensation in any given year at a level which is 50 per cent of the average wage as of June in the previous year. This has great significance, as it protects injured workers by raising the minimum as average wages increase.

It is not only disabled workers who will receive increases under this bill, Mr. Speaker: we intend to increase benefits going to survivors as well. Therefore, the basic payment going to surviving spouses is being increased by \$60 a month, and the amount payable for each dependent child will be increased by \$30 a month.

Combined with these increases in flat rate benefits, there's an increase in the minimum compensation payable to survivors. For example, the present minimum payable to a surviving spouse is \$580 a month. We will be increasing this minimum to 50 per cent of the average weekly wage for the previous year.

Mr. Speaker, you have just heard me describe the major provisions in this bill to amend The Workers' Compensation Act. Some might be concerned about the cost. While these increases are going to be expensive, we estimate that the changes will result in an extra \$15 million liability being created for the workers' compensation board. However, this cost will be absorbed by the surplus in the boards' pension fund and will not require one dollar increase in taxes or a one dollar increase in payroll assessment.

It has given me a great deal of pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to have been able to outline these changes to The Workers' Compensation Act. We intend to do a major review of payments going to injured workers. The review will provide significant increases to many disabled persons. Secondly, we intend to increase payments going to the survivors and, finally, we intend to increase minimum compensation dramatically.

Mr. Speaker, I move that this bill be now read a second time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have not been accused lately of showering praise on the Minister of Labor, but this time I am going to extend a few accolades your way. I know that you people have been in such short supply of praise lately that you'll welcome it from whatever source. I am pleased to be able to lighten some of the load.

I may say that I am pleased to see the Attorney General back here. He is the one member of the treasury benches who will remember what a shambles The Workers Compensation Act was in when we took office in 1971. It simply did not provide adequate coverage for the workers. Many of them were denied coverage. Those who got coverage got it at an inadequate level.

The workers' compensation scheme is one of the triumphs of the former government. When we left office that scheme was fully funded, the only one in Canada to be so fully funded, and I hope that continues. It had an emphasis on rehabilitation that made it the object of studies from a number of different parts of the world, and it was one of the richer schemes. It provided benefits which were well above average. I won't say they were the best in Canada; I don't know that, but they were well above average. So we left office calling that one of our achievements.

I may say I am pleased to see that this bill comes forward. I am given to understand it is not different in substance, although there may be some difference in detail, from what was introduced last March. I am pleased to see that. I am pleased to see that the work of the former government will be carried on. I have no hesitation, Mr. Minister, in supporting the principle of this bill. There may be some details with which I quarrel and, if so, we'll be moving appropriate amendments in committee of the whole.

I can say, if I understand it properly (and I think I do), that we have no hesitation in supporting the principle of this bill. I see no reason why this bill cannot be passed at the current session, no matter when it may end.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

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

Bill No. 53 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to have the opportunity to make a couple of comments, really quite brief, about the Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

The amendments contained in this bill have been unanimously recommended by the board of internal economy which, of course, has representatives from both sides of the House. The major provision of this bill is contained in section 3. This amendment provides that increases in remuneration for members of the Assembly for the year 1983 shall be limited to 6.5 per cent. This is consistent with the government's economic recovery package, which is the rate of inflation as measured by the CPI minus one. As elected officials of the government of Saskatchewan, it is incumbent on members to take the lead, particularly at this time, in demonstrating to the people of Saskatchewan that economic recovery is essential, and part of that recovery package is

obviously some degree of restraint.

Income-related payments for MLAs arising from membership on committees, membership on the Executive Council and other extra indemnities to members are, for the year 1983, frozen at the 1982 levels. Expense-related payments are subject to the normal adjustments provided by the act, and it is estimated that the cost saving as result of these measures will exceed \$100,000, or approximately \$110,000.

I might just add before I close, Mr. Speaker, that I view this measure as part and parcel of our entire recovery strategy. We want to make sure that we work our way out of recession. We also want to make sure that the administration, and certainly those are elected members, are not part of the problem. That is, we don't want to contribute to inflation; we'd rather be part of the solution.

In any recovery strategy, it's important that the people involved in the public sector restore confidence in the economy. We want to particularly focus on confidence so that private investors in this province know that the government is leading the way.

Now, in that recovery strategy we have done several things, but I want to point out that we can put confidence back into the economy and into the general public in several ways. We can do that by putting money back into the people's hands to increase their spending power, despite some of the restraint programs.

One obviously is the elimination of gas tax, which is about \$100 million back into the pockets of people in this province. Public utilities review commission — obviously we've frozen the rates until the end of 1982 at least. Similarly, \$15 million in terms of job creation — we're the first province to do that — to stimulate as well as sow confidence. Obviously the mortgage program was the first in the country to provide confidence on interest rates over time. So the combination of those has put this administration, and clearly this province, in a number one position, number one in the nation in terms of the rate of inflation. Our CPI is running below anybody else. We are number one in terms of unemployment, number one in terms of gasoline prices and number one in terms of the mortgage program. We're proud of that, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It's only part of the program of recovery.

The second thing we have to be aware of is that we have to further stimulate the economy in the areas that we want to target, where we can get the most productivity. Certainly our farm program that provides 8 per cent money to get to the agricultural sectors is extremely important in that regard.

Secondly, the impact that we've made in the energy business, which is a large employer in this province, particularly in the service industry and in economic activity generally, has been important in terms of providing the confidence in our entire recovery package. And the recovery package, as I've pointed out, Mr. Speaker, has two parts: one to contain the size and the growth of the administration, the other to provide confidence and stimulate the economy.

Third, Mr. Speaker, it's part and parcel of our program that we called "general productivity improvements." We want to make sure that we provide incentives for productivity and particularly increases for merit as a result of improvements that we are about to make.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, regulatory reform, to provide the confidence for investors here. So I would just like to summarize, Mr. Speaker, in rising on this legislation. That it is part of

an entire recovery package that has been brought forward by this province, and I am glad to see that members of both sides of this House are endorsing it.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I presume this is a belated throne speech debate since the Premier covered virtually every activity of his government. I assume you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . missed a couple. You missed the statutory amendments act and you missed the power of attorneys act. You didn't do either one, but you covered everything else. I assume members of the opposition will be allowed the same latitude.

I may say of this caucus that they have no difficulty supporting the general wage increases given to members of this Assembly. We think that's entirely appropriate. That is what is being done by other elected bodies and I think there is no reason why we shouldn't also show leadership.

I wish the government opposite had been as generous to some other groups. I wish the government opposite had showed the same sparkling generosity when dealing with — let's pick one of those groups who will benefit by your largesse — those working on minimum wage. I wish you had found time to give them 6.5 per cent.

I see the Premier busily trying to explain something to me. I'm missing it. He's not quite loud enough. I wish as well we had found 6.5 per cent for some of the other groups, for those on social assistance. This government has been relatively generous with some groups with whom it has dealt (its political appointees and so on the have come into in some places at 100 per cent increase, and I won't get into the details) but it has been relatively niggardly with others, and I will support it. I'm sure it would have been appropriate to have provided the same sort of thing to those on minimum wage. I wonder why, if members of this Assembly need 6.5 per cent — I assume that's the theory or you wouldn't have given it — I wonder how it is that those who labor at considerably less than us, without any of the perks that we have, I wonder how it is that they don't need 6.5 per cent.

I wonder how it is that people on social assistance don't need an increase at this time. As I say, there seem to be two rules. There's nothing inappropriate about 6.5 per cent; it is, I think, an appropriate amount. We will be supporting it, I want to make that clear, but I wish you had found it in your hearts to have provided some sort of a Christmas present for some other groups who have not been very generously dealt with.

The Premier went through a wide variety of government programs that he felt were part of the new Saskatchewan. A wide variety of programs and, as I say, he missed a couple. I didn't hear him mention The Power of Attorney Act, and I didn't hear the statutory amendments act stated again, but I heard virtually every other aspect of the new government's program.

I thin, while we are prepared to support the principle, and I say that unreservedly, we will want to consider the detail of the bill, and I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 58 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the realignment of the administration of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, as you will know and as the House will know, some time ago I announced the intention of this government to realign the functions and the duties of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan to the major parent departments and to have services provided to northern residents by the line departments of the Government of Saskatchewan.

In most instances these realignments have been made, and I might say to members opposite, these realignment procedures have gone on very successfully. And, despite some hue and cry from some members of the opposition caucus, the acceptance of the procedures that we have carried out in our realignment among northern people has been very good, and I have found it to be a very gratifying thing to find the general acceptance from the people in the northern communities.

The realignment of each administrative program in the northern Saskatchewan administrative district with the appropriate provincial department has been carried out for the purpose of giving more effective direction to each local program. The persons involved in the administration of each program in the North will be now much more closely aligned with their counterparts in the rest of the province. That fact, and the integration of each government activity in our North with the government activity being carried out in the rest of the province, should result in an improvement in the quality of the government services being provided in the northern administration district. In most cases, since the administration was transferred to the Department of Northern Saskatchewan by order in council, the administration could be realigned by the same method. However, in some instances, there is no legislative provision in the departmental legislation for programs delivered by the Department of Northern Saskatchewan under The Department of Northern Saskatchewan Act or other Department of Northern Saskatchewan legislation.

The purpose of this bill is to amend a number of acts to clarify the necessary authority for line departments to administer programs. The amendments contained in sections 2, 3, 5 and 7 of the bill relate to matters now administered by the Department of Health. All of the health programs in the North have been continued under the general auspices of the Minister of Health and his department. In some instances, legislation is required to authorize the administration of these programs by the Department of Health. In other cases, a clarification or change in the existing legislation has been considered advisable.

For the most part, the children's dental care program that has been operated by the Department of northern Saskatchewan can be operated under the authority of The Dental Care Act without any difficulty. This act is the act under which the children's dental care program is being conducted in the rest of the province. In the field of professional dental services, most parts of the northern Saskatchewan administration district are quite different from the rest of the province, because the services of a dentist are just not available. From time to time, the dental staff of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan have been providing emergency dental services to adults residing in remote areas, because there was just no other reasonable alternative. This practice is being continued by the dental staff in their new capacities as employees of the Department of Health. The Dental Care Act is intended only to authorize the provision of a broad scope of dental services to beneficiaries, and does not authorize the provision of services on a purely emergency basis.

The amendment to The Dental Care Act contained in section 2 will authorize those services to be provided.

The Department of Health is also continuing the food transportation subsidy program. This is a program designed to encourage the shipment of perishable foods into certain remote communities, and to reduce for the consumer in those communities the high cost of transporting those foods. The amendment to The Department of Health Act contained in section 3 of the bill will clearly provide that authority.

The Minister of Health is also assuming the responsibility for the province's obligations under various agreements that the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan has entered into concerning the provision of health services. These include agreements for ensuring the provision of medical services on the west side of the northern Saskatchewan administration district centred at Ile-a-la-Crosse, as well as in various other communities within driving distances of established medical practices. They also include agreements to finance the employment of community health workers by local community authorities and local advisory councils. The Minister of Health has the authority under The Health Services Act to renew such agreements, or to enter into new agreements with other persons and bodies. However, agreements may not be made under that act only with the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

Because of the volume of agreements that appear to be involved, it is being proposed that The Health Services Act be amended in order to dispense with the requirements of an approving order in council for these agreements. This proposed amendment is contained in section 5 of the bill, Mr. Speaker.

The persons providing public health issues in the district, including in particular the public health nurses and public health inspectors, are now also employees of the Department of Health. The health minister's authority to provide public health services is only to provide those services within a health region. The entire district was established as a health region by the Minister of Health, effective October 1, 1982, in order that he could continue to provide public health services under statutory authority.

A regional board of health has not been established for this region because the applicable regulations provide for appointments to the board to be made pursuant to a series of municipal appointments. Those regulations cannot be applied to the northern Saskatchewan administration district with its various communities that are not established as municipalities. The health region and the regional board of health as constituted in the rest of the province may not be suitable for the widely scattered areas in the northern administration district. It may, therefore, not be practical to attempt to apply that kind of organization to the far North.

The proposed amendment to The Public Health Act contained in section 7 will authorize the Minister of Health to provide public health services outside a health region. This will make it possible for public health services to continue to be provided in the North, even though it may be concluded that the health region establishment is not practical and that the health region should be dissolved.

The amendments proposed by section 4 of the bill relate to realignment of educational matters to the Department of Education. Four school divisions previously within the administration of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan are now under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education.

The amendment to clause 2(g) of The Education Act clarifies the authority of the

Minister of Education with respect to all boards of education in the province.

The addition of clause 10(1)(p) to The Education Act will ensure authority for the Minister of Education to arrange for schooling of students beyond the grade 9 level in the Creighton School Division. These students attend school a few miles from Creighton in Flin Flon, Manitoba. This proposed clause, along with the Flin Flon boundary agreement act, will permit the Minister of Education to arrange for educational services for students in such situations and to provide payment to the receiving school board for these services for Saskatchewan students. The Minister of Education has already met with boards of education in the northern Saskatchewan administration district, as well as departmental staff affected by the realignment and will be meeting with the teachers affected.

Section 8 of this bill, Mr. Speaker, amends The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Act. Effective November 1, 1982 Saskatchewan Housing assumed responsibility for all property administered under the northern housing regulations. This included staff housing, low-cost housing projects and other government —subsidized housing projects in the northern administration district. The new subsections (4)(6) to (4)(9) effect the transfer of all the property administered under the northern housing regulations to Saskatchewan Housing Corporation and the consequent legal requirements for this transfer.

Under section 6 of this bill, section 23 of The Northern Administration Act is proposed to be repealed. This amendment will eliminate an advance account not required for the operations of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and inconsistent with amendments proposed by the Department of Finance relating to all government advance accounts.

No other changes are proposed to The Northern Administration Act at this time, since implementation of northern municipalities legislation, which I will be introducing tomorrow, will require re-evaluation of that act in the coming months.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the realignment of the administration of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all I want to commend the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan for his deliberation and work regarding the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. Just off the surface, I concluded from his remarks that he is dealing with some basic, important issues related to people of the North.

Regarding the bill itself, it seems that it may have quite-far-reaching implications, etc. It relates to the Department of Education Act, The Department of Health Act and proposes to repeal and amend certain sections of the former The Northern Administration Act. As well, it deals with the northern housing branch.

I have just had the opportunity now to receive specifics regarding this bill. We haven't had the opportunity to peruse or to assess the bill itself. And I conclude that people in the communities under the respective jurisdictions that are mentioned here will want to possibly discuss this at some length. So I, at this point in time, would beg leave to

adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 59 — An Act to amend The Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources Act

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to move second reading of An Act to amend The Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources Act. This bill proposes amendments to sections of The Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources Act consequential to the realignment of activities in northern Saskatchewan. These amendments are proposed in order to promote efficiency in the treatment of advances and to allow the Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources to create tourist accommodation classifications with the tourist industry.

Mr. Speaker, the responsibility of providing a radio communication service and the program which assists the development of commercial fishing in this province are being realigned to the Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources from the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. The proposed amendments will provide the Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources with the specific authority required for these activities.

The grant-paying process will also be expedited with greater efficiency. As is authorized currently in The Department of Northern Saskatchewan Act and proposed in this bill, grants up to a specific amount will be processed upon ministerial order. This government will thus ensure more effective and efficient administration which will provide overall benefits to all people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, existing methods of controlling and accounting for expenditures from advance account activities were found to be inadequate. Program effectiveness was difficult to evaluate. Program costs were difficult to determine as some administrative and other overhead expenses were not charged to the advance account operations but were charged to other ordinary expenditures. Legislation was also not consistent in wording concerning advance accounts across the departments.

Proposed amendment, Mr. Speaker, to effect better control over advance accounts which will be renamed revolving funds are consistent with bills concerning other advance account operations to be presented by the Minister of Finance.

This bill proposes to provide my department with the authority to execute agreements on classification standards with the tourist accommodation industry. These amendments will provide authority to reflect the wishes of the industry rather than decisions at cabinet level alone. We have consulted with operators in the private sector in this province, something that they have relayed to me is a new practice and something that they very much welcome. Operators in the tourist industry have been consulted as I said, in our planning process, and are pleased with the development. Business opportunities will be promoted, Mr. Speaker, and this government's sensitivity to the wishes of the people of Saskatchewan will once again be reflected. I respectfully urge the House to support this bill as presented.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of this bill, An Act to amend The Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources Act.'

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to have an opportunity to go

over this bill a little bit further and for that reason, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill 60 — An Act respecting Prairie and Forest Fires

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, this bill proposes amendments to the many sections of The Prairie and Forest Fires Act which have become outdated. Realignment of sections of the act which are still pertinent is proposed to consolidate and clarify the intent. The general responsibilities of rural municipalities in the prevention, control and extinguishing of prairie and forest fires within rural municipalities, is not clear. This bill proposes clarification of the general responsibilities of the rural municipalities, as well as the responsibilities of my department, for the prevention, control, and extinguishing of wildfires in rural municipalities.

The proposed amendments delete reference to local improvement districts as this form of municipal government has been discontinued in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this bill proposes amendment of certain sections of The Prairie and Forest Fires Act which do not meet current requirements, or are too limited in scope. An example, Mr. Speaker, is section 21, which is discriminatory. Section 21 presently limits conscription of persons to fight prairie and forest fires to male persons over the age of 18 and under the age of 60 years. It also excepts trainmen, telegraphers, dispatchers on duty, and physicians from being required to fight prairie and forest fires. This bill proposed that an officer or a fire-ranger may require any able-bodied, adult person to assist in firefighting — a provision more in keeping with requirements of contemporary society, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in 1980 this province expended \$15.9 million fighting forest fires. In 1981, \$19 million was expended, and for 1982 expenditures will be about \$8.2 million. Many fires are caused by man. As a deterrent this bill proposes to remove all references to minimum penalties, and provides a general penalty section with a maximum fine of up to \$1,000 for each offence a person is found guilty of, and a fine of up to \$5,000 in the case of a corporation. By amending the penalty sections to provide for one general penalty section with maximum penalties only, the courts will have the necessary latitude to assess penalties in keeping with the gravity of each offence. Mr. Speaker, this bill proposes consolidation and adds clarity to numerous sections which relate to the responsibility and liability of a person starting a fire, having knowledge of or requested to assist with the control of a fire.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments as proposed in this bill will clarify authority and responsibility for the prevention, control, and the extinguishing of prairie and forest fires in the province of Saskatchewan. The bill as presented will assist in the protection of forest resources, human life and property. I respectfully urge the House to support this bill as presented. I move second reading of this bill, An Act respecting Prairie and Forest Fires.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Speaker, most parts of this bill I am in agreement with, with the minister, but I would like to take a closer look at the new penalty clause that you have in there, and just see what ramification this might have, and problems that we might encounter with this type of section in there. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to

adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 46 — An Act to repeal The Land Bank Act and to make Certain Temporary Provisions for Lessees

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of An Act to repeal The Land Bank Act and to make Certain Temporary Provisions for Lessees.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, before we have the vote on third reading, I would just like to make a few comments on this bill to comment on the narrowness and vindictiveness of this government, and how they are dealing with land bank tenants. They are not just content with stopping a program and saying that from here on, we are not going to put up any more money for land bank land to be put up for rent. They want to destroy any evidence that that program ever existed in Saskatchewan.

Rising now with this new power that they attained for themselves they are prepared to crush the farmers who dare to believe and take part in this program called the land bank. Mr. Speaker, we are witnessing the beginning of a new totalitarian rule in Saskatchewan. This is something new for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, During committee the Minister of Highways was acting as third-string substitute and he could only dwell on the fact that it only put 152 farmers on the land to own their own land. That's all the commission did.

Before I deal with that, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask: where is the Minister of Agriculture, this champion, this Deputy Premier and House leader who said that this is the most progressive legislation Saskatchewan has ever seen? I understand he's flown the coop and gone on vacation while the House is still sitting. He's starting Christmas early. It's hardly a week since we heard a ringing declaration from the minister about the importance of this piece of legislation, but where is he today? Maybe he's investigating the land bank program or the land purchase program down in the Bahamas where they have a place or a tax haven. I'm not sure. Maybe he's taking advantage and saying that we should have a place like that here in Canada, where you can make your money and avoid the responsibility of society by ducking out of it, to a tax haven.

I'm upset that the minister isn't here to answer some of the questions, particularly those which we raised last night. If I would have got the answers that I wanted and if I could have gotten some kind of co-operation I don't think I would be entering third reading today. The minister who is speaking from the Bahamas said that this is one of the most important pieces of legislation, but he doesn't consider it important enough to stay and wait until it's passed, just one short week. Maybe he doesn't even like it here in Saskatchewan. If Saskatchewan is such a bad place to be in before Christmas, and if this is his attitude toward public business, I am sure the people of Saskatchewan will be glad to relieve him of his new responsibilities as soon as they have a chance. Then he can spend all of this time in the Bahamas; then he can gamble with his own money instead of gambling . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! We are in third reading debate. I don't believe the whereabouts of the minister really enters into that debate. I would ask the member to

come back to the subject at hand.

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would say that yesterday our second stringer or our third stringer should have offered us some performance and answered some questions when we were talking about who was going to be affected by this . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . My colleague points out the definition of a minister. But, yesterday, we just saw a second stringer substituting for him and last night a third stringer gave a third-rate performance. All he could talk about was the 152 farmers, Mr. Speaker, that bought their land. He and others, and the member that is not here, have continually given the pitch that the purpose of this land was so farmers could buy their land. They repeated it like a broken record. And nowhere can they back up that claim when that legislation was introduced — the land bank legislation.

The purpose was to establish viable farmers. The farmers had a choice. They could buy or rent. And after they were into the rental position — after they got established — they weren't forced to buy like this piece of legislation is doing now. "Perish the thought," they say. And in section 3 they say, "We're going to open up the rents." We tried hard, Mr. Speaker, to write in some guarantees into this legislation and write in some farmers' rights. And we tried to make the crown responsible in section 4, for loss or damage that the farmers sustain. Not just employees and ministers, but the crown is absolved from accepting any responsibility.

Now we find, the tenants can't get lower interest rates unless they buy leased land first. And, Mr. Speaker, that reminds me of the Godfather that says, "I'll make you an offer you can't refuse." That's what they're saying with this new legislation." I'll make you an offer you can't refuse." You know, with a gun at their heads.

Not just land bank leases are affected, Mr. Speaker. And that's what brings me to my feet in this third reading today. Last night, the Minister of Highways let the cat out of the bag. I'm sure his colleagues aren't too happy with the revelation he made, but the lands branch lessees are affected as well. They're going to change the regulations. Not a word about it prior to that. Nothing was said prior to the introduction of this, that this made was going to be broad, sweeping, powers.

Just because the biggest percentage of their land in the lands branch lies in a line starting south of Maple Creek and ends where the hills quit, between my and the Minister of Rural Affairs' constituencies, just because all the land lies in that area that happens to be held by two members on the opposition side, is that why they have to tear up those lease contracts as well? I don't know. The ministers made mockery of their phrase "open government," in this one admission. He tried to weasel out of it by not answering questions, and it took us close to an hour and a half, but he finally broke down. I'm sure his colleagues told him he'd goofed, that wasn't supposed to come out.

Now there's another 1,200 people are being affected — 2,700 by the land bank repeals act, and an additional 1,200, that makes 3,900 farmers, Mr. Speaker. That makes 3,900 farmers that are affected by a government; that's not open government, Mr. Speaker. Those people aren't representing an open government, they're representing a sneaky government. They tried to sneak it in.

The Minister of Agriculture said, "No increases in 1983." Big deal! If the formula was followed, every member on that side of the House knows that lands branch land would have gone down by 30 per cent. He said "zero increase." That's not a zero increase, Mr. Speaker, that's a 30 per cent increase in their rent. I thought rents were supposed to

come down in 1983, according to the formula.

The bill is bad legislation. The government didn't dare lease the land bank stand beside the farm purchase plan. They're destroying the contracts with a lot of little farmers. They are hurting the little farmers, but there's lots of money to make concession for the oil companies. This new Saskatchewan that they are opening the door to is quite interesting. We talk about the Van Mulligen case, native rights, and now the land bank. The joke in southern Saskatchewan is: what's the different between Saskatchewan and Poland? What's the difference? In Poland they are lifting martial law, Mr. Speaker. I can't support this bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, I have a few very brief comments to make about this bill. I will do it without entering the gutter of politics as the member opposite has just done. Mr. Speaker, this bill isn't taking anything away from anyone. Basically what we are saying is that in the first 15 months we are looking at helping 3,500 farmers, and most of those are young farmers, to buy and own their own land in the province of Saskatchewan, and that is a step forward.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. GARNER: — I guess part of it, Mr. Speaker, is that we could say it's the end of the NDP state farms. They're gone, gone from Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, we are offering the farmer of Saskatchewan a choice: not that they have to rent the land from the Government of Saskatchewan, not that they have to buy the land from the Government of Saskatchewan. The choice is theirs. Mr. Speaker, that is called Conservative freedom in this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, this government has brought about a farm purchase program so that that young man out there can now make his dreams a reality, and not as under the NDP administration where they wanted to own, control, and operate all the farms in the province of Saskatchewan. We are saying to the farming public of Saskatchewan, "The choice is yours. You can rent, or we will enable and assist you in buying that land." This is a positive step and a step ahead in the future for all the farming public.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

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

Yeas — 39

Devine
Muller
Birkbeck

Duncan
Schoenhals
Boutin

Martens
Rybachuk
Young

Taylor	Weiman	Gerich
Lane	Hodgins	Domotor
Rousseau	Sutor	Maxwell
Pickering	Sveinson	Hepworth
Sandberg	Sauder	Folk
McLeod	Petersen	Morin
McLaren	Meagher	Myers
Garner	Schmidt	Zazelenchuk
Klein	Smith (Moose Jaw South)	Johnson
Katzman	Hopfner	Baker

Nays — 8

Blakeney	Lingenfelter	Shillington
Thompson	Koskie	Yew
Engel	Lusney	

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lane that Bill No. 50 — **An Act to amend The Election Act** be now read a second time.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I have consulted with the Hon. Attorney General about some aspects of this bill, and we have agreed that they could perhaps be adequately covered in committee. Accordingly, we will not be opposing this bill on second reading.

I have some strong objections to one aspect of it, if I understand it properly. I will pursue that with the Attorney General and other hon. members in committee, and determine from that our position on third reading. With respect to second reading we propose to support the bill, and the principle of the bill, which is to give remand prisoners the right to vote.

HON. MR. LANE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in response to the Leader of the Opposition, he did indicate to me his concerns with the specific provisions. I believe it was in regard to the ballots and the manner in which the ballots will be counted and deposited.

The background is, Mr. Speaker, that sanatoria patients and hospital patients of course vote differently in a general election. In a by-election they vote in a similar manner to other electors. The advice I was given was that with the remand prisoners and the possibility that they could come from greater distances, it was felt that the standard manner of voting for hospital and sanatoria patients would be used in the case of remand prisoners in a by-election. The thinking is, basically, that hospital patients in a by-election are generally reasonably close to where they live (of course not always) but that possibility may not exist on remand prisoners. That's the thinking behind the

proposal. That is the reason for it.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome the support in principle, and I'm sure we'll be discussing this particular aspect further in committee. But I did advise the Leader of the Opposition that I would respond to that. I move second reading of the bill.

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

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 49 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act

Clause 1

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I had said yesterday, I didn't see too many problems with the bill. The majority of the bill, and I will repeat for the minister, the majority of the bill is housekeeping amendments. It appears to be that it is merely housekeeping except when you get to item 8 of the bill, subsection 32(1), where he increases the amount from \$750 million to \$1 billion. That portion of the bill, Mr. Chairman, is the part that concerned me a bit — when the minister earlier this year, as my colleague has suggested, was considering selling the Cornwall Centre or selling some other government building to raise funds, and then he changed his mind about that, then he decided now that he has to have an increase in the funding available for Sask Tel.

I think that one of the questions I would have of the minister is: with the larger amount of funding that he is proposing, is Sask Tel going to continue with the program of burying fibre optics as they have in the past?

HON. MR. LANE: — That particular policy is under review as I have advised in question period on numerous occasions. I would expect that we would be proceeding but no final decision has been made.

MR. LUSNEY: — It's under review at this time, and you're saying then that you've virtually stopped the burying of fibre optics until you make a decision as to whether you want to continue with it or not. When do you expect that you will be making that decision regarding the fibre optics program?

HON. MR. LANE: — Very, very shortly, but I don't want to leave you with the impression that we've virtually halted. There is a thing called cold weather out there and the ground gets very hard, and what was done in the wintertime was a survey and not the digging of the trenching for the fibre optics and the laying of the cable. So I'll just correct the phraseology of the hon. member that in fact what he said was not quite accurate.

MR. LUSNEY: — When the minister said it was under review, I can understand that there will be some problems trying to bury cable during the winter, and I don't think that I was suggesting that that should be done. Is the minister then saying that the program is going to continue? They are going to continue a very aggressive program in fibre optics, as has been done in the past, when the weather permits next summer?

HON. MR. LANE: — I just answered your question. We are reviewing it, I expect that we will be proceeding, but there has not been a final determination. We're reviewing all the

capital budgets in the normal budgetary process of all crown corporations and this falls in that category. I have given you my expectation.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — I'll just take a minute so I'm clear on what the minister is saying. When he assumed the chairmanship of the board, there was an ongoing program for fibre optics network around the province. It was put on hold while it was under review. The survey work which might have been done last summer for the next year was not proceeded with. There was some suggestion that it might be done during the winter months, and while it might be somewhat more difficult, survey work can be done during the winter months. As I understand it, the minister is saying that no decision has been made with respect to whether the installation of that province-wide network will continue. But his expectation is that it probably will, or perhaps that it's too hard. But that's approximately right.

Can he say whether the survey work is going to go ahead this winter, or will that wait until next summer?

HON. MR. LANE: — No, the survey work, assuming we do go ahead, will be done this winter for next spring.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 9 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the bill.

Bill No. 43 — An Act respecting Powers of Attorney

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2

MR. KOSKIE: — One possible suggestion to the Attorney General for consideration. In reviewing the bill, I'm suggesting to the Attorney General possibly setting up a registration of all powers of attorney. It should be set up, in fact, so individuals could see the terms of the powers of attorney. I don't know how many powers of attorney are out there. But what I'm just suggesting is that you may take a look at the possibility or the feasibility of setting up a form of a registration, so that individuals, in fact, would have an opportunity if they're dealing with someone with power of attorney to be able to confirm what powers, in fact, were set out. While we're agreeing with it, I just raise that as a possibility for consideration.

HON. MR. LANE: — I appreciate the comments of the hon. member. My concern would be that the power of attorney, being a personal instrument . . . whether we would want the public to incur the added cost of a registration. I'm advised that the vast majority of powers of attorney deal with the aged and it would simply be another cost for them for a registration service. I respond in that manner. If the hon. member was insistent I suppose I could get an internal study done as to the cost of that, but I suggest perhaps the hon. member would consider it in that light and, if he is still not satisfied, correspond with me and I'll be prepared to take a look at it. I think if we keep in mind that the vast majority are for the aged, that it may be an additional cost that they should not have to incur.

MR. KOSKIE: — I accept what you are saying, that there could be indeed a cost. I have no idea as to the amount and the number. I would just ask the Attorney General, if he knows, to advise me whether or not such a registration is in place in any of the other provinces. I'm not aware of it, but I mean could you provide . . .

HON. MR. LANE: — I'm not aware of any but I'll check it out.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 5 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the bill.

Bill No. 52 — An Act to amend The Heritage Property Act

Clause 1

MR. SHILLINGTON: — No particular debate about the name of the bill, but I do have a single question. I may as well ask it here as elsewhere. I expressed my concern yesterday, Mr. Minister, about the length of time it is taking to complete this program and expressed concern about some of the dangers that might befall us if we don't do it with all possible speed. I simply would like a comment from you on what you believe to be a reasonable timetable for completing this program. You know my concern that it be completed at the earliest possible opportunity.

MR. SCHOENHALS: — Mr. Chairman, I would remind the hon. member that this act came into force in November 1980. I don't think I need to jog his memory too hard to indicate who was in control at that time. When we took over in the spring, very little if anything had been done on this. We have since instituted the mechanism to put the registration in place. We indicated that the Museum of Natural History will be the housing of the registration. It's set up and ready to go. I would expect that the three-year term we are asking for in the bill, or putting into the bill, will be plenty of time to get the job done. I'd like to get it done sooner if possible, but we should be able to finish it in that time.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 49 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act

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

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 43 — An Act respecting Powers of Attorney

HON. MR. GARNER: — I move this bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 52 — An Act to amend The Heritage Property Act

MR. SCHOENHALS: — Mr. Speaker, I move this bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 54 — An Act to amend The Northern Saskatchewan Economic Development Act

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 54. The purpose of the amendments is twofold: primarily to change the government's method of accounting for, and control over advances made to working capital advance accounts; and secondly, to provide the necessary authorities for activities transferred from one department to another.

Presently, advance accounts receive advances from the consolidated fund for purchases of equipment, supplies and other operating costs that are used to provide goods and services to various users. The costs of such goods and services are then recovered from the users. The method of accounting used by the advance accounts facilitates accurate program costing and recovery based on use, as assets are capitalized and charged only as they are used.

Advance accounts were used for this purpose as the consolidated fund does not provide this capability. However, the consolidated funds' method of accounting for these advances resulted in deferring expenditures as the up front advance was shown as an asset of the consolidated fund. The provincial auditor felt that this method of accounting for advances was inappropriate, as it was inconsistent with the government's stated basis of accounting. The auditor recommended that the advances should be written off and future advances shown as a budgetary expenditure of the consolidated fund.

The proposed amendments therefore eliminate the advance accounts and replace them with revolving funds wherein any net cash outflow from the consolidated fund to the revolving fund will be a budgetary expenditure. While in essence the revolving fund will operate similar to an advance account, the method of accounting for the cash outflow to the fund will change, and at the same time, will allow the government to exercise a greater degree of control over these funds.

It should be noted that, as of April 1, 1982, there was \$164 million in outstanding advances, the majority of which will be written off to net assets. This means that the consolidated fund surpluses of previous years as reported by the former government would have been reduced likely to a deficit situation, had the \$164 million been counted as expenditures. In the future the majority of net cash outflows to these funds will be shown as a budgetary expenditure and will compete with all other government expenditures for the revenues of the province.

These amendments are, therefore, essentially a housekeeping item. This initiative as approved was started by the former government in February of 1982. However, legislative authority for the change had not been given to date. Accordingly, I propose that amendments be made to the Saskatchewan economic development act to provide for the change.

I should indicate that there are at present 18 advance accounts administered by eight departments. At this time four departmental bill requiring amendments are being brought forward, three by myself and one by the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources. The remaining four bills will be brought forward at a later date.

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

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I simply want to express a point that I wish to commend the members opposite for at least giving a bit of emphasis and consideration to the northern part of our province in terms of economic development initiatives. I wish to peruse, assess and study Bill 54 further, and I therefor beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 56 — An Act to amend The Department of Revenue, Supply and Services Act (No. 2)

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 56 — An Act to amend The Department of Revenue, Supply and Services Act (No. 2).

Mr. Speaker, I am introducing these bills on behalf of another minister, and what I am reading in these explanatory notes is exactly the same as what I have read before. I presume that instead of repeating myself . . . It's the same story.

I move second reading.

MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Speaker, we will want to have an opportunity to review this bill, and I would beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 57 — An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act (No. 2)

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 57 — An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act (No. 2).

Mr. Speaker, this bill relates to legislation enacted on July 9, 1982 that applies to spousal pensions payable under the public service, Sask Power, Sask Tel, workers' compensation board and liquor board superannuation plans. That legislation increased spousal pensions from the previous 50 per cent to 60 per cent of a deceased superannuate's or employee's pension entitlement. The clear intent of the legislation was to increase all existing spousal pensions that were being paid effective May 1, 1982, as well as all new spousal pensions that became payable on and after that date

However, because of the timing of the legislation and the omission of retroactivity for the pertinent sections, the legislation providing for the increase did not apply to several spousal pensions that became payable between May 1 and July 9 because of the death of a superannuate or employee that occurred during that period. This bill then simply corrects that situation by making legislation retroactive in order to include the spousal pensions that commenced between May 1 and July 9, 1982.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 57.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, just one point. I am first of all saying that we will be supporting the bill, and I appreciate the explanation of the minister on their retroactivity portion. We were wondering what that was about. We have no problem with this bill and we will be supporting it.

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

RURAL AFFAIRS

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 43

MR. CHAIRMAN: —Would the minister introduce his officials, please?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my immediate left, acting deputy minister, Dan Gilewich, and sitting immediately behind him, director of administration services branch, and immediately behind me is Gerry Parrott, acting director of municipal management and financial advisory services branch.

Item 1

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few questions for the minister. However, before I proceed with the questions I would like to make a few comments regarding the estimates. Unfortunately we have to deal with estimates at the end of the year rather than the beginning of the year, but I notice in the estimates that are before us now, there are very few changes from what was proposed in the March budget, except for a couple of items that I will be dealing with later on.

One of the questions that I would have for the minister would be: in your total budget, I guess, for this year, and I see some reductions in it.

Are you going to continue in the future with some of the programs, or maybe I shouldn't be looking at what you'll be doing next year because you won't tell me. And this year is almost gone, so it becomes a little difficult. But on primary grids and farm access roads, are you going to separate the farm access roads, the construction of them and any bridge repairs or culvert repairs, or any other repairs that may be required for low-level crossings? Are you going to separate those into the bridge division, or are you going to have that as part of the construction cost of that road, and provide funding to the R.M. according to the formula that is being used for that grant?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — I'd just like to inform the member that the bridge is under the bridge construction program, and the roads are under the road assistance program.

MR. LUSNEY: — Most of these bridges, when they are repaired, and I'm not talking about a major construction of a bridge or a new bridge . . . But if a farm access road is being built, the engineers assess the bridge at the time, and it may have to be widened a little, or it may have to be reinforced, or whatever — just some minor repairs to it. Are you saying then that the R.M. has to divide those two or will be looking at a different rate of grant on that repair work? Why can't it just be tied in as one job on that main farm access road, when it is not the major construction of a bridge?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — There is a different percentage for the bridge, and a different percentage for the construction, so they wouldn't follow the same guidelines. So that's why they are separated.

MR. LUSNEY: — Okay. Then I might ask, I suppose, have you considered changing the guidelines regarding some of the minor repairs on culverts or low level crossing, or what have you, when the R.M.s are constructing the main farm access roads?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — I am advised by my acting deputy that the bridges under 20 feet do in fact go along with the construction of the road. Anything over and above that comes under the bridge grant.

MR. LUSNEY: — The formula then for the construction of that road would apply to whatever repairs are made to that bridge that's under 20 feet?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — Yes, it would.

MR. LUSNEY: — Another question, Mr. Minister. The intermunicipal recreation grants. Are you going to continue them as they have been in the past? Are you going to honor any agreements that were made between the municipalities regarding recreational grants that they have applied for to the department, had approved, and had paid out (at least in this year) to the various recreation communities that are out there, or municipalities, when they have the intermunicipal agreement there? Are you going to continue that program and honor those agreements that were made, or are you going to make some changes in it?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — I will advise the member that the recreational program is under urban affairs and he could perhaps ask that question when his estimates come up.

MR. LUSNEY: — The grant, however, applies to rural municipalities which make agreements with certain urban centres. Now, they provide funding through these agreements to an urban centre. If there is a small town (pick any town, it could be Milestone or what have you), the R.M. there would have an agreement with them to provide some funding for that facility in Milestone. That goes through rural affairs because the R.M. provides that funding. Are you going to honor the agreement that the rural municipality has with the recreation centre from the urbans?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — Yes, we will.

MR. LUSNEY: — Okay. Could I go a little further then and say: are you going to provide that funding to the rural municipalities when they have an agreement that was approved in the past regarding hamlets? Apparently I have been made aware that hamlets have been cut out by the department on funding. In this year without any notification to the R.M.s, the funding was not provided. It was just cut back. They were paid for the larger towns and villages, but not for the organized hamlets.

HON. MR. PICKERING: — We have cut out the hamlet grants. They get their grants through the R.M. because they are under the jurisdiction of the R.M. where villages and town are under urban affairs.

MR. LUSNEY: — Okay. They get their grants from the R.M. That's true. The agreement was, and has been in the past, where the R.M.s over the last couple of years have been receiving the grants from the department to provide this funding to the hamlets. This year, in one instance at least that I am aware of, the grant was provided to the R.M. for an agreement that they had two of the villages within the R.M. It was not provided for a hamlet because the department finally then said that it was the responsibility of the R.M. and the department would not be providing the funding for it.

HON. MR. PICKERING: — Well, I think if the hon. member could supply us with some of the specifics, the exact hamlet you are talking about, we might be able to come up with the answers.

MR. LUSNEY: — Just a general answer, Mr. Minister. The specific one will get to you eventually, not here this afternoon. Is it the policy of the department not to honor any agreements that have been made which included hamlets?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — They get a basic grant and a per capita grant depending on their population. To my knowledge we haven't cut any of them out.

MR. LUSNEY: — I'm glad to hear that, Mr. Minister, because I will be providing you with further details regarding a certain hamlet that was cut out. Probably it was just an oversight on behalf of the department or whatever it was. If the policy hasn't changed, I would expect that the R.M. will be receiving the remainder of the funding that they should have received or have been receiving in the past.

I don't really have any more questions in general. I suppose we could go to the questions item by item and I have some questions regarding the separate sections of the items.

On item 1 specifically, Mr. Minister. I see there's a bit of a change in what was proposed in the March budget and what you have here. The other expenses seem to be where there's the largest change. Could you indicate how come? I see your funding is a little lower there. The estimates are lower than what was proposed in March. Why the difference?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — The majority of those other expenses were to do with the rural capital assistance program administration that didn't in fact take place because it never did hit the floor of the legislature and was never passed. As a result, the program wasn't proceeded with.

MR. LUSNEY: — I agree, Mr. Minister, that it never did get approval in this House. It was proposed however, and I see a reduction there. I don't imagine I'll get the reasoning as to why the reduction. I suppose I could ask that question, if you can tell me what the reasoning is that you had come up with a lower figure than what was proposed last March.

HON. MR. PICKERING: — Would the member like us to send this over to him?

MR. LUSNEY: — While that's being sent over, Mr. Chairman, maybe I can just go on a few other questions on subvote 1. Could the minister inform me of what salaries have been paid to his staff since he has been a minister; what the names of these people are; the positions that they hold — all of the minister's staff?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — Are you talking about in the department or just in my office? Just in my office? I have one executive assistant who is receiving \$27,816 a year.

MR. LUSNEY: — Who was the person that you said was receiving the 27,000?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — My executive assistant whose name is Steven Schiefner. I think if you look back at the former administration, the people working in the very same office were making somewhat more than this. Besides that, there were two of them in there. There was a special assistant and an executive assistant. So I think we're getting along quite well here with just one person.

MR. KOSKIE: — Qualifications of this executive assistant? Education-wise, experience?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — I'll be able to table that for you. I don't have his resume in my hand here, but certainly if I'm satisfied with him, I can't see why you wouldn't be.

MR. KOSKIE: — Is the minister indicating that he hired someone and he doesn't . . . and obviously would have reviewed it at the time that you hired the person. Surely you have an idea as to some of the general qualifications of this individual that you've hired for 27,500. Give us some facts.

HON. MR. PICKERING: — I certainly have given it some thought, and this is a minimum salary as set out by the previous administration. And that salary is \$27,916 a year. The qualifications he falls under is up to me to decide whether I'm happy to hire this person with his qualifications or not.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Speaker, I see it is difficult for us to get too much information out of the minister. The minister indicated he had only one EA. Does the minister have anybody else working in his office under a contract, or under some other agreement?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — No, I do not.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Chairman, could the minister provide me with a list of salaries of the people working within the department?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — Yes, I could send that over now if you would like.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Chairman, do any of the minister's staff have any CVA vehicles that

they have at their disposal?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — No, they don't. They do not have CVA vehicles, the ones in my office.

MR. LUSNEY: — Do you have any vacant positions within the department at this time?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — Yes, we do. If you'd like me to list them, I can list them. Or I can send them over to you. Would you like me to tell you who they are? Send them over? Okay.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you, and I trust I am excused for speaking from a seat other than my own, although *Hansard* may not, I suppose, I just have a quick question. Do you have any plans to hire someone to handle public relations — a PR person in your office? Do you have any plans to hire such a person or establish such a capacity in your office?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — We've been looking for somebody to fill that position, and up to this point in time we haven't found anybody.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I just wanted one further question. At what stage are you? Have you advertised and had nobody who is prepared to take on such an impossible job, or have you not advertised, or at what stage are you in hiring a PR person?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — Like I informed you before, we have been looking into the situation, and we are not in any big hurry because we won't be hiring anybody until after the New Year.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, a question to the minister on this same topic. Do you have a salary range that you will be working in when you are advertising and hiring that position?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — As the member is well aware, these positions are filled through an order in council, and it will depend on the qualifications of the person we hired as to what salary we will in fact pay.

MR. KOSKIE: — The minister has been around now for some seven months, and if you look at the executive administration on the form that you have here, you have an acting deputy minister, you have an acting assistant deputy minister, you have an acting executive director. Is the minister having some considerable problem getting anyone to come to take a job under him? Are you having problems in getting a permanent deputy a minister, or a permanent assistant deputy minister? Everything that you have here is 'acting.' When are you going to get a permanent deputy minister?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — Well, I think if the member for Quill Lakes would have a look around himself, we've been well accepted throughout the province here by the representation we have in this House. Whether we have people acting . . . It's rather obvious they are acting well because we don't have that many problems. The ones we got we inherited from the former administration.

AN HON. MEMBER: — How about Van Mulligen?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — We didn't inherit him either. I'm just saying that we're happy with what's going on within my department, and if there are going to be any changes

made down the road, we will make them ourselves without your decision.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. KOSKIE: — You may have answered this previously but I want to ask it again anyway. I want to ask you whether you have been in fact advertising to fill these positions on a permanent basis, and are you following the procedure of some of the other departments wherein you are offering a contractual employment basis, rather than the normal appointment under OCs?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — I think I can answer both questions by answering your first one. No, we are not advertising to fill any of these positions.

MR. KOSKIE: — I notice that there is a special assistant to the DM. Is this an additional position over what the previous administration had, and was there a special assistant to the DM previously?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — No, this isn't an addition. It was there when the previous administration was here.

MR. KOSKIE: — What was the salary being paid previously in comparison to the salary being paid to the special assistant to the DM at the present time?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — I think the hon. member for Pelly has that information there in front of him, if he'd look at that sheet we sent over.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Chairman, you have here nine vacancies, Mr. Minister, that aren't filled at this point within the department. Have you advertised for some of these positions or are you going through the public service commission to fill these? What areas have you looked into to try and fill these positions so that the department can get on with some of the work that should be done before spring comes?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — At this point in time we haven't decided, and until we do we won't be doing any advertising to fill these positions.

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2

MR. LUSNEY: — Again here, Mr. Minister, I see a decrease in what was going to be. We have the same number of people working. Other expenses have decreased by quite a substantial amount. Could you indicate what the decrease comes from?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — I sent it over in that second sheet. I think I sent it across with the page.

Item 2 agreed to.

Items 3 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

Item 9

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Chairman, I see here, I believe, a \$12,000 restraint, a cutback. I imagine that would be on here re materials. Could the minister explain where the cutback comes from?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — I am advised that we didn't need as many materials as we had anticipated. As a result we had a \$12,000 cut there.

Item 9 agreed to.

Item 10

MR. KOSKIE: — I think this is where it comes under, Mr. Minister. Could you advise me, for instance, during the year . . . Well, can you give me the information in respect to the supergrid road program? Can you indicate the number of miles that have been completed to date?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — The hon. members for Quill Lakes, would you mind if I just send the information over? It's quite lengthy here.

MR. KOSKIE: — You include the total of all the supergrid that has been constructed to date. And within that information is there also the amount that was built in the past year?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — Yes, there is.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Chairman, item 10, revenue sharing. I noticed that it is the same as it was before. Does the minister intend to continue in the following year with the same, roughly the same amount of revenue-sharing moneys provided to the R.M.s as has been in 1982?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — We just met with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities yesterday. I am aware that this was the end of their 5-year agreement. We have ongoing negotiations with them and they will be announced in the budget in 1983-84.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, could you give us some indication of when the R.M.s could expect that budget to be put down so that they can plan their expenditures for the year also?

MR. LUSNEY: — We might be giving an interim to them in February, but as you are well aware, the budget for rural affairs won't be passed until the spring session when we pass the budget for '83-84.

Item 10 agreed to.

Item 11

MR. LUSNEY: — Could the minister indicate what local improvement districts are involved in this?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — Paddockwood No. 520, Big River No. 555, Loon Lake No. 561, and Big Beaver No. 622.

Item 11 agreed to.

Items 12 and 13 agreed to.

Item 14

MR. LUSNEY: — Could the minister give me a list of what roads were completed and what R.M.s received some of that funding in '82?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — The were located in R.M. No. 152 and R.M. No. 183.

Item 14 agreed to.

Item 15

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Chairman, there's one item here that is missed in this new budget which was in the March budget and that was the capital grant program. That was a rural capital assistance program which many of the R.M.s had anticipated receiving and many of the R.M.s had also planned some of their budgeting around receiving that grant. They may have made some commitments to purchase some maintenance equipment or maybe to build a new office. That has been cut back, I notice. There's about \$1.5 million for 1982-83 that was in the budget that was supposed to be provided for the R.M.s. Could the minister tell me if he is going to replace that program since the R.M.s lost on it this year? Is he going to introduce another program which will assist some of the R.M.s to pick up the money that they had lost in '82?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think I answered this question before in the House back in the summer session. The former minister of rural affairs sent out a letter to all R.M.s indicating they were going to have a rural capital assistance program, and in that information sent out, he told them that it would not become a program or a law until it went through the legislature. As a result, an election was called and any of the R.M.s that budgeted under that program were budgeting ahead of legislation being passed.

We had this come up at many of the district meeting throughout the province back in June and had many letters on it where people went ahead and budgeted with the idea that this program was going through. We told them it was a mistake because of the fact that the program hadn't been implemented. It hadn't passed legislation, and they would have to just put up with their financial difficulties and place it on the burden of the taxpayer. It wasn't our fault, but we certainly are looking at all programs within the department.

If we'd gone ahead with it as the member for Quill Lakes says, we certainly would have gone ahead with some type of program had the former administration left us any money. But we didn't have any. In your proposed budget, there was almost \$200 million deficit. So we had to cut many programs that we . . . We now have the books open in the province and the people know exactly where we're at as far as the financial situation is — open government. So we'll be looking at programs such as this down the road, and all the programs within the rural affairs to see how we can make them better.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Chairman, the minister goes on to say that the R.M.s are at fault because they budgeted a little ahead of time. I'm sure the minister is aware that the R.M.s have a certain date by which they have to prepare their budgets. This had to be

done prior to the budgets being passed within this legislature, so it put them in a position where they had to have something prepared; they got a draft of what was being proposed and they budgeted according to that.

All the minister had to go was just put in that extra \$1.5 million and they wouldn't have had any financial difficulties out there to go to their taxpayers with. But I suppose political promises come before the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. So we can understand why that program was cut, and it appears that the minister isn't going to introduce a program that going to benefit the taxpayers of the R.M.s the way they had anticipated.

Mr. Minister, you had indicated that if you come up with a program it would be one that you'd be coming up with. And, I have asked you this before: do you have anything in your plans at this point to come up with a program, not identical but similar, with some extra funding for the R.M.s in 1983-84?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — I would like to go back to your earlier comments where the R.M.s you said went out and purchased equipment or whatever. They were advised by the minister of rural affairs not to budget with the rural capital assistance program included in their budget, because it had to be passed through legislation before anybody could receive any funds through the program. It did not hit the floor of the legislature, as I said, and so anybody that budgeted for that had to suffer the consequences.

As far as coming out with any program, rural capital assistance, we are looking at a program now. We don't want to reveal any of the discussions we have ongoing, but we certainly are looking at something to help the R.M.s in the future.

MR. KOSKIE: — I just want to indicate to the minister that with respect to the program that was being proposed by the previous government, it was a \$12 million budget over five years. I want to say that we have capital assistance programs for the urban, and that it was the representation of the association of rural municipalities that they should be treated in a similar manner. And accordingly the previous government in consultation with them established a capital assistance program for the rural. I want to say that it was done in consultation. It was designed to meet the needs as the municipalities had indicated. And I want to say I don't really understand why the minister purposely scrapped this program when, in fact, the municipalities have been requesting it. Can you give us a reason why you scrapped it, other than that weak, limp answer that you gave before? Are you for it or against it? Will you implement it?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — I don't think I ever said I was against the program. I just said that when we formed the government back in April, supposedly it was a \$200 million surplus. Had it been that we could have increased that program. This rural capital assistance program you're talking about - there's 279 R.M.s in the province; there were only about 50 that would have qualified for any funding during the 1982-83 year.

MR. LUSNEY: — We're on item 15 are we, Mr. Chairman. On item 15, you have here a new program, \$148,000 for road ambulance services. It's a new program. Could the minister indicate who received some of this money or if all of it was disbursed; what the formula is for you advancing this money to whoever it was, and how much each individual or each ambulance service got?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — We supplied rural ambulance of the province with an extra

\$500,000 because many of them were in financial difficulty. This is administered through urban affairs. Urban affairs put up \$352,000 and rural affairs 148, making a total of \$500,000. But the distribution of the funds was administered through urban affairs.

MR. LUSNEY: — You've got \$148,000 in here, Mr. Minister. Are you saying that you've got money in your estimates here which you don't know where it went or how it was spent?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — One thing we do know is where our money is going. \$148,000 was transferred to urban affairs who administered an extra \$500,000 to the rural ambulance assistance program for the year 1982-83. They administered . . . And where the funds went, I don't have a list of them, but I think if you ask that question in urban affairs estimates, he can certainly supply you with the answer.

Item 15 agreed to.

Vote 43 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

RURAL AFFAIRS

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 43

Item 1

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, a short question on this vote. Can you tell me, in the administration, what does that fall into? Is it personnel or other?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — The reason for the special warrant was for the retroactive salaries. Salary payments anticipated though SGEU were \$100,000; a new assistant deputy minister and support staff was \$35,000. If you want to hear about the out-of-court settlement for Portage — \$8,200 — we could probably dwell on that for a little while if you like.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Just one more question on that. I see that last year administration was \$725,000. This year it will be close to \$1.2 million. I would just like to point out in closing that for a government that talks about decentralizing and not having a top-heavy operation, I find it rather amusing that you would raise that portion of your budget by that much.

HON. MR. PICKERING: — Mr. Chairman, the March blue book included a 9 per cent increase for the October 1981 negotiated salary increase. The final negotiated figure, 12.75 per cent, was not agreed to by the SGEU until July 1982. Thus the March blue book understated salaries in most cases by 3.75 per cent. Much of this would have been recovered through savings from position vacancies.

In the November blue book, salary numbers are in most cases significantly higher than the March blue book numbers because of the following factors: funds are included to pay 12.75 per cent retroactive salaries for in-scope employees for the period October

1, 1981 to March 31, 1982. The November blue book reflects the projected actual salary costs based on expenditures to date and projected vacancies. The November blue book salary costs would also differ because several programs introduced in the March budget by the NDP will not be implemented. In addition, minor salary changes occurred because of promotions, reclassifications, annual increments and appointments at different salary levels.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, you said in supplementary estimates, you needed an extra 35,000 for a new assistant deputy minister. Do you have a list of the salaries of your ministers, deputy ministers and what have you? The list that I have here doesn't really have anything for a new deputy minister. We have acting deputy ministers; where does the new deputy minister for 35,000 come in?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — He was placed in there by your administration, and since the election has been transferred to another department.

MR. LUSNEY: — Well, Mr. Minister, if he was transferred to another department, why would you need an extra \$35,000 for that deputy minister if he is no longer within your department? You have 47,000 here for a deputy minister that's in there at present. Have there been more people you have moved that way that you needed money for?

HON. MR. PICKERING: — The 35,000 just indicates his pay up to the point in time that he was transferred.

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 43 agreed to.

The committee reported progress.

MR. SPEAKER: — I would like to remind the members of the CPA (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) dinner this evening, and for those of you who are forgetful like I am, the dinner this year is in the Hotel Saskatchewan in the Regency Room.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:06 p.m.