

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Thursday, December 16, 1982

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. JOHNSON: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night at the CPA dinner I had the pleasure of sitting beside a young lady who has been visiting Canada from Sweden since last August. She had never been to the legislature, so I indicated that I would pick her up and bring her down here and introduce her to you and through you to the Legislative Assembly. She is here on a working permit and works in the Toronto Dominion Bank downtown. As I said, she has been here since last October and is returning home later on in January. I would like to wish her a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year on behalf of all on the floor of the legislature, and a safe journey home.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Dismantling of Workers' Environment Board

MR. KOSKIE: — I would like, Mr. Speaker, to direct a question to the Minister of Labor, the minister in charge of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

Outside this House yesterday, in an interview with the Leader-Post and reported this morning, you said, and I want to quote:

The decision to disband the board was made several months ago.

I want to ask the minister if that is true. And if you have an open-door policy with unions and you want to co-operate with them at every level, could you advise us why you did not communicate this decision to scrap the worker environment board until very recently?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, The WEB board was under discussion for a number of weeks. As I mentioned in the House yesterday, we, in the Department of Labor, have the occupational health department under our jurisdiction. We have people in that department who are doing mine safety, doing mine inspections continuously, and the fact that we have another board and a commission, we figured, was just a duplication of effort. These people are available and if they're available they can come into our department any time or discuss with our mining inspectors any problems that they may see at their mine sites.

MR. KOSKIE: — Supplemental, Mr. Speaker. I have here a copy of an agreement which was indeed signed by the participating parties on March 25, 1981. It seems to me what you have done is unilaterally discard that contract and have had no consultation with the participating parties with respect to your actions. Can you indicate what actions, what discussion you have had with the unions that were involved, in respect to

disbanding this board?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, we did not discuss with the board members in that agreement, with the union and board members, whichever . . . There is union and management on that board. It says in the agreement that the associate deputy minister, shall be chairman of the board, and at this time we did not have an associate deputy minister, so, looking at the whole board and the duplication of work that was being done, we want to have it all under our Department of Labor.

MR. KOSKIE: — A further supplemental. You have indicated that there was no associate deputy minister in respect to the executive committee. I want to indicate to you that my information is that the executive board met, in fact voted to change that provision, it was passed at the executive meeting, and that you have unilaterally discarded the actions of the board itself.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I have said before that we figure it's a duplication of effort. We are going to look after the occupational health and safety through the Department of Labor, and that was probably the 799th board that we've run across since we took office here in April, and there was so much duplication of work we are wanting to streamline the whole operation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. KOSKIE: — As I take it, the position that the minister has indicated is that any future action that he takes will be unilateral without consultation of unions, as you have so clearly demonstrated in your action here. Are you heading on a confrontation rather than a co-operation basis in respect to working with unions?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. I've had more co-operation in the last six or seven months than I think the previous administration has had for several years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. McLAREN: — As far as the actual rank and file worker is concerned, we've had more to do with the worker in seven months than you people had before, and it's been the leadership that you have been working with. The rank and file are coming into my office now.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — A question, Mr. Speaker, for the Minister of Labor. Surely even the incumbent Minister of Labor understands the difference between the role played by the board and the role played by your department. The role played by this board was: it allowed worker input into the decision, whereas yours is an enforcement role. My question is: would you explain to me concisely and precisely how your department provides worker input into these decisions in the workplace?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, for several years now, in all of industry, in all companies in this province, there have been occupational health committees in the companies themselves. Every month we get minutes into our Department of Labor as to their concerns and we are on top of it all the time. So what's the use of having another board on top of the occupational health committees that are already in existence in the province?

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Supplementary. How many times have you been asked by management about conditions in the workplace, and taken time to consult the workers and report back to the management? You are suggesting that's the process in your department. How many times has that taken place since you assumed office?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Are you suggesting how many times management have been in?

MR. SHILLINGTON: — No, that wasn't my question.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Then repeat your question, please.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — New question. You are suggesting that your department is duplicating the role of the board in allowing worker input. You are therefore saying that you receive requests from management for advice, you consult the workers and report back to management. My question is: how many times has that actually happened? How many times have you taken the opportunity to consult with workers and report back to management on these things?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I'm informed that this should probably be an estimate question, but the occupational health committees are the workforce in the industry. They are the ones that are sending the minutes to our department all the time for our inspectors, for our people to read, and to discover if there are inaccuracies out there. They react to that.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Is there not a difference between occupational safety, which is enforcement-orientated, and the worker environment board, which seeks to provide worker input into decisions before they are made? Isn't that the difference between the two?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, it is my experience, and I have been involved with it prior to getting into government, that the employees do have the right to express their opinions at their occupational health meetings — and that is what we are getting here — prior to any problems and suggestions and changes that could be made.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Isn't it true that the occupational health deals with problems in an ex post factor way, whereas the worker environment board was intended to give workers the opportunity to have input before the decisions become final?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I see no difference in them whatsoever. The occupational health people will do that at the work level, also through their minutes.

Economic Recovery in Saskatchewan

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Premier. I think it was yesterday in this House he pointed out that he was in active demand as a speaker outside the province, and it inhibited him from attendance in the House. I noted in the press that he had been in Vancouver speaking to the Vancouver Board of Trade, and the report in the *Leader-Post* some days ago indicated that Saskatchewan has decided not to participate in the current recession in Canada, the premier had advised the members of the Vancouver Board of Trade.

I noted just about the same time an advertisement in the press headed, “ Repossessed Homes”, and it gave a list of repossessed homes, and then it says, “More homes too numerous to mention. Call for your list of repossessed homes. Call Jennifer Smith.”

And just about at the same time I saw another ad in the paper saying:

Ford Motor Credit Company repossessed trucks. We have on hand four 1980 Model Ford CLT trucks . . . are offered for sale prior to being sent to an auction.

Now, My question, Mr. . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — You should tell the rest of the province that.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Members are asking for more details, perhaps they want to pick them up. “Phone or call at Percival Truck Centre, No. 1 Highway East, Regina.”

My question to you, Mr. Premier, is this. While you may well have opted not to participate in the recession, some citizens of our province are rather clearly participating very much against their will. Are you proposing to take any steps so that citizens will not have to participate in this recession in the way that you are asserting that we in this legislature are not participating in the recession?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, in the province of Saskatchewan we have initiated several programs which the rest of the country looks at with a great deal of envy. And when I travel across the country, or indeed out of the country, or our ministers travel in other parts of the world, people from all walks of life and from various corners of the world appreciate what’s going on in Saskatchewan.

Now, when we start to talk about housing, the best mortgage program in the history of Canada was initiated in this province to protect people from losing their homes — at 13.25 per cent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Now that may not appeal to the members opposite, but I want them to remember that they voted for it, and they appreciate it. It’s the best one in the country. When we’re looking at discretionary income in the province of Saskatchewan, something like over \$100 million is passed on to the consumers, who are now saving in the neighborhood of about \$1 a gallon over the province of Quebec. And it’s even getting better, because we don’t participate in federal programs that are passed on, and we don’t piggyback on them like the former administration did. No more 20 per cent gas tax.

Number two, when we look at the rate of unemployment in the province of Saskatchewan, it’s the lowest in the nation. When we look at the rate of price increases of CPI, it’s the lowest in Canada. When we look at the new activity in the energy business, everybody in Canada is looking at Saskatchewan for investment and economic activity because of jobs, because of the service industry. They are announcing new discoveries, and new oil programs. When you put the thing together everybody knows, everybody knows that we have to cope with the national economic programs. None of us are all that happy with them, but the province of Saskatchewan has an attitude that we can be resilient as anybody in the nation. Because we’re first

class we'll be first out of the recession.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I have a very short question. How can you be first out of a recession you decided not to participate in in the first place?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Maybe the member opposite doesn't recall that we are Canadians. This province is part of the Canadian scene. The people in Saskatchewan under their new administration are going to say, 'We're going to have a positive attitude about dealing with economics and with enterprise, not a negative attitude.' It's that change in attitude that the whole country is delighted about, and that's why they're requesting information from this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Trappers' Association

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question will be directed to the minister for DTRR, the minister for DNS. It's in regard to the trappers' association. As you well know, the association depends largely on government funding for its operation and programs. In the past eight months, the association has been trying to get some indication from you as to whether it can receive program funding or not. The STA's meeting and annual convention is coming up next month. The association is directly concerned that it has had no response from your administration. My question is: will the minister advise this House as to whether his government plans to provide the Saskatchewan Trappers' Association with grants or financial assistance at this time?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member is maybe misrepresenting a little bit about the dire concern of the trappers' association. My ongoing discussions with them have always been of a positive nature. Yes, we will be providing the trappers' association with grant money. In fact, I believe \$25,000 is on its way (if it's not on its way, it will be in the very near future) for the administration aspects of the Saskatchewan Trappers' Association. I believe they're aware of that.

MR. YEW: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I spoke with the people of the association just as recently as an hour ago, and they advised me that there was nothing in the works. They've had continuous promises and commitments by your administration. However, apparently the whole executive of the new administration is out on Christmas leave. And they direly need this money at this point in time. However, my question is: if your department is prepared to give the association funds, what is the reason for delaying this payment until after the new year?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — I've just said, Mr. Speaker, that we have not delayed the payment till after the new year. I'm confident that the money will be in the hands of the trappers' association before the new year. And I'm really surprised at the information you gave the House today that they are not aware there is money coming, because my information is that they are aware of that. And I don't know where that kind of misunderstanding could come from. But in any case I will assure you through Mr. Speaker that the money is coming to them before the end of the year.

Absence of Minister of Agriculture

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier. The opposition has noticed that since Monday the Minister of Agriculture and the House Leader has not been in the Assembly, which included the passage of two very important farm bills. Can the Premier indicate whether the minister is away on government business?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — The minister is not in the House. He's on private business.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the Premier. Mr. Premier, can you indicate to the House whether or not the Minister of Agriculture and House Leader is away on holidays at this time?

I would like to know whether or not it's the intention of the government to complete the estimates of this year's budget? We are now into the ninth month of the fiscal year. I'm wondering whether you can give assurances that we will complete estimates by the time we leave here for the Christmas recess?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, no, I can't give any assurances that we will.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the Premier. Will the Premier give us an assurance that the House will diligently pursue estimates until close to Christmas so that we may have some opportunity of asking the treasury benches how they have spent the money over the last nine months?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, yes. We'll diligently pursue it. It depends on the opposition — what they want to pursue and what they don't.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to have the assurance from the Premier that it will depend on what the opposition wishes to do. May I assure you, Mr. Premier, that we wish to proceed with estimates and with the other House business, and we wish to proceed diligently. We'll take a break for Christmas, and would the Premier then agree that we will carry on for some days, that we will take break from the Christmas and New Year and come back very shortly thereafter?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, we have bills that we want to get passed, we have estimates we want to get through, and we'll proceed with the normal course of events to get them finished and get them completed as quickly as possible.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, final supplementary. I am very pleased that the Premier has indicated that we'll move quickly before Christmas. The final part to the question is whether we will come back quickly after the Christmas break, in early January, to complete the estimates.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — We'll be announcing when we come back when we see how much progress is made in the next few days. I can't add any more to that.

Nipawin Hydro-Electric Site

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I took notice of a question by the hon. member for Quill Lakes concerning the tendering of the security contract at the Nipawin site. I wish to confirm with this House that the normal procedure of accepting bids by Saskatchewan Power Corporations carried forth in this tender. The Fort Security Services bid of \$361,700 was low bid.

Base Fort Patrol Ltd., Saskatoon, after a consultation with the power corporation to finalize and upgrade and uniform their original bid, came to \$368,238, an increase of approximately \$6,000 over and above the Fort Security contract.

Besides that, Mr. Speaker, the people who were going to be involved with the Fort Security contract were all from the local area. The other company, with second low bid, was a Saskatoon-based company with their head office outside the province.

It was the decision of our board to give it to the low bid because it was the low bid, plus the fact that it was a local content of people in the contract.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. KOSKIE: — I just want to direct supplementary question to the minister. You indicated that normal procedure was followed. On the 13th of December, you met with Base-Fort Petroleum Ltd., representatives of them. Did you at that time indicate and acknowledge to representatives of that company that, in fact, their tender was lower than the one that had been awarded? Higher?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I was not in attendance at that meeting, but I have all the figures here. I would ask you to tender the document that you had yesterday and we'll upgrade it for you.

MR. KOSKIE: — In order to clarify the irregularities in respect to this contract, and there were a number of them, I wonder if the minister would in fact, file all of the tenders and the bids that were submitted.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, this is not my information to hand out, but I have the final figures here for you. I did meet the lady in Saskatoon, that was not before the Saskatchewan Power Corporation board, but I did meet with them and I suggested to her then that we would give them the final figures as to how the contract was arrived at, and she evidently met with the Power management. My understanding is that it's all understood; it's after the fact now. We're also doing some work at the tendering of power corporation and potash corporation to speed up, have less paper, make it easier for people to tender.

MR. KOSKIE: — In respect to the acceptance of what you terms the low tender, I wonder if you could advise us whether there were any additional revisions of the contract following the tender rather than the initial bid that was submitted.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, the only addition to it was the fact that they were not local people that were going to be working at the site. They had not entered in the costs of living in camp. That the only difference.

Economic Recovery in Saskatchewan

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A question to the Premier. It relates to our failure to participate in the recession. The question arises out of an article the other day in the *Globe and Mail*, and the headline says it all: "Prairie Boom Goes Bust." I will not quote the article for you, but let me just relate a very few stats: Saskatchewan's unemployment doubles; welfare in Saskatchewan up to 33 per cent more than Manitoba; unemployment insurance up 40 per cent more than Manitoba; all three governments face rising deficits; commodity prices down.

I listened with some interest to the comments of the Minister of Finance wondering what hope the unemployed and the bankrupt might find in what he was taking to the conference. All I heard was a hope expressed by him that there might be a greater co-operation.

My question is: is the Minister of Finance taking to that conference anything more useful than his expression of a hope for the joyous hand holding with the federal government?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the attitude coming out of Saskatchewan over the past, I suppose, 31 of the last 38 years has been one of negativism, a negative attitude. And people are tired of that. They know that the whole world is suffering from a recession, but they want to think that we have two things in particular: that we have the ability to produce food, and the ability to produce energy. And those two are in abundance in the province of Saskatchewan. And we feel confident that we can lead this nation in contributing toward recovery, in providing jobs, in providing energy for not only this province but the rest of the country and, indeed, the world, as well as food processing. We're looking forward to negotiating on heavy oil, on all sorts of things that can link to this province.

And what we're saying to the rest of the country is that the sky is not falling in. In fact, we lead the nation in most statistical pieces of information that we can generate and that we're proud of it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

POINT OF PRIVILEGE

HON. MR. LANE: — Point of privilege. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Koskie in questioning indicated that he had information which indicates the contract was awarded to Fort Securities for \$361,700. He went on to indicate that in fact the Government of Saskatchewan and Sask Power had not awarded a contract to the lowest bidder.

Today he indicated that there were serious irregularities in the awarding of the contract. Today, evidence was tabled by the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Power Corporation that in fact the information was given by the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Power Corporation that the low tender was given.

Mr. Speaker, we have an indication, and I suggest the record will show, that the hon. member in fact, one, deliberately misled the House as to the information he had; secondly, that the member gave false information to this Assembly. He should be, Mr. Speaker, made to account for the source of his information he had; secondly, that the member gave false information to this Assembly. He should be, Mr. Speaker, made to account for the source of his information, the information that he had which bases on the unfortunately untrue allegations made by the hon. member. This

House cannot put up with any more of that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: — I would like to check the record and I will bring in a ruling tomorrow.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 61 — An Act respecting Local Government in Northern Saskatchewan

HON. MR. McLEOD: — I would like to move first reading of a bill respecting local government in northern Saskatchewan.

Motion agreed to and the bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

MOTIONS

Report of the Legislative Librarian

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I would like to move a motion, seconded by the Hon. Graham Taylor, the member for Indian Head-Wolseley, by leave of the Assembly:

That the report of the legislative librarian dated December 10, 1982, and tabled in this Assembly on December 14, 1982, as sessional paper no. 55 be referred to the standing committee on communication.

Motion agreed to.

Change in Membership of Public Accounts Committee and Municipal Law Committee

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, one more, I move, seconded by the Hon. Graham Taylor:

That by leave of this Assembly the name Mr. Meagher be substituted for that of Mr. Hampton on the list of members comprising the standing committee on public accounts, and that the name of Mr. Meagher be substituted for that of Mr. Hampton on the list of members comprising the standing committee on municipal law.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 50 — An Act to amend The Election Act

Clause 1

HON. MR. LANE: — I would like to introduce Mr. Keith Lanpard, chief electoral officer.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

Clause 4

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — My question surrounds why you want to put in this envelope system for hospitals and nursing homes, hospitals and sanatoria, and remand centres for by-elections. I would well understand why you would want to do this for general elections, but I can't see the merit of it for by-elections. It has some very substantial demerits.

HON. MR. LANE: — The basis for the change for the judgment of Mr. Justice Sirois. If I can refer to, I believe it's page 36 of the judgment:

There is no mechanism in The Election Act providing for inmates to vote in an election. This is a matter that should be looked into by the legislators, by the chief electoral office and others who are responsible for administering the act. A mechanism could possibly be set up similar to that used for hospitals and sanatoria under section 90 of the act.

So we are bringing it in, I suggest, in compliance with section 90 of the legislation. That's basically what we're doing.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Let me try this again and you can correct me where I'm wrong. I don't think that is the procedure for hospitals and sanatoria on by-elections. It's only in the general elections. Hospitals and sanatoria in by-elections now, if I understand it right, just fill in a declaration and their ballot goes in the ballot box and does not go into a ballot envelope. What I want to know is: why do you want to change that system, which has worked well, and go to another system which has all sorts of dangers in it?

HON. MR. LANE: — We didn't want to isolate out the remand prisoners with an opportunity to verify their residency requirements. I think there is a potential (and I very guardedly say that) for abuse, and perhaps in some cases there may not be concern about the penalties. It was felt, so that they wouldn't be isolated, that all three hospital sanatoria would be brought under the same procedure. That's what it is.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — I think I now understand. I'm not sure I agree, but at least I understand and I think it's not completely without logic.

My case is this: in a bill like this you're asking all the people in the hospitals and the sanatoria and the remand centres to fill out a declaration on an envelope form, and then you're asking them to put their ballot in the envelope. So during the period from the time they put their ballot in the envelope until the time when it's counted, there is always a possibility of abuse, because here is a ballot in an envelope and it is clearly identifiable how they vote. There is a gap in the time from the time the vote is passed until the time it's counted.

Obviously you don't want to do that unless you have to, or unless there's a good reason for it, and we don't do it now, with respect to hospitals and sanatoria, in by-elections. In

order to deal with what you think is a potential problem in remand centres where people might assert their residency carelessly (shall we say), without heed of the consequences, because some of the people in remand centres are not noted for their trustworthiness (I think that's fair), you are going to set up this much more complicated system and are going to require people who now don't have to put their ballot in an identified envelope — you're going to make it apply to all.

I question that. I think I now understand it; I question it. I'm always nervous about this business of putting ballots in envelopes where you have signed a declaration. In yet another emanation of this act over the years, we had little envelopes in big envelopes and that seemed to offer a little more protection.

Has the minister considered the possibility of having a different system for remand centres than for hospitals sanatoria and rejected it on the grounds of possible problems with charters of rights and human rights codes and the like?

HON. MR. LANE: — As I indicated, we would be prepared to look at it. I think we're dealing with realities, probably a by-election coming up, and we felt that it was safer to comply as much as possible with Mr. Justice Sirois' obiter, and that's simply the reason for it. I'm sure that if we gave it a great deal more thought we could find alternative ways to go, but I think it does cover the problem that we are politely addressing, both of us, and should it not be workable (we think it will because it is the practice followed in a general election) . . . I'm sympathetic to the comments you make, but we are working within those constraints, and when we review it later as to the whole question of number of remand centres (there are well over 60) perhaps we will address it different at that time and that will be brought forward for debate.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, I think I have made the point. I like to think that we have as few instances where people's votes are in identifiable envelopes, and where we have them, for as little time as possible, but I see that the minister has given some consideration to this and has sought a way to solve the problem. I won't quarrel with it. I ask him to consider other approaches as he reviews this act in particular, as he obviously is going to do because he has to grapple with the question of remand centres in general elections as well.

HON. MR. LANE: — I most certainly will. I appreciate the comments, but again given the constraints that we're under at this time we felt that this was the safest route to go, given the judgment.

Clause 5 agreed to.

Clause 6 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the bill.

THIRD READING

Bill No. 50 — An Act to amend The Election Act

HON. MR. GARNER: — 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.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Devine that Bill No. 53 — **An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (No. 2)** be now read a second time.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, this has to do with The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, and more particularly in its main thrust with the increase in remuneration to members of the Legislative Assembly in our capacity as members and in our capacity as person with additional duties. It also deals with the office of the Speaker and the succession thereof when we have provincial elections.

We on this side of the House will be supporting this bill. We support the measure with respect to remuneration for members of the Legislative Assembly and the people with additional duties.

I have some questions, largely because I'm not clear on precisely what is intended with respect to the succession of the office of the Speaker. I simply want to make one comment. The bill, in effect, says the MLAs will get an increase of, I think 6.5 per cent. And, while I'm not in any way thinking that that is an excessive increase in remuneration. I think all of us should be a little hesitant in accepting a remuneration of 6.5 per cent at a time when we are unable to find any basis for having any increase at all for people of minimum wage.

It is my belief that 6.5 per cent is a reasonable increase for people in our economic bracket. I think an increase of somewhat more than that is appropriate for people on minimum wage, and we simply have not had any such increase. I again ask the government to, as we adopt this bill, similarly adopt a policy which would deal at least as fairly (and I would suggest somewhat more generously on a percentage basis) with people who have incomes much lower than ours.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, we will be supporting the bill.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McLeod that Bill No. 58 — **An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the re-alignment of the administration of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan** be now read a second time.

MR. YEW: — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. With respect to Bill 58, members on this side of the House will not be supporting the bill at this point in time. The bill, at this point in time, is a ways and means of legalizing the realignment that is presently taking place. The implications of the bill is the reverting back to the 1960s when decisions were made in southern Saskatchewan, southern line departments, with no concerns and sensitivity at all to northern residents.

In terms of providing constructive criticism to the bill, I would suggest strongly that

northern residents be involved in the planning, administration and operation of the bill in question. Assurances are needed that this will happen, and assurances are needed as well that that information will go out to the communities, to all northern residents, as to what the implications will be and what it means to northern residents.

There is no mention, at this point in time, of what type of responsibilities or delivery services will be forthcoming to the communities, and all of the areas that were mentioned in the bill are direly essential services that are badly needed, that are direly needed such as dental care, provision of dental services to the young. There is mention of The Department of Health Act, the provision of food, transportation subsidies, etc; in terms of education, arrangements for the provision of educational support and services for the communities that are within the boundaries of Alberta and Manitoba. The Health Services Act: the provision for the employment of medical and health personnel in remote and isolated communities where such services are required. There is mention of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Act.

However, there is a principle of public information involvement. The members opposite talk about open government. They talk about slogans like “Trust us” and “so much more we can be”, but where do northern residents fit into this entire picture? We’ve had a fair amount of major announcement by the government, the present administration.

The throne speech was presented here on June 15, with no reference to northern residents. The Tory budget was presented here just recently, with drastic cuts with regard to northern services and programs. There was a complete dismantling of DNS without fair information and involvement of northern residents from all sectors, various organizations. There was a complete elimination of the Saskatchewan Fur Marketing Service. And I find at this time that I cannot support the bill. Therefore I and my colleagues will be in opposition at this point in time.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McLeod that Bill No. 59 — **An Act to amend The Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources Act** be now read a second time.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate by the Hon. Mr. McLeod that Bill No. 60 — **An Act respecting Prairie and Forest Fires** be now read a second time.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Rousseau that Bill No. 54 — **An Act to amend The Northern Saskatchewan Economic Development Act** be now read a second time.

MR. YEW: — Again, Mr. Speaker, I must point out that there is little or no information with regard to a specific regulation to govern the program at the local level. At present and in the past administration we’ve always had what is referred to as local economic

development committees, and a district economic development committee . . . (inaudible interjections)
...

You must pardon me, Mr. Speaker. Again, as I mentioned before, I'm not all that versed on the Legislative Assembly as it is. It will take me at least a year before I can really catch on to the procedures.

However, I, at this point in time, cannot provide full endorsement to the minister's proposed bill, based on the fact that there is need for the people at the community level, at the local government level, at the industrial level, to have some input and some specific information on this bill, to provide them with the ability to decide whether this bill is to their benefit, is to their advantage, is to the advantage of promoting good, sound economic development programming in northern Saskatchewan. Also, in my capacity, I'm of the understanding that I am elected here to do a job, to scrutinize what is good in general for the people of this province, and in particular with this bill for the people of northern Saskatchewan.

At this point in time, I'm sorry, Mr. Minister, I cannot endorse the bill as presented.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Rousseau that Bill No. 56 — **An Act to amend The Department of Revenue, Supply and Services Act (No. 2)** be now read a second time.

MR. KOSKIE: — I want to make a few comments in respect to Bill No. 56, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me that one of the main effects of Bill No. 56 will be to replace the current system of advance accounts used by four agencies with a system of revolving accounts. In each case the revolving fund will serve the functions now served by the agencies' advance accounts, and will assume the advance accounts' assets and liabilities upon the bill coming into force.

However, I am somewhat concerned, and in committee of the whole I would ask the minister to be prepared to address our concern. The main differences seem to be that the revolving funds would not have upper limits set by law on the amount of money they contain as is now the case with the advance accounts as stipulated by sections 36(4)(a) through to 36(4)(d) of the present revenue and supply and services act.

The minister also, it seems to us, will not be required to provide an annual statement on the financial standing of the revolving fund to be included in the *Public Accounts* of the province as the current section 38 to be repealed required the minister to provide for advance accounts. The bill does provide for, in the proposed sections 28(11), 29(11), 30(11) and 30.2(11), orders in council restricting the total of liabilities and assets of the revolving funds.

The bill replaces the central survey mapping agency as a branch of revenue, supply, and services. The agency is now a branch of highways, although this was not mentioned in the notes that we received, or in the bill.

I think also, as another point, it seems to me that within the bill in section (4)(d.1) it may indeed establish (and the minister might indicate this in committee of the whole) that it may allow for the demise of the Saskatchewan Government Printing Company (if that is

the intention of it, then I would like to know from the minister); a transfer of some of its capabilities to office services agency. I suspect there is also within the bill a transfer of the central survey mapping agency from the Department of Highways to RSS. It has been in the works for some time and is as result of a study conducted by the BMI.

Section 4(e) seems to me not overly significant. It changes the meaning of office supplies and really puts into effect a policy that was in the past being put in place; it legitimizes.

In summary, I just want to say to the minister that our essential concern is what I raised in respect to whether or not the minister would be required to provide an annual statement on the financial standing of the revolving fund included in *Public Accounts*. Has that been eliminated in the new amendments to the bill?

Those generally are the basic concerns; we'll ask the minister for the details in committee of the whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to underline the comments of the member for Quill Lakes with respect to method of reporting of the revolving funds. Where will we find what they take in and what they spend in a way that one can simply look up now in the *Public Accounts* and see the financial statements of each of the advance accounts and payments out and who were on the pay roll and how much they got, and all of the sorts of information which is readily available in the *Public Accounts*? Unless we misunderstand the bill that will not be required of the revolving funds. It may be dealt with in some other way but it's not obvious from the bill, just how.

The other point that I want to make is by way of rebuttal of the statement made by the Minister of Industry and Commerce about these deficits that would somehow have been in place. The script you read had a big deficit there had this system been in place. Previous governments . . . And you have to go back for these, lo, decades since we had advance accounts. I just wanted to question it. If anyone is believing that that has any reference to the last few years, and it obviously had some reference to the last few years, but if anyone is believing that it had any particular reference to the last few years, my advice to them is to ignore those comments.

If we wanted to get into the spirit of this, why, we could say that there is no reason for setting up a separate fund as we have for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation because we could have financed that out of appropriations. Then we would have deficits of several billion dollars, if we want to get into the spirit of this.

These advance accounts essentially are a way to hold assets. If you believe the assets are worth something, then it isn't really a deficit. If you think the assets aren't, then it is. I'm not at all sure that this way that we're going is the right way. Not at all sure. I mean it is better for the auditing, but I'm not at all sure it is better for the management.

I will raise a point or two along this line in committee. This is no place to debate in second reading that sort of thing, and so I will not be opposing the bill.

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

MR. SPEAKER: — I would like to ask the members when they say yes or no to please

speak up because mumbling there is very difficult to hear here.

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.

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

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 55 — An Act to amend The Highways Act.

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the amendment is twofold in this bill: 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/or 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 user. The method of accounting used by 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 the purpose as the consolidated fund does not provide this capability.

However the consolidated fund's 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 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 similarly 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, 1981 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 future the majority of net cash outflows to these funds will be shown as budgetary expenditure and will compete with other government expenditures for the revenues of the province.

These amendments are therefore essentially a housekeeping item. This initiative was

approved and started by the former government in February, 1982. However, legislative authority for that change had not been given to date. Accordingly, I propose that amendments be made to The Highways Act, The Department of Revenue, Supply and Services Act, and the Saskatchewan Economic Development Act, to provide for the change.

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

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Speaker, I don't think that I would really disagree so much with the revolving fund that the minister speaks about. However, there are sections of the previous bill. The Highways Act, that have been deleted: sections 21 to 30 in item 4 of the amendment.

Section 21 says that the Minister of Finance may, upon the requisition of the minister, advance funds from the consolidated fund. Then, too, there was a limit on that fund, a limit of \$50 million that could be advanced that way. There is no such limit that I can see in the new bill, Mr. Speaker.

Also, section 28 requires the department to have an accounting and to have annual accounting statements of the money that they have, and the expenditures of those moneys within the department. I haven't been able to find in this bill where it states that the department will still be required to have adequate accounting, or to provide accounting to estimates of the moneys they have spent — the moneys they have brought in the account — where they were spent. It just gives them a large bank account, from what I can see, that they can do whatever they want with, and do not really have to provide an accounting to the people of this province, the taxpayers of the province.

The minister made a few other comments there, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to look over in *Hansard*, and to just take a look at what the impact of this new bill is going to be. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

Clause 1

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

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to introduce my official, Mr. Brian King, chairman of the workers' compensation board.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I have a couple of questions. I have some amendments. I gather you don't have copies of them. I'm surprised at that. Perhaps I'll get the page to make a copy. In the meantime I have some questions of this that I could pursue while we're getting the amendments done.

I had a couple of questions with respect to the reports. One was: I gather these increases are based on the interim report or largely on what we had last spring. You have, since that time, received a final report. I am wondering why the amendments do not reflect what is in the final report.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, the final report, we are still reviewing that document. The interim report came out some time ago and should get the bill in this fall. As far as the back pension increase, we went with the interim report.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — When did you receive, in your office, the final report?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — It was in June 1982.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — This is a sort of a minor question. I am wondering why, as I understand has been the practice in the past, why the report wasn't released when you received it, and why you waited until a day or so after Bill Allan featured the report in a column in the *Leader-Post*. I'm wondering why you didn't release it immediately rather than waiting until Bill Allan did in the *Leader-Post*.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, it was, as I say, June 1982 when we received the report. It was a fairly large document. We wanted to meet with the committee that prepared the document. We did not have that meeting until a couple of months ago.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — How long do you suppose we will be considering the final report before we are able to make a decision. We have now had six months. I'm wondering what the process is and how long we will need to consider the annual report before we can make the decision.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — There is a considerable amount of matter in the final report, Mr. Chairman. I have been doing a costing of the impact of that total report. We have just received that lately. We will be looking at that in due course.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — We used to be able to get all that information within a matter of a few weeks. I'm wondering why it takes this government a few months.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — I suppose, Mr. Chairman, it is because I have three portfolios to look after and have to learn the whole business of government; it's taking me awhile to do all that. Basically that's the reason. But we are working very diligently on that right now.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Are you saying that you have the information, that you have had the analysis done by the officials and it's in your office awaiting your attention?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — I don't know which analysis you are talking about. The costing?

MR. SHILLINGTON: — You wanted an analysis of what it would cost. You said, when I

asked you why it took you so long, it was due to your inexperience. Are you saying that you have the information in your office but have either not had the opportunity to look at it or do not understand it? The question is: have you got the analysis from the officials?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — I have the analysis now and we'll be looking at it in due course.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I don't intend that; I'm not trying to badger the minister. I'm trying to make the point that I suspect.

AN HON. MEMBER: — . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Be nice, Joan. That's not in my nature. Not in my nature to ever even try to bother a Conservative, a member of the House, and I'm not going to badger the minister about it. I do want to make the point that the official opposition feel that the final report should be proceeded with, and it should be proceeded with promptly. I would be amazed to discover that the final report would run a deficit in the fund, if that's what you're trying to find out. If that were the case, that would make a difference with me. I then wouldn't be quite so cocksure. I'll put that way, because we would then have to consider increases in the assessments, and that would be a different matter.

The amendments, and I'm going to move them now without further ado, in fact do reflect the final report, and do increase the benefits along the line of the final report. I guess, Mr. Chairman, I should read these. Sorry, I'm not quite sure of the procedure. If you had received these I would not have had to file a white amendment. Now that you've got them, do you need a white amendment from me, or can you just take these as now having being received? All right. Let's proceed then with the amendment.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, the amendment we have had passed to us is from the last report, and we are not in a position today to accept those kinds of amendments without cabinet approval. The ceiling would go from 26,000 to 29,000 under the present formula and the amendment would put it up over 40,000 and we can't accept that without further study.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, just a couple of questions. I don't intend to belabor the point. Is the minister saying that these amendments would run the fund into a deficit? Is the minister saying that the effect of these amendments would be to create a deficit in the fund?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — No. It would not. But it would certainly increase the assessment rates.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — The minister has told me the matter is before cabinet. May I conclude this with a question as to when we may expect a decision from the cabinet?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, I didn't say they were before cabinet. I've got the amendments in my office now. We haven't discussed it in cabinet. That's my point. The earliest that we could do would be in the spring sitting.

Amendment negatived on division.

Clause 3 agreed to.

December 16, 1982

Clause 4 agreed to on division

Clauses 5 to 12 inclusive agreed to.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I just want to speak briefly before you make that motion. I want to repeat what I said. I want to congratulate the minister for having brought these forward in a timely fashion. I can tell the minister that if you bring forward amendments which reflect the final report. I shall be equally congratulatory and equally co-operative in getting them through the House. I would urge the minister to bring forth amendments which reflect the final report at the earliest opportunity.

The committee agreed to report the bill.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Will the minister of Industry and Commerce introduce his officials.

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Yes, I would be happy to, Mr. Chairman.

Sitting to my left is Mr. Allan Palmer, executive director and to my right, George Todd, chairman, public service superannuation plan.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

Clause 4

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Am I right, Mr. Minister, in interpreting this as being in exactly the same terms as the bill earlier passed, except that the effective date is May 1, rather than July 8, or whatever the date was, July whatever it was?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Yes, it is.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the bill.

Bill No 44 — An Act to amend The Department of Finance Act

Clause 1

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

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — I would like to introduce Mr. Lawrie McFarlane, the director of the budget bureau.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Minister, why is it thought a good idea to introduce this provision? What problems were associated with the previous legal position where this sort of thing tended to show up in appropriation acts rather than in The Department of Finance Act? What's the problem? What are you aiming at?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Chairman, in reply to that question, I am advised that the authority is in the appropriation bill at the present time. The bill has not been passed, and we want the authority to be put into the finance act permanently.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — That's just what I thought, and we would like to think that the appropriate bill might get through this House some time before we all grow whiskers. This then, Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, is a way that you can live by special warrants and virements, without ever having to pass an appropriation bill and without having the appropriation bill the power to move money from money you have raised by special warrant to other subvotes by way of virement. You don't have that power except by appropriation bill. There is no evidence that we can detect that an appropriation bill is likely to be forthcoming, and I am curious to know why you feel that this is necessary.

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Chairman the point of the procedure, I'm told is to try as much as possible to avoid special warrants. I might like to just add here as well that as I understand it, this was initiated by your government. This was being looked at by your government. I don't know whether the decision had been made to introduce it or not, but this isn't anything new. This is something that you had looked at before and you would have brought it in. And I might also add, as I understand it, that this is really an unusual circumstance and how it came about so quickly this year is the fact that here hasn't been an appropriation bill passed because there was an election called. It never did get passed. Therefore, we have been living under special warrants when the session isn't sitting. I'll leave it at that for now unless there are any further questions on it.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, I appreciate what the minister says, and that's why I'm raising the question. We are now 39 days into the session. We have had about three days or so of estimates, which had to be some sort of record in Saskatchewan: 39 days into a session and having virtually no estimates passed. And very few called, I may say, and that has to be some sort of record. And you indeed have been living on special warrants because you didn't bring in a budget. Fair enough. This has been, I think the first time that a government has attempted to operate on a budget which wasn't passed for that length of time. But that was perhaps a special circumstance. We'll find nothing like this in the history of our province.

You may say that that was because the previous government didn't pass its spring budget, and I will take that as read before you say it. But then you didn't bring in a budget and you are living on special warrants. And the only possible way we can figure out what you're doing, by way of spending money, is by looking at the special warrants and figuring out what money you're raising. And that we can do.

As I say, with respect to the Departments of Health or Education or Highways, the big spenders . . . Well, let's talk about health and education and social service. We have not had any opportunity to ask any questions about those matters. As I say, I don't know whether we are going to get a chance.

You have been living on special warrants. Fair enough. But you now in effect want not to live on special warrants, but you want to live on special warrants together with virements. So as I say, with respect to social services, if you want to spend some more money for the minister's office, you will certainly not put through a special warrant for administration. You will put through a special warrant for sort of senior citizens' grants, or something which is salable to the public, and then you will vire the money out to the minister's office. As I say, we don't have any opportunity to question the minister because that is not called. Maybe we'll see a virement someday . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

I am told they're in the *Public Accounts*. I never can find them there and if anyone knows where they are in the *Public Accounts* I'd be happy to have them pointed out. But even then I don't think there's any legal requirement to put them in the *Public Accounts*. If there is, I'd be happy to have that drawn to my attention. So, as I say, I don't think that there is any way that anyone can figure out where the money is spent if you're going to do it by special warrant and by virement and you do it by virement pursuant to a provision in this act which makes it permanent, and not as part of an appropriation act where the opposition has had a chance to ask some questions.

I think it is a substantial change in the way we finance our programs and a change which makes things less clear for the press or for the opposition and not more clear. And I think that's a change in the wrong direction.

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Chairman, I'm surprised the Leader of the Opposition would complain that we've been sitting for 39 days and he hasn't had the opportunity he claims he should have had.

Let me explain to the Leader of the Opposition that first of all, you called the election, not us. You called it before you passed the appropriation bill last spring. And since that time, as you well know, the important bills that we've had to pass in this House have taken up the time of this House and we're coming to what you are looking for in the appropriation bill. But if you had passed your budgets and your estimates last year, without calling the election, there would have been no problem, would there? It was your decision, not ours.

As for the virements over the special warrants, I am advised, as I understand it, that there is less infringement on the legislature with the virements than with special warrants.

And finally, you did indicate that there was supposed to be in the *Public Accounts*. Again that was started, I believe, when you were still in government and I'm pleased to tell you that they will be in the *Public Accounts* this year. So you'll have the opportunity as the opposition to question any virement that is issued in future years and this year.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, it's true of course that we called the election without passing the budget. It's equally true that you have run well over seven months without bringing one in, which as I say has got to be some sort of record for a government which . . . And I think that that'll be the only time in Saskatchewan we've operated a government for seven months without a budget. If anyone can correct me on that, I'd be much surprised.

But that's not relevant to this. This one in fact gives you an opportunity to take money

out of money which you have raised by way of special warrant which, as you know, is a cabinet decision and not a legislative decision . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, the whole point is that we did not operate for lengthy periods of time on large amounts of money by way of special warrant. It depends on what large is but this is . . . There's obviously five times as much money taken out by special warrant this year as in any previous year in Saskatchewan history. I guess we all know that and my . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon?

I don't know whether I'm making this point, but look: if you take, if you raise money by way of a special warrant you've got to do it with a document which we can look at and the press can look at. No way can you look at a virement until well after the event, well after the event at least now we know what you say you're spending the money on, because you raise a special warrant and you say you're raising the money for senior citizens hostels, subvote X of social services.

You wish not to pass special warrants for purposes other than the ones which are disclosed in the warrants. That will be the clear effect of it. If you can pass a special warrant for senior citizens' housing or senior citizens' hospitals in social services, and then vire it out to the minister's office, we will never know that and no one can ever know it until you publish the virements in the *Public Accounts*, if you do. And so as far as I'm aware, you're under no legal obligation to do so. And while it's nice to have the minister say he's going to do it, they may decide that they want to save paper and not do it. If there is a legal obligation to publish virements, it has gone by me; perhaps it has. We certainly intended to do it as you say and it should be done. I am not aware of a legal obligation. You are wanting really to extend very substantially the scope of virements. My point is pretty simple . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Don't shake your head and say no, because that's the whole effect of the bill . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, go ahead then, you explain why you are not expanding the scope of virements.

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Well, I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, and I would like to reply to the Leader of the Opposition, that while you were in government you had 3,588 virements. What are you talking about the scope? Of course you used them all along. You used an average of 360 a year. It's nothing new. You are talking about the scope of it. You've always been able to take virements and vire out of the department back into the treasury or into another department. That was available to you as well.

We don't intend to do that. I believe, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, and you will agree, that it would be far more advantageous or accountable to the taxpayers to have a department vire within its own department than to have a special warrant for more money when the money is already there. That's the intent of the bill. If a department (and take any one of them you like) has in one subvote extra money and they need it in another one, this will give them the authority to move it. That's the idea of it. Would you rather they go through a special warrant, and add funds when there are already funds in the department? I don't think you would. I don't think you would. The fact is, if they have a budget to work within, then let them administer that department on their own without having to come back every time. That will give them that opportunity. What you are talking about is, you have \$100 million or whatever in the department, so you need more in the subvote; let's get some more, although you may have extra money left over. Do you agree with that? I don't think you would. If you do, then say so.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — I do most emphatically agree with that; I do most emphatically agree with that? What's the point of coming in here to say we'll vote social services \$400 million? That's what you are saying? Never mind what they are doing — some is in

corrections; some is in senior citizens. There is no reason why this legislature should have any opinion as to whether it should go to senior citizens or corrections. None whatever! He says, once you vote \$400 million, that's it. If they're spending too much on corrections and not enough on senior citizens, then by all means take some of the senior citizen's money and put it in corrections. What business is that of the legislature?

Well, I take the other view. We pass these budgets not by department but by subvote. We pass the estimates by subvote, not by vote. He wants to do it by vote. He says, "Whose business is it if money is taken from senior citizens and put over into corrections?" . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, of course you are! Well, let's try it again. You are saying that it's perfectly all right to take a special warrant for 10 million bucks for senior citizens, pass it through cabinet, allow someone to read this extra 10 million for senior citizens, when not a dime of it may be going to senior citizens. You then want to vire it over to corrections, and you want nobody to have any right to see that virement. Once again I say the special warrant is a public document; the virement is not. The special warrant is a publication document before you get the dough; the virement is not a public document. No one will know. Maybe later, if in fact you publish it 18 months later, maybe we can track it. I would much prefer if you didn't need the money for senior citizens that you pass another special warrant for corrections. In due course we will find out that you didn't need the money for senior citizens.

Sure your special warrants may add up to more money than you needed, but you are not going to spend it. You don't simply by passing a special warrant, spend the money. You simply give yourself authority to spend the money. Now, I am asking: why, when you need extra money that you haven't been voted by the legislature, do you not want to disclose that fact? Why do you want to pass a special warrant for one purpose, and by dark of night essentially, because no one can know, take the money out and spend it on another function? That's what you are asking us to agree to.

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — I'm really having difficulty with your logic because you are saying that what we want to do is take \$10 million — I think you used the example of money for senior citizens to corrections or whatever. Well, what did you do with the 3,588 virements that you passed? First of all, isn't that exactly what you were doing when you passed 3,588 of them in your term, in your 10 years of tenure in this legislature? Of course you did.

The only difference between this amendment is that it's taking it from one Act to another Act. You are taking it from the appropriation Act to the finance Act. You have always been doing it. You probably have done it twice as often as what we will do it. I didn't know that, but 3,588 virements in your term are a lot of virements. That's exactly what you were doing. So how were you accountable to the people of Saskatchewan that you were doing it that way? How could you have been accountable to the people if you were hiding them? At least now we are going to put them in *Public Accounts* which you never did . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I know, you can say what you like but that was a fact. The virements have always been . . . I mean the intent of the virements isn't changing. You are just moving it from one bill to another one. You have always had it.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Why are you wanting to change? If 3,588 isn't enough for you, why do you want to change? What's wrong with the system?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — The answer to your question is a matter of, I suppose, basic simplification. You don't have to wait. We are having it in the finance Act for the appropriation bill to be passed every year. What we are saying is that we're trying to

streamline the operation of government. We're trying to get the departments to run more smoothly. We don't want stumbling blocks in the way. It has always been there. You used it; we'll use it. But now it is going to be there on a permanent basis. It's a matter of simplifying the whole operation and system. I think you understand that. I don't know why it would bother you. It has always been available. Now, we're saying: all right, there are times of the year when it isn't. We're saying: let's get that stumbling block out of the way, or that obstacle out of the way, and do it. It's good management.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, that's very revealing, because that tells us the facts. Up to now, this legislature has said: you have the right to use virements when you pass an appropriation bill, when you have given the folk in this legislature a chance to debate all your spending. Now you say, in the interests of efficiency, no more of this nonsense about the legislature having to pass this: we want to use virements whether or not we have brought in a budget; whether or not an appropriation bill has been passed; whether or not the legislature has an opportunity to debate the spending. And there is no use shaking your head, because that is exactly what you're doing.

Up until now, up until now virements have been able to be used and no one denies that, and everyone is perfectly willing to concede that. And if you say 3,500, you've counted them. 3,588 since 1971 I take it? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh well, he got some of his staff, who are very able staff, to count that high for him. And every one of them, 3,588 of them was passed after a legislature had approved a budget. And zero of them were passed before a legislature approved a budget. And that is obviously inefficient. Inefficient.

He wants to pass these without the necessity of asking the legislature to approve a budget. And I just say, that's bad. You have now a way to finance your government by special warrants. The only inconvenient factor of that is you have to say what you are going to spend the money for. You don't now have to answer any questions to anyone. You can pass a special warrant. But we're not going to pass any estimates. We've been at it seven months now. Seven months now and no estimates. No assurance whatever that there will be estimates passed two or more months hence. None whatever.

Members opposite say we had an opportunity. I'd like to . . . I missed it. I don't know when the health estimates were called. I don't know when the I and C estimates were called in the seven months that you've been in office. But, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, that is a piece of poppycock. We aren't the government. At no time when we were the government did we operate for more than the time from April 1 to, I suppose, May 15 may have been the last appropriation bill. Always busy debating the estimates and never more than 45 or 50 days without a budget.

You people have been at it now well over seven months without a debate . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . If anyone wants to doubt it, get in this debate. Well over seven months without a budget unless my calculations are wrong, and you still want to go on governing, not only by special warrant, but also by private (I won't say secret, that has an overtone) special warrants, by way of virements, and still bring in no appropriation bill. That's what you propose, and that's simply bad. You can't justify that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, try it.

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Be happy to. First of all, again your logic escapes me. I find it hard to understand why, all of a sudden, after so many years here, you're concerned about this. You're talking about 12 months instead of 10 months, normally speaking.

You've always had it for 10 months of the year, now it's going to be for 12 months; we're going to take it out of one and put it into the other.

You can complain about no budget, but you introduced a budget last spring. You didn't pass the estimates, you called an election instead. You might have been wise to pass your estimates at the time. However, that's hindsight. So take whatever responsibility you like in that respect; and we'll take whatever responsibility we have. At least we're acting today.

There's no reason on earth why you should be concerned about an extra two months, that this can be done in the name of efficiency. I can't understand your logic. Again I come back to say to you . . . Industry and Commerce. I don't know, let's say my budget is \$12 million. One department is running out of money for whatever unforeseen reason; another department is not. They have extra cash; we can vire from one to the other. Your suggestion is, let's go back to the treasury and get more, instead of using what we already have. That's what you're suggesting. Let's go back and get some more, there's no bottom to the barrel. That's not good management. That in fact is not good management. If the funds are there, within the department . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — They're not there forever.

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — They're there when they are passed by this House, and they will be from now on when we pass the estimates. Why do you find that so hard to understand? You are voting on it as well. If you don't want to vote, that's up to you. But when you have the estimates in this Assembly, you'll vote on the subvotes, you'll vote on the estimates, they're passed. The money is put into the department. You've been viring for 11 years, and the governments before you, and we'll continue to do it. So what are you complaining about?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, briefly put, I agree with every word the minister says. We all heard the minister. We're going to have a budget. When it's passed, he can pass virements, and if it's like every other appropriation act virtually in history, you can pass virements, but only if you bring in a budget; and only if you pass a budget. That seems to me to be the right rule.

You want to do it without bringing in a budget. That's what this is all about. Everybody knows you can vire. Everybody has done it, and the rule has always been: but only after your budget is passed. And you are saying, "None of this nonsense about passing budgets. We want to switch this money around, even though the legislature has not passed the budget." Now, doesn't the minister agree that that's the effect of the bill? Is there any other effect of the bill?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — No. The answer is no. There's no difference. The alternative, however, is to raise more funds through a special warrant, and we don't agree with that. We don't agree that we should have to raise more funds when the funds are already there. The funds are there.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, what in God's name is this man talking about? He takes the view that when money is budgeted, somehow there's a great pool of money. Nonsense. Just nonsense . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Waiting for the chairman's ruling.

Look, let me try again. You've got a couple of subvotes down in industry and commerce.

You've got administration, and name me another that you know. Let's say business promotion. I don't know what the headings are.

Now, if you're voted \$2 million, \$2 million for each of those, you don't have any money. It's all over in finance. So it's not a case of your having a big pool of money. That is an authority, and not a pile of money. That's self-evident. So if you raise money by a special warrant for an extra half million administration, and you don't spend half a million over in business promotion, you don't have to raise an extra dime. The suggestion that you're going out to get more money is sheer fantasy, sheer fantasy. That suggests that there's a pile of money over there. All you're doing is telling the press and the public that you're spending an extra half million dollars on administration when you pass a special warrant, or at least you have the authority to. That's all you're telling. Not spending a penny more.

Now what you want to do is say, "All right, we're not spending that money over in business promotion. We are spending it in administration. We'll simply move it over." Fair enough. That's the virement process in the past. But that process has only been available to a government that brought in a budget and faced the legislature. Now you want to make that process available to any government whether it ever brings in a budget. And I just suggest that that's bad. I just suggest that if a government doesn't bring in a budget . . . This happens in Ottawa. Heck, they've gone for years without a budget sometimes. And I don't know whether we're starting down that road here in Saskatchewan.

If a government doesn't bring in a budget, then I think it shouldn't have the right to vire. It should raise its money by passing special warrants so that at least the press and the opposition can see what it is asking extra authority to spend money for. And I don't think that's an unreasonable position on the part of any opposition.

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Chairman, I think we could go around and around and around on this all day. The only comment that I can wind up with, or try to make the member understand, is that it's a question of one or the other; either special warrant of virements. We happen to think that virements create better management and more efficiency. You've used them. We're using them, perhaps a little extended from what you had.

You talk about approval of money. We well understand the money comes from the treasury. However, it's matter of authority, it's authority that you're doing when you're doing special warrants. We prefer to work within the budget of the department to vire from one to the other. As I said, the authority has always been there in the appropriation bill. We're transferring that authority from one Act to the finance Act. I've repeated that time and time again, Mr. Chairman. I don't know what else I can say. That's the way it is.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — I have a couple of very specific question then. Would the minister agree that under the appropriation act, the authority is effective really only for 12 months? Would he agree that under this act, he wants to make it effective permanently?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Yes, to both questions.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, would the minister agree that if a special warrant is passed, more information is available to the public about the prospective spending proposals of the government than if the money is provided for that

purpose by virement?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — No. But, let me say that may or may not be true. What you're suggesting, as the better route to take, under special warrants is encouraging in fact . . . What it does is encourage management of the department to go asking for more money from treasury board rather than trying to straighten out their problems which they may have created within their department. Again, I come back to you and I say it's for efficiency and better management. It forces management to improve on their performance and the operations of their department. We say: that's better.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, I think the minister wishes to keep diverting this issue to the question of whether or not virements are a good idea. No one is questioning that. The issue is whether or not virements are a good idea when there isn't a budget. When there is no budget — that's what we're talking about here. And that is the question because the tradition of this House has been unvaried that virements are used. We have always used virements and provided for it in the appropriation act.

The legislature has protected itself against this use of money by the government, which was not voted by the legislature, by giving it limited approval. And as the price, the legislature has insisted that it be in a budget. If a government doesn't bring in a budget and get it passed, then it does not have the approval to spend money that is not authorized by the legislature.

Now, you are saying that that custom which has been here since the dawn of time, is a bad one. And you are saying that, notwithstanding the fact that a government doesn't bring in a budget, it ought to be able to raise money by special warrant and vire the money for another purpose, undisclosed to the public.

Do you not agree with me that that is the effect? One, you do not bring in a budget so that there is no opportunity debate. That is our situation now. And, there is no point in arguing why we got here. That's where you are. Two, you want to raise money by special warrant in accordance with past practice. You want to disclose one purpose in the special warrant, and you want to move the money over to another purpose without any public disclosure of any kind. Is that not true? Without any vote, without any opportunity to debate, and without any public disclosure — is that not true?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Since when? I'll just turn that around and reply to your question in this way. Since when have we debated in this legislature special warrants? They're not debated here. Special warrants are only for when the House is not sitting. So, while you're arguing about debating an appropriation, or a virement, or a special warrant — you don't. You never have from the beginning of time you know. I mean that's another point. Special warrants are for the time when we aren't around here to make those decisions. You know that. So there is no debate.

This year is an unusual year admittedly. And I agree with you on that. The budgets are usually . . . it's a matter of two months when we don't have the approved budget. Hopefully it will be the same in the future. So, what's the difference between 10 months, 12 months, for the sake of efficiency and good management, and accountability to the taxpayers? And this is what we're saying.

The virements will appear in *Public Accounts* where you can question them. You're not going to question the special warrant. You can see it but you're not going to question it

in this legislature until after the fact. So, you have no different options or problems or solutions for that. It's the same thing.

And, if you're looking, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, we're looking, as I have repeatedly said today, to efficiency, good management, accountability. We believe that's very important to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan and that will allow us to have that. What you're suggesting isn't going to give us any more, because we can't debate it any more than we can the virements. But the management will be better.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, that indeed sounds ominous. Keep in mind that none of this has any effect unless there's no budget. All this efficiency that you speak of can be achieved and has been achieved in the past whenever there's been a budget. The minister is coming in here and saying he needs this authority in order to get efficiency. He only needs it, and I underline this, he only needs it if there isn't a budget, if there isn't an appropriation act with all the authority in it. And yet he is standing here and saying he needs this for efficiency. He is in effect telling this house that we are going to have long stretches without appropriation acts; long stretches which we haven't had in the past but which we've had now for seven months. And this is not an exception but the rule. Otherwise he wouldn't need this for his efficiency.

He admits freely that it only has relevance for those days when we don't have a budget. It only has relevance then, because the appropriation Act when we have a budget contains this authority. He wants an additional authority for those few days in April when it's possible I suppose for some agency to spend its 12 months money in one month. It's possible. Or two months. But we just never had an occasion, I think, when we've ever gone beyond the end of June, not in the history of this province, except this year.

And it is very, very clear that the minister is saying that he needs this, and he needs this because it is not going to be the practice of this government to bring in regular budgets with appropriation acts with the power to vire. He wants it, budget or no. And I say that no legislature should willingly give up its right to have that much pressure on a government to bring in a budget, by simply giving a free right to vire with no appropriation Act. I don't think that any legislature ought to be asked to do that, and I don't think we should be asked to do it. And I say again the minister has made it abundantly clear, because his argument makes no sense otherwise, that there are going to be long stretches when this power is needed in order to achieve efficiency. A new power.

Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, would the minister agree that this additional power is effective, is needed, only when there is no appropriation Act? Will he concede that?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Yes.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Will you concede therefore that if you need this power it is because you anticipate periods when there is going to be no effective appropriation Act?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Yes.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — What periods does the minister anticipate there will be when there is not an appropriation Act?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Yes, to your question. We'll only need it when there is no appropriation bill passed.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, the question again. When do you anticipate there will be no appropriation Act passed? At what period of the year in your normal administration?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — I suppose on the average it would be two months after the budget till the appropriation bill is passed — I think you agreed with that awhile ago — except in unusual circumstances, like this year, when you called an election before you passed the appropriation bill. We can do as you did.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — So that what we're dealing with . . . We're not dealing obviously with the past, because you have managed quite well under those exceptional circumstance, and I don't know whether it has caused great inefficiency in your government. Have the circumstances which you say contribute to inefficiency caused inefficiencies in your government between your taking office and today?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — I'm advised that yes, indeed we've had problems. And if we continue to operate with special warrants, it could even get more serious.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, I didn't make my question clear. I didn't ask whether you had problems. Nobody promised anybody in politics a rose garden. I wasn't asking about whether you had problems. I was asking whether there were any inefficiencies arising because of the fact that you are unable to vire money out of money raised from special warrants.

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Yes, I would say that they created some inefficiencies.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, in the Department of Industry and Commerce?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — I would reply to that on the basis of across the board through the government we've had problems. They could get worse, as I said, if we allowed this to happen. As I've said before, it efficiency that we're trying to improve on, and better management. We hope that we can accomplish that.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, just so that we have some idea, would you give a little outline of the inefficiencies in the Department of Industry and Commerce which have been occasioned by this very difficult legal situation?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — I'm advised that we don't know about the Department of Industry and Commerce as such. But there have been cases within the government, I'm told, that we've had to raise larger special warrants, larger than would have been required under virements.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, that is blindingly obvious.

What I want to know is, how did that contribute to any inefficiency?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — I think that seems to reply to why you had such inefficiency in your government, perhaps. We have said before, and I indicated earlier as well, that had we had the opportunity or the ability to vire, instead of raising larger amounts of money through special warrants, management would have worked it within their department to better improve and operate their department. They would not have gone back to treasury and said, “Look we’re short \$1 million, so pour more in.” They would have found it. They might have been able to find it within the department and improve the efficiency and the management of that department. That’s where inefficiency comes in. That’s where bad management comes in. Under your previous administration you encouraged your managers to be bad managers, by saying, “Well, if you’re short over here, just come back and we’ll give you more instead of trying to solve the problems that you’ve got in your department.”

We’re asking our department heads to solve their problems, and not to come back for larger sums of money than what they have had appropriated for their department in total. All you’re doing is saying, for example, if I had a \$12 million budget in my department and somebody was short, I don’t go from \$12 million up. We work it out within the department, be more efficient and manage our affairs better. I can’t understand why you don’t see that.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, we have already established that we are talking about periods only when there isn’t an appropriation Act . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Exactly, when there isn’t an appropriation act. You’re telling us about the inefficiencies in our government.

Now, for the argument to be logical, you have to apply it to a period when there wasn’t an appropriation Act, and when we were passing special warrants. You have to find a period from April 1 to June 1 or thereabouts when there wasn’t an appropriation Act, and when the legislature wasn’t sitting because if it was sitting we couldn’t pass special warrants. If you can find a half-dozen days in the last 11 years when that was true, I’d be mightily surprised. That just makes no sense at all, none at all. None at all.

I want to say again, the minister is making it blindingly clear, although he won’t admit it, that he is gearing his government up to operate without appropriation Acts, otherwise this means nothing. Otherwise this means nothing, because when else do you need this? You only need it when you don’t have a budget. If you don’t have a budget from until April 1 to June 1, and the legislature is sitting, you can’t pass any special warrants anyway; you can’t vire anything out anyway. The hang-up is that you people want to operate this House without bringing in your spending estimates. That’s the hang-up. Otherwise, this makes no sense whatever.

AN HON. MEMBER: — You’re filibustering.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Look, if I am filibustering, will the hon. member please get and tell me why these arguments aren’t logical. Why do you want the right to say to this legislature, “We can’t spend money, and we can move money around by virement, which is not a public document, without you having any opportunity to pass a budget.”? That is not reasonable. I am registering our firm and strong objection to the proposal of members opposite to set themselves up to operate without any budgets being passed

through this legislature. I've said my piece. I'm not going to try to make that point again. The arguments put by the member are nonsensical in the sense that — unless they make a great deal of sense if you are not going to bring in a budget. But if you are going to bring in a budget like all other governments have in the past, then these arguments make no sense whatever. I say that you ought not to be asking the legislature to adopt that sort of a practice which permits the government to operate without an appropriation Act.

Clause 2 agreed to on division.

Clause 3

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, the minister has been free to suggest that the list of virements would be published in the *Public Accounts*. Is the minister prepared to bring in any statutory requirement that the virements be published if there is any that is lacking?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Chairman, I am advised that that can be taken into consideration. We'll consider it.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, I thank the minister. If he is going to be consistent with his allegations that this was not attempt to make information more difficult to obtain, then I know he will urge upon his cabinet colleagues the statutory provision calling for the publication of virements that are passed.

Clause 3 agreed to on division.

The committee agreed to report the bill on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 36

Devine	Schoenhals	Martens
Birkbeck	Boutin	Rybchuk
Taylor	Weiman	Young
Rousseau	Sutor	Gerich
Sandberg	Sveinson	Domotor
Hardy	Sauder	Embury
McLeod	Petersen	Hepworth
McLaren	Glauser	Folk
Garner	Meagher	Myers
Klein	Schmidt	Zazelenchuk
Katzman	Smith (Moose Jaw South)	Johnson
Duncan	Hopfner	Baker

Nays — 8

Blakeney
Thompson
Engel

Lingenfelter
Koskie
Lusney

Shillington
Yew

Bill No. 59 — An Act to amend The Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources Act
Clause 1

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Does the minister have any officials?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I would introduce to the House Lyle Lensen, the assistant deputy.

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Chairman, I only have a few questions on this bill for the minister. The definition of a minister is now being changed where it will not longer be just the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources; any minister will be able to make decisions on behalf of your department. I'm just wondering what your opinion is of this; do you not feel that you should be the only minister making these major decisions on behalf of the department, rather than any minister within the Executive Council?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — No, I don't believe that's what the change would indicate. I think what the change says, it assigns the definition: "Minister means the member of the Executive Council to whom for the time being the administration of this Act is assigned." Under the present circumstances this Act is assigned to the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources, so in that case I am the only minister that would be acting under this. And if this Act is assigned to another minister, well then it would be that minister that would make those decision. So I don't think there's a change there.

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry, Mr. Minister, I didn't really hear your answer there with all this commotion going on. My question was: we feel that these major decisions for tourism and renewable resources should be made by the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources, and I just didn't quite get your answer there.

HON. MR. McLEOD: — That's right. They should be and they will be. This doesn't change that at all. What it says is that the minister means the member of the Executive Council to whom this Act is assigned, and under the present circumstances this Act is assigned to the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources. That's the minister it will be. It doesn't indicate, as you seem to suggest, that any minister, any member of the Executive Council, could be making decision under this Act. That's not the case.

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Minister, could you explain the reason for making the grants of up to \$10,000. Previously all grants required an order in council and now you have the authority to expend \$10,000. Is it without an order in council?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, the simple explanation of that, and I might add I think that same proposal was coming for amendments to this act from the former administration and the former minister . . . Basically it's exactly for the same reasons that I saw many Acts go through for the same thing, and that is that there are a good number of grants under the Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources to tourism organizations and so on, a great number of grants throughout the province to promote tourism, those kinds of things, one of the other grants that your colleague was asking about in question period today in support of the trappers' association, those kinds of things. It's

just a matter of the efficiency when they are under \$10,000 — small grants, to be able to get them out and moving and into the communities and wherever they will do the most good. So it's just a matter of getting those out without having to go through orders in council for the smaller grants.

MR. THOMPSON: — The limit was always \$10,000. Am I correct on that?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — That's right. Any grants up to \$10,000. The limit is \$10,000.

MR. THOMPSON: — Before agreement to do clause by clause, I wonder if you could make it clear; the bill does not make it clear that a report on the revolving fund will continue to be included in the *Public Accounts*. Could you explain the reason for this on the revolving fund?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — I'm sorry. I couldn't hear your question. I didn't hear it really.

MR. THOMPSON: — In clause 25 it requires the minister to consult with the industry before making regulations. The change from advance accounts to the revolving fund dropped the requirement concerning the audit by the provincial auditor. The bill does not make it clear that the report on the revolving fund will continue to be included in the *Public Accounts*. Would you clarify that for us?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — I believe that goes along with the same clauses that have been going on in various other bills here already in various other departments: the changing of the advance account system to what will now be called revolving funds. I believe that has been clarified as well: that they will be considered in the *Public Accounts* or reported in the *Public Accounts*. As far as I'm concerned, I believe that is the case.

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Chairman, my colleagues have a few more questions that they want to ask on this, but if you want to go down to the clauses that they're interested in we could proceed with that.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 7

MR. THOMPSON: — I'm through with this bill and my colleagues are through. If you want to just take them by numbers . . . If it's agreeable to you and the minter, we can just go by the numbers and get this thing through.

Clause 7 agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 10 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the bill.

THIRD READINGS

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

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

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

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

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

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 44 — An Act to amend The Department of Finance Act

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

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

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

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

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

The Assembly recessed until 7:00 p.m.