

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Friday, March 23, 1984

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.
Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Select Committee on Fire Prevention-Protection

CLERK ASSISTANT: — Mr. Katzman, as chairman of the select committee on fire prevention-protection, tables the report of the committee. Copies of this report will be distributed shortly for members.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Speaker, with leave of the Assembly I would move:

That the report of the select committee on fire prevention-protection be taken up under the orders of the day.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to the Assembly a group of 13 grade 11 and 12 students who are seated in the east gallery. They are from the Consul High School in the south-west corner of my constituency, some 300 miles approximately from Regina. I'm sure all members will want to join with me in greeting them and their teacher, Jean Lightfoot, as well as their bus driver, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Olmsted, from the area. I'm sure all members will want to join with me in welcoming them here and wishing them a safe return to Consul later on today.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my colleague, the member from Elphinstone, who is unavoidably absent, I want to welcome to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, 22 students from the city of Montreal, in the province of Quebec, and five from Regina. They are exchange students from Brookwood Association of Pierrefonds, Quebec. Unfortunately my unilingual limitations don't permit me to welcome you in French. I wish I could, but our welcome is sincere none the less. I gather from the information I have that you are here on some sporting event, you are here competing in some sporting event. It's not clear from the information that I have what exactly you are competing in, but I wish you the very best of luck. They're signalling me; I gather it's probably volleyball. Yes. Either volleyball or . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Basketball.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — We now know, Mr. Speaker, it's basketball. Both the member from Assiniboia and myself are from rural backgrounds, and the schools didn't have gyms, so the signals are not as meaningful to the member from Assiniboia and I as it would be to someone that grew up in an urban area.

They are accompanied by Mike Tapiero, the girls' coach; Cal Sibley, the boys' coach; and Brian Norton, a coach from Regina. I'd ask all these students to stand up and be welcomed.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Merci, Monsieur le Président. Au nom de mon collègue de la Regina Centre, et aussi de tous mes collègues de l'Assemblée, c'est un plaisir pour moi de souhaiter ces étudiants de Bronkwood? (j'ai pas mes lunettes) – Brookwood. C'est un plaisir de vous souhaiter une chaleureuse bienvenue ici à Regina. J'espère que vous allez jouir de votre séjour, et de votre visite ici à l'Assemblée.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, a group of grade 12 students in the west gallery who are from the good town of Debden in the constituency, which I have the honour to represent, of Turtleford.

They are accompanied today by Sister Michelle Blanchette, and their principal, John McIver, a former colleague of mine when I was principal in that area. We were on the principals' group together up there. Good to see you here. I hope you're going to have a very pleasant stay. I plan to meet with you at 11 o'clock this morning in the members' dining room. We'll have photographs and, no doubt, you'll have a few questions you'd like answered.

On behalf of all members of the Assembly, we wish you a pleasant stay and a very safe journey home.

Aussi, Monsieur le Président, et mes amis de la langue française ici, j'espère que vous allez jouir de votre visite à la législature aujourd'hui.

Yesterday, I had the honour to officiate at the opening ceremonies of the basketball tournament. Thank you. Welcome.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Reduction of Staff at Department of Highways

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Highways. The Minister of Highways, in a news interview this morning, indicated that he had laid off, or fired – basically fired – some 237 people from the Department of Highways.

He did the interview yesterday, just prior to coming into this House, where we wouldn't have the opportunity to find out about what he was doing. However, we are aware of it today. And, Mr. Minister, you are claiming that these people will be able to go to the private sector now, and find jobs, and get hired on through the private sector, because the private sector will be doing most of the contracting work for the Department of Highways.

The budget, Mr. Speaker, that was brought down a couple of nights ago, indicated to Saskatchewan taxpayers that none of that will really be happening, because, in that budget, it shows that there is less money this year than there was last year.

Mr. Minister, how can you say to the people of Saskatchewan, and to the workers that you've fired, that somehow you are going to be able to provide more work in Saskatchewan, more road building which they can get jobs with the private sector, when that actually is not possible and will not happen?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think we have to clarify some of the points that have been brought up by the hon. member this morning. Number one, I did not have any

interview before I came into this Chamber yesterday. The question came from, it looks like, the real opposition in the province of Saskatchewan, the news media – not the opposition opposite. Second point, Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite would turn to the blue book, he would notice that we have an increased transportation budget in the province of Saskatchewan this year, versus what some of the other jurisdictions in western Canada have been doing in the past, where their transportation budget has gone down. Saskatchewan has picked up the challenge, and is meeting the needs of the people of Saskatchewan – just to clarify those two points, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, in looking at this budget, it shows that there is going to be now increase at all in the *Estimates*, and if you look at the supplementaries of last year, it shows that there was more money put into Highways last year than what is in your budget for this year, so what's actually happening is less money than what you've had before.

How are you going to accommodate all of these families that you have fired, through the private sector, to make sure that they will be able to have a job and be able to continue to operate their homes and to keep their families fed in this province, because there are so many people that are unemployed? Why don't you be truthful with them, and say that they are being fired, and they are not guaranteed any job or any prospect for the future?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well, Mr. Speaker, once again we'd better clarify it, and I would ask all members to turn to page 48 of the blue book (that's this one right here, *Estimates* '84-85). Look on page 48, expenditures: 220,115,70; for 1984-85, expenditures: \$222, 400,030. Now, I don't know how their math works, Mr. Speaker, but to me that is an increase.

Now, further to the job abolishments, Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with all members of this Assembly a press release put out by the Saskatchewan road building industry in the province of Saskatchewan, and the Road Builders & Heavy Construction Association of Saskatchewan. Now, Mr. Speaker, if the other members would be quiet in the opposition, we could get to the facts. I'm very concerned about this, as well.

Mr. Speaker, in this release it states:

The road building industry is committed to two principles (this is just part of it). First, we want to provide excellent roads to the people of Saskatchewan at competitive prices; and second, as we stated in our letter to the minister, a major shift of work to the private sector would require that the contractors hire additional workers, and one obvious choice would be to hire laid-off, experienced Department of Highways employees. We invite them to apply through out Regina office at 1939 Elphinstone Street.

Mr. Speaker, I have the other letters. I could take up a lot of question period, but very hopefully that will answer the member's opposite's question that there are jobs there for the job abolishment that takes place.

One other point, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to bring out. These employees do also have the opportunity to bump throughout the Government of Saskatchewan, so there are opportunities for jobs there for these people.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Speaker, new question to the Minister. Mr. Minister, you used the figures in the *Estimates* book which shows some \$285,000 more in expenditures for this year than last year, but you neglected to tell the people that you have a supplementary estimate figure in here to add to last year's figures of over \$1 million. That indicates to me that this year's figure is less than last year's. Would you not agree that it's less, in fact, than what you had last year? And further, Mr. Minister, how can you say to the people that you have fired that they can go and get jobs with the private sector, when the private sector says in their letter that there is currently a

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surplus capacity in the industry? They are going to have to compete with some of the part-time workers that the industry would normally hire. There is less money in the budget. Would you not agree, Mr. Minister, there is less money in the budget for the industry to bid on, and that means less road work, less employment within the industry, and 237 employees and families will have no opportunity to get into that industry and have jobs?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well, Mr. Speaker, no, I cannot agree with the member opposite, and I will just share a couple of facts with you, Mr. Speaker. The cost saving that it is to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan by turning this work over to the private sector, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please! When the members ask a question, I think they should give the minister an opportunity to provide the answer. Order, please!

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about this. I hope the members opposite are just as genuinely concerned as this government is. Just a fact, Mr. Speaker, on seal coat contracting that is put out by the Department of Highways and Transportation. Mr. Speaker, the department cost on this one contract, and I'll use contract CN33027, average contract price: this was the bid from the private sector to do one kilometre of seal coating — \$1,350; department's cost — now this is the Government of Saskatchewan's crew's work-force doing this — cost is \$2,273 a kilometre. Mr. Speaker, this represents a 67 per cent saving to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan to build that same kilometre of road. Mr. Speaker, I can give them one other example. One other example, Mr. Speaker. We'll call it contract M83023, average contract price by the private sector bidding on this job, seal coat contract. Private contractor's price was \$1.492 per kilometre. The department's cost was \$2,273 per kilometre. Mr. Speaker, this means 52 per cent cheaper the job can be done by the private sector. I think, Mr. Speaker, we have to just go back a step. There's a difference in philosophy, Mr. Speaker, between this government and the government that was in here before. We're very genuinely concerned about spending the taxpayers' dollars. We want to get the best roads and the most miles for their dollars. Going this step will provide a better, more efficient transportation network for the people of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister. Mr. Minister, the figures that you are using are figures that you've put together. I don't know where you get them from, but if they are anything like a lot of the other figures that you have put together before, I think it's be . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. The member is making speeches instead of asking questions. I would ask the member to get to his question.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, would you not agree that the figures that you have indicated are probably, if they are the least bit correct — and I would doubt that very much — but they are probably a result of the depressed condition of the industry in this province today? Would you not agree that that is why you are getting some of the low tenders? And would you not agree that without putting more money into the budget, we are not going to see increased activity in road building? We are going to see a deterioration of our road system, as it has been in the past.

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well, Mr. Speaker, once again I will try and point out to members opposite. I mean, I have read off examples here of 52 per cent saving, 67 per cent saving. I mean, I'll try and explain it very simply to the members opposite.

We'll take \$1. That \$1 being spent by the department would be totally used. Now, it would take

52 cents to turn and build that same piece of road by the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, we have a disagreement in this Assembly, which is nothing new. Nothing new at all, Mr. Speaker. The NDP wanted to take the taxpayer's money from Saskatchewan, build up a big government – a big government force. They were the largest road builders in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, private enterprise is not a bad word. It's not a dirty word. It's called competition. Public tender – these jobs are out and go out to public tender for people to bid on. Where the problems lie, Mr. Speaker, (and we have them in Saskatchewan here) because Manitoba is literally going broke in the road building industry, and their road builders are trying to come into the province to destroy the industry here.

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister, before he sat down, indicated the very question I was going to ask. He presupposed it. According to the Saskatchewan road builders' construction industry's own letter that you quoted from – and you forgot to say how many additional workers they would require – if they would get 200 million extra dollars worth of work, they'd create 100 jobs. But you just missed mentioning, when there is a recession in the country, and when there is a surplus capacity in the industry, what happens in Saskatchewan? Who tenders the jobs? Where are you going to get the tenders from? There's going to be contractors coming in from Manitoba and Alberta, exactly like they were when I was bidding on sewer and water jobs when Thatcher was in government.

And the question is, where are these 250 people going to get jobs if you're giving the jobs to Saskatchewan and Alberta contractors?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well, Mr. Speaker, once again we have to clarify it and give the members opposite an education in transportation and road building. We are not going to out-of-province tenders. I cannot solve the problems of NDP Manitoba because they're going broke, and their road builders are going broke, Mr. Speaker. I can't. There are no tenders going out to Alberta firms. We are going to protect, Mr. Speaker, the road building industry in the province of Saskatchewan.

I have the letter here from the road builders stating – their original letter – that they need 100 to 150 additional employees with this work that is being turned over to them, that is going to save money for the people of Saskatchewan. I mean, I could read the news release time and time again. The bottom line to it is, Mr. Speaker, that there has been a shift from the public to the private sector. The work is turned over to the private sector. They need that same expertise that was in government forces before to now build the forces and build the roads in the private sector.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. How are you turning this work over to the contractors in Saskatchewan? How are you turning this work over to the contractors of Saskatchewan? What method are you using? Are you calling in some friends and telling them if you give the Tory party so much money you'll get a job? Or are you going to call tenders? How are you turning this work over to them?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this is most likely new in the province of Saskatchewan, too, but what we do, we call for public tenders. Maybe the NDP way was to give it to their friends, their buddies of Manitoba, and so that Saskatchewan wouldn't have the opportunity. We go to public tender. The tenders are opened in public. It's the most democratic way of running any business anywhere in North America.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, my question now is . . . And I expect that in the next session there

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will be a row of Saskatchewan contractors sitting on that side as members, just like I got into politics. I got into politics, Mr. Minister, because of the way the capitalists . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — I would ask the member to refrain from making speeches but rather to ask his question.

MR. ENGEL: — My question to the minister is: how are you going to guarantee that the Saskatchewan contractors get the jobs if you're calling tenders?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Once again, Mr. Speaker, an education in how government works. Mr. Speaker, the private contractors submit tenders on a project, whether it's for seal coating, or grading, or anything else. The minister has to sign those tenders. We go through lowest tender, but there is a system where the minister, through order in council, can award to the second bidder.

I have done that, Mr. Speaker, and those second bidders have been Saskatchewan contractors. We have contracts coming in from Manitoba but, as I stated earlier, Mr. Speaker, I can't solve the problems of Manitoba when they're going broke. I can protect, and assist, and take care of the people of Saskatchewan, and that's what this government is going to do.

Purchase of Nimbus Water Purifiers

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the minister of revenue and financial services, the member from Maple Creek. My question deals, Madam Minister, with the Nimbusgate affair. It may be Consumer Affairs. I'm being corrected. Whatever the portfolio is, it's of such weighty importance that it slips my mind at the moment.

Nevertheless, the question deals with the purchase of the \$10,000 worth of Nimbus water purifiers for cabinet ministers' offices, from a defeated PC candidate, without calling for tenders. The fact that this purchase broke the law is now confirmed by the auditor's report, which was tabled yesterday.

My first question, Madam Minister, is: what specific steps did you take to ensure that these unlawful purchases were not repeated?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — I think that question is better directed to the Minister of Supply and Services, not Consumer and Commercial Affairs. My portfolio has nothing to do with purchasing anything for government. The minister in front of me is in charge of that.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, since the minister prefers not to face the music, I will ask the present minister, I gather, whom you prefer to hide behind. My question then is: what specific steps did your predecessor take to ensure that these unlawful methods were not used again?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is using the word "unlawful." They certainly were not unlawful measures, but I will say, Mr. Speaker, that I will, first of all, review the auditor's report which was tabled yesterday. I will review what the hon. member is asking. I will provide for the hon. member the answer that he's requesting.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — New question to the minister then, who I gather is thumping for the member from Maple Creek. The report raises some very serious questions about your predecessor's conduct. It's a fact that 19 purifiers were purchased in August, 1982. It's a fact that on September 10, 1982, New Democrats asked the Provincial Auditor to investigate the circumstances, and it's a fact that on September 11, the next day, the Provincial Auditor's report states that an order was placed for a number of water purifiers. There are only two possibilities, Mr. Minister. One is that your predecessor was trying to hide her mistake by having equipment ordered three weeks after it had been installed. The only other possibility, Mr. Minister, is that a

second order for water purifiers was placed.

Just to clarify the matter, Mr. Minister, my question is: how many water purifiers did the provincial government purchase in total, and was the tendering process ignored in more than one case, or was the minister trying to cover her mistake?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, first of all, as I indicated to the hon. member a few moments ago, I will take notice of the question. I'll take notice, as well, of this. Once I've had a chance to review all of that rambling in *Hansard*, I will bring a reply to it.

I might say, though, Mr. Speaker, the thing that I have noticed about the hon. member suggests that something is amiss, and I would say there is something very much amiss in this House when a budget was delivered two days ago by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, a budget very good for the province of Saskatchewan, and you, as an opposition, must go to your old files and dig out for question period things out of the old files, and you can't come up with a question regarding anything . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, let me say by way of background to my next question, had the *Public Accounts* and the Provincial Auditor's Report been tabled at a more normal time instead of so late, the question would have been raised long before this. It's raised because of the lateness of these reports.

Mr. Minister, I want to remind you that I am making no allegations. I am repeating what's in the Provincial Auditor's Report. Mr. Minister, my third question is: since we now have it clear that this was unlawful, can the minister assure this House that you and your predecessor made it very clear to the officials that this kind of shoddy, questionable conduct displayed will not be repeated?

Mr. Speaker, I was addressing my question to the back of the minister's head, since he was turned around talking to the member from Maple Creek. Mr. Minister, will you assure this House that your predecessor made it very clear, to whoever purchased those purifiers, that that kind of conduct would not be tolerated?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, I have already indicated I will review carefully the questions asked by the hon. member. I will bring a reply back to this House as soon as possible.

University Funding

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address a question to the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. As the minister will be aware that there are many deficiencies in the budget for many groups, and particularly for the young people of this province — deficiency in the budget for the young people of this province, and particularly those attending university. One looks at the budget — you'll find that this year's increase in university operating grants is less than 5 per cent, in fact, an increase of a mere 4.3 per cent, and enrolments have increased substantially.

I want to say that the Canadian Federation of Students have indicated that unless we have more funding for the universities, more funding for the university, that there will, in fact, be drastic cuts in the quality of education, and increased tuition fees. I ask the minister: can you guarantee to the young people of this province that your funding, operating funding, will, in fact, guarantee to them in the time of great economic problems for them in obtaining summer employment, in order to finance their education. Can you guarantee to the people of this province in that, in your view, and in your discussions with the university, that the amount that you have submitted for operating grants to university will not necessitate huge tuition fees at the expense of the

students attending?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank my critic in the opposition for giving me the opportunity to participate in this daily exchange of insults. I sat here a very lonely member . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Once again, we have the member from Regina Centre giving me a piece of his mind.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. Order. If the member has an answer to the question, I would like to hear the answer.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize to the hon. member.

I was talking about young people of the province . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'll wait till the children have finished their antics, Mr. Speaker. The increase in the spending to the universities this year in our budget comes to a total of \$145.1 million, and that, in actual fact, is an increase of 10.2 per cent total increase over what we spent the previous year. In the last two years, Mr. Speaker, we had a 17 per cent increase; we had an 8 per cent increase the following year. Seventeen was the highest of any province in this country; 8 per cent was fractionally below being the highest. That's 25 per cent in two years at a time when inflation was running 7 per cent each of those years. And, Mr. Speaker, something I just have to get out here. I want to thank the ex hon. Doug McArthur for giving you the question, because I happen to have a memo here to Doug McArthur, dated February 20 back around 1980. Anybody remember Doug McArthur? And this came (I think this is very legitimate, Mr. Speaker), this memo came from the Hon. Allan Blakeney, premier. We're talking about increased funding which I'm saying we're doing, and we have done.

What did the then premier have to say to the then minister? Here's what he said. Would you like to hear what he had to say? Do you want to hear it? Here's what he said . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Settle down my friend, you're going to enjoy this:

I want the planning committee to take a look at some point during the next several months at the positions the government (the NDP government) intends to take in the longer term with respect to the universities and vocational institutes. I am particularly interested in knowing how we intend to organize our relationship with the universities, the manner in which we intend to reduce the real growth of university funding . . . (inaudible) . . .

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Report of Select Committee on Fire Prevention-Protection

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Speaker, members of this House, I'm pleased to stand in my place today on behalf of the special committee on fire prevention and protection to move its report.

Before I get down to the report itself, I would like to thank our two special advisers. I would like to introduce them to the House. They are in the Speaker's gallery. Between these two gentlemen, they have over 70 years of active fire-fighting, both in the administration and the smoke-eaters section. I would ask the retired chief of Regina Fire Department, Mr. Lou Yanko, to please stand, and Les Parker, Battalion Chief, city of Saskatoon.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Speaker, without these two gentlemen's capable assistance, the knowledge the committee would have had would have been very limited. Mr. Speaker, before I

go into my report, I have a couple of other thank you's I must make.

Today, in the Assembly, our Assistant Clerk made his final report to this House – Mr. David Mitchell. David, your assistance on the committee, there is no words to explain. You worried about things; you guided us to make sure we followed the rules; and with your assistance, our report has come in on time.

Mr. Speaker, just a little bit of humour before I get into the committee. There was a picture taken in a whirlpool in Prince Albert. If I can get the vice-chairman's attention for a minute, I think he is looking at that picture right now. The Clerk, in his wisdom and his joviality, has produced a picture for our personal use only, and it's the only time I think you will ever see me on the left and Mr. Engel on the right.

To be serious, Mr. Speaker, our report, the select committee on fire prevention, which we are tabling here today, is a short report, as far as pages are concerned. It has 20 major recommendations in it. Those recommendations are meant to chart a different course for Saskatchewan in some areas of fire training and prevention.

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, the first fire-fighting equipment was a bucket and a bucket brigade. Today, we have fire-fighting engines that pump 1,500 gallons per minute. We have helicopters that fight fires in the North. There are many, many different ways.

Mr. Speaker, change is the name in the fire-fighting industry today – constant change. We heard, during our hearings, about the lack of available training to the volunteer brigades in the province. There was no criticism of the training that was available; there was just no enough of it. We addressed this in our recommendations, and we recommend that we have an outreach project in the province of Saskatchewan. What is an outreach? It is where we will take the training as a government, and, as the members from both sides of the House have recommended, to the people of Saskatchewan, more regularly than it has been in the past.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker, I neglected to say something that I think is very important when I started my speech – to my vice-chairman, Mr. Engel and Mr. Sveinson, Mr. Petersen, and Mr. Hopfner. Gentlemen, the non-partisanship of our committee may be the forerunner of good things to come. I compliment you all on never getting into partisan politics during the committee. We might have got into them after the committee hearings, on a little friendly jibe or two, but the committee worked across party lines for the betterment of the people of Saskatchewan. That is what the committee was set under, under the rules. If the Minister of Finance was here, I would add this, but I think he'll read the debate. We stayed within budget. We had to share rooms and several things like that, but we stayed within the budget we were given.

Mr. Speaker, let me start getting back into my topic, and suggest our days sometimes were 6 a.m. in the morning till midnight. We started on January 9 doing our hearings. We finished our hearings and are tabling our report March 23. That speaks well of members. I compliment them for changing their personal schedules to make arrangements to do the same. Mr. Hopfner is not here with us today because of those changes that he had to make, so he will be missing the tabling of the document today.

He has sent me a letter asking me to pass along his concerns, his thanks to the members of the House for allowing him to serve on this committee. He points out in his letter to me that the committee was not partisan. He points out the thanks to Lou and Les, who were with us, and he asks that all members of this House support the resolution I will be making later on the acceptance of the report.

Mr. Speaker, let me go into the actual fire-fighting now. A fire-fighter goes into a building with flames, to save lives and property. He does not know what he will run across when he walks

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through that door. For all he knows, it may be a friction fire and, for those of you that don't know what a friction fire is, that's a fire caused by the mortgage and the insurance policy rubbing together. Those fires, unfortunately, have traps for firemen, and they put their lives on the line every time they walk into those.

Mr. Speaker, we salute them for that, and we realize that we must give them the training to understand the problems, and that is what our report addresses more than any other thing. We address outreach, modules, and a fire college – the three basic parts of the report.

An outreach, as I said earlier, goes out to the community. A module, Mr. Speaker: I have a book, the IFSTA (International Fire Service Training Association) manual. I have a box for about 35 of them here, I think. They're all this size.

In a manual, for example, the one I have here, item 2 talks about portable state fire extinguishers. That would be classed as a module under the system we're suggesting be developed. There will be a class or a lecture put together so that people will understand how to use a fire extinguisher properly, the right kind of fire extinguisher to use in different kinds of fire. That knowledge will not only be beneficial to the fire-fighter, but will be beneficial to citizens in the community.

And using other methods of teaching, through different areas of education, which some of the other members will touch on later, this information can be passed on to everybody in the community, therefore, assisting in a low fire loss in this province.

Mr. Speaker, also on outreach, there further can be course on all different kinds of programs, be it from rescue, be it from arson investigation, be it to just basically putting out a simple fire. The professional fire brigades have training at all times and, therefore, are more advanced. The volunteer brigades do not have that opportunity, and it is the duty of the Government of Saskatchewan to develop that.

Mr. Speaker, during our committee we had presentations from many different groups. I would refer to one, the insurance companies of the province, to make a point.

All of us sort of complain when we pay for our insurance for fire and so forth for our homes. It was discovered during the committee that, if certain modifications are made in a community, the cost of those modifications to the community may be saved very rapidly on the insurance premium paid by the citizens of that community. And because of those kinds of concerns, it is recommended in our report that the fire prevention officers sit down with their communities and look at all the feasibility things that can be done to lower the cost to the citizen of the community for his insurance. And, in one case, a \$20,000 investment by the community moved the rating system of that town to a lower rate, and the citizens of that town saved more than that 20,000 in that year, and that saving went on from then on. Mr. Speaker, a dollar spent in prevention is worth every cent; it is.

Mr. Speaker, it was interesting during our hearings that we heard about the new technology, hazardous chemicals, and leading oil trucks, car crashes, and so forth. Toronto, to us, the members of the committee – we were able to watch a department in action for a morning. Their response was within 1.5 minutes to two calls they had. It was interesting to note that 60 per cent of a fire department's calls are not for fires, in eastern Canada. I understand, in this area, the percentage is not quite that high, but they are called for many different things, be it to rescue people from car crashes, and other areas.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked a slight bit about outreach; I have talked a slight bit about modules. Let me now go to the person who must develop those modules. We recommend – and it cannot be stressed too strongly – that we hire a person capable of developing the modules, and being an administrator, and being able to co-ordinate the construction of a fire college in due course, that

will meet the needs of the people of Saskatchewan.

We do not have to re-invent the wheel, as I said every day during the hearings. We are one of the last provinces in Canada to go with the fire college. We can learn from all the other mistakes and good points. We recommend that person with the fire commissioner's office and the Minister of Labour's office put together what would be the best possible fire college for the citizens of Saskatchewan, and the people who protect our home and our lives in fire area.

The location of that college, our committee did not deal with. I make that . . . We had several people give us suggestions, but we did not deal with that in our report.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has a million people, not 10 and 15 million as some other areas have, and therefore our college must serve our needs, and must be geared to our needs. We suggest that the courses be that way. We suggest the college must serve Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan needs. We suggest that it must be done in co-operation and discussion with the Saskatchewan fire chiefs' association, and therefore we have recommended an advisory committee to make sure that the college stays along the tracks, and the curriculum stays along the tracks that is needed for the changing times.

And I must stress changing times. In Toronto, in other cities like Saskatoon and Regina, they try to keep a catalogue of material stored in any warehouse or building. The fire in the member from Nipawin's constituency the other day is a prime example of how important it is to know what is in a building, because of the health and safety of both the fire production people and the people of the community. We are all aware that the community had to be evacuated because of the chemicals involved.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think that I could take the time of the House to really say all the things I have and wish to say. All we can do is compliment the people of the province we now have in the fire industry.

I give you a little story of something we heard in northern Saskatchewan about a fire. The fire chief came before us and informed us that he had a school on fire, and only one fire truck. That's pretty tough for one fire truck to handle. They kept getting the fire out, but it kept flaring up again on them. Their final decision was simple. They took a bulldozer and cut the school in half – drove right through – to take the fuel away from the fire, and he saved a major portion of the school. He had no other choice. It was the right decision. Those are the decisions they are faced with all the time out there, and they do their best, and we must salute them for that.

Mr. Speaker, the other members of our committee will have more to say on this topic, and I would probably have a few things to add in final wrap up. My comment to you, Mr. Speaker, before I take my place and move this report is: God bless those who are willing to volunteer and put safety of others ahead of themselves. God bless those who continue to do so, and may God protect them as they attempt to save others' lives and property.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to move this report of the special committee on fire prevention and protection, on behalf of the members who worked so hard, and the advisers and our assistants. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move:

That the report of the select committee on fire prevention and protection be now concurred in.

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Chairman, that's how I used to have to start when I wanted to make a comment in the committee, and I might as well do it here again, then. It was a pleasure to serve on the committee. When we decided in our caucus who should go on the fire

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prevention committee, it was quite a toss-up, and then when I looked at the itinerary, I was kind of sorry that I did accept the position.

It was a strenuous month that we worked under. The time frame was a little bit too close, and I think we would have benefited a little bit if we would have had, say, eight weeks instead of trying to crowd it into the four. Some of the members, including Mike that the chairman mentioned, aren't here today because of functions they've postponed, and things they might have done.

But, all in all, I think we accomplished a task that needed to be done, and we had some good co-operation. Two members that travelled with our committee on a regular basis were already introduced to this House, and I would just like to add that I enjoyed their fellowship and company very much. It was a pleasure travelling with both you gentlemen and getting to know you, and to enjoy the experience they had in fire-fighting. There is something special about being a fire-fighter, and the quality of person that gets into that line of work, and sticks it out as long as these two gentlemen did, says something for a fire-fighter. My impression of fire-fighters has changed immensely since January 1, and it's to the people we met and travelled with that had that influence on my life.

Another person that I'd like to introduce this morning is John Macmillan, and he's sitting . . . Would you stand, John. He's brought another fire-fighter from Broadview with him. Thank you. John is the president of the Saskatchewan Fire-fighters' Association, and his brief and his continual effort and his persistence, I think, is what made it possible for this study to be made.

I think there are several other people, while I'm introducing people that have had impact on the committee, and I don't know if it's in order or not but . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . thank you., Mr. Deputy Premier. But there are staff members, and people that have been working in Saskatchewan for a long time, and I'd like to introduce – I think he's still there . . . Yes, he is. He's the only one in the gallery so he doesn't have to stand up. But our fire commissioner from Saskatchewan is sitting in the gallery to my rear – Mr. Murray Fisher. And the second in command in Saskatchewan is up in the top row, right in the corner up there, is Bob Gawley. He's the deputy fire commissioner. Bob travelled with our committee the entire time that our committee travelled around, and we also want to thank you, Bob, for taking the time, and to your wife for letting him go and be with us as much as he was.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you. And I think all in all these people made an excellent contribution, because if you look at the terms of reference that the committee had (if you look at your report), that the terms of reference that were spelled out are very detailed terms of reference, and the kind of things we were going to look at. It's on page 2. If I have to make a little confession here (and I'm not sure if I'm out of order or not) . . . Maybe our Deputy Clerk and clerk of our committee will call me to order, but when you can come out with this detailed a terms of reference, it tells you something. And what I'm really trying to say is I think we could have asked these people that are on the staff to write the report and they would have come up with the same kind of a solution, and they almost hinted at that at our last meeting. I'm not saying this to be derogatory, but to compliment the staff that we have in place. The one major thing that came through to me over and over again, at every hearing we were at, is that these people were well recognized. We came into a committee and people would say, "Hi Bob," and "Hi Lou." They'd know the gentlemen that were with us, and these people were recognized in the fire community across Saskatchewan. And I think it speaks highly for the department and what they're doing.

The criticism that I recorded and the impression that I got was one that the training that was

going out into the field, that Murray and Bob's staff were doing, was doing the job, but they were saying, "Look, we'd like it more than once every five years. You've got to get out there and give us a little bit of extra training there."

So if I can refer to my notes a little closer, so I make sure I don't miss anything, I want to thank the members – the member for Rosthern, and the member for Kelvington-Wadena, and the member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster, and the member for Regina North West – for the spirit of co-operation and tolerance they had with me, in that we were able to produce a report that I definitely feel was non-partisan. There was no partisan interference.

I think that should be a message to the government (I'm glad the Deputy Premier is here; I wish the Premier were here, as well), because there are questions and there are problems that arise in Saskatchewan. I know there are committees of legislative secretaries and committees of MLAs and there are committees of Tory people that you select, running around the country. And I think, if you really want to get a good hearing, and if you really want to hear what the people of Saskatchewan are doing, don't be afraid to stand a legislative committee up and let them listen to the problem.

There are some topics and there are some topics being studied . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I know, but what I'm telling you is that you have 20 other committees running around, and if you want to really know what's happening on some of these topics that should be dealt with on a non-partisan level – and I could go into some specifics – but if you would want to hear what the people are saying, stand up and listen in a non-partisan fashion like this committee did, and I think you'll have an excellent example that then the people are prepared to come out, and then they're prepared to speak their mind, because they know it's not just speaking to the Tory government; they're speaking to the Government of Saskatchewan. And I think that made quite a difference.

And so I want to express appreciation for that kind of an attitude that was developed in this committee. It wasn't easy, but we were able to get that across, and I felt comfortable about that because I was on the rules committee with the Deputy Premier when we set up the structure that we could appoint this kind of committee. So I think that's great.

There's one more person that I really want to compliment for his hard work and for his organizational ability and the work that he's done for our committee in putting the report together, and that's Dave Mitchell. He has put in the second effort and gone the extra mile. Now I'm not sure why he's leaving Saskatchewan. Possibly it is because he took his camera along on this committee. But pictures last a long time and on my note here he said he kept the negative. So I'm not sure if it's W.O. we're dealing with here or David, but he might be making some money with some of these pictures down the road a bit.

But I would say thank you, Dave, for the help you've been and the way you've co-operated with us and made this a real non-partisan committee.

Mr. Speaker, let me touch on the report itself . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, I'm not going to get into the partisan aspect of it. As I said, the terms of reference that were spelled out indicate the capability of the staff that's there. And I don't think anywhere in Saskatchewan that there were people appeared before us and that criticized your department as such. If there was a criticism there it was that there weren't enough staff people and that you should beef it up and do more of the same thing that you were doing – do more of the same thing that you were doing.

Clearly the training program that is now in existence has not kept up with the changes that have taken place in the technological age we're living in . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, I'm talking about the training modules that are out there, if you're listening, Mr. Deputy Premier.

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The committee report meets this challenge head on. We've recommended not only the development of new training modules in the fire commissioner's office but, in addition, the development of a fire training college in Saskatchewan.

There's another area, Mr. Minister, that I'd really like you to look at, that the report doesn't zero in on. But the departments of both Alberta and Manitoba offered, on a voluntary basis, that we co-ordinate the college effort and that we become specialists in the field, rather than do another college that would duplicate what they are doing in Alberta and would duplicate what they're doing in Manitoba. They're suggesting that there are fields of expertise that we could be developing, and I think that is a very good idea. They suggested it and our committee really doesn't spell that aspect of it out.

As a member and vice-chairman of the committee I would urge the government to concentrate its efforts on the appropriate structure and the curriculum to be offered by a fire training college, and do not spend a lot of time on the appropriateness of a college. That has been very well defined, that we need a place to train those that are both volunteers and professionals.

I believe that the recommendations found on pages 17 to 20 indicate that view that I've just stated, and I'm sure the other committee members will agree with that.

In the context of a training college, I want to offer a few observations arising from the work of the committee. And here the principal of Brandon College (I think he's the principal), indicated that fire-fighting is no longer a matter of sprinkling a little bit of wet stuff on a little bit of red stuff.

Perhaps I need go no further than to remind all hon. members of the events in White Fox, and the chairman commented a little bit about that about two weeks ago. In that town of 500 people, 200 people were forced to leave their homes because of toxic fumes resulting from a fire at Sask Wheat Pool's seed cleaning plant. The toxicity resulted from the storage of 200 lb. of gopher bait in the plant. That 200 lb. of bait contained 11 oz. of strychnine. Eleven ounces doesn't sound like a lot of strychnine, not much by weight, but serious enough to cause this great evacuation. However, in addition to the problem of the fumes, there was a concern that, by using water to fight the fire, a contamination of the town's water system could result. Mr. Speaker, we can all be thankful that there was no loss of life, no reports of serious injury, and no contamination to the town's supply of water. The problem that was faced and dealt with so admirably – and it could have been a catastrophe – by the officials at White Fox is a potential problem that exists right across this province. How many places store that kind of gopher bait?

Mr. Speaker, there are many hazardous chemicals and many areas that that kind of a threat could result. I think fire prevention officials from across the province drew this to our attention and the frustrations they had when they're handling this kind of situation. Most communities in our province and our citizens are reliant upon volunteer fire-fighters. These volunteers have served the people in this province very well, and I know they will continue to do so. However, as I said before, the time is long gone when we can just put a little bit of wet stuff on the red stuff. It is important that we, as members of this House, accept the need for a fire training facility, so that volunteer fire-fighters, as well as the career fighters, have an access to the training they so urgently need to provide people of the province with the protection and assurance of safety that they deserve.

There's no question about my position on this. I know that in making these remarks I have the support of my colleagues on this side of the House.

I want now, Mr. Speaker, to address myself to one other issue regarding training, which is not dealt with directly in the report but was raised in our hearings, and I refer to the need of the reserves. At our hearing in Weyburn we received representations from a Mr. Peter McKenzie, a senior fire safety advisor with the federal Department of Indian Affairs, and Mr. Oliver Cameron,

vice-president of Saskatchewan Indian Community College. They indicated to us that at least 700 volunteer fire-fighters must be trained within the next five years if fire-loss fighters from reserves are ever to come down to the figures that would reflect the off-reserve situation.

The federal government is embarking upon a fire-prevention program on the reserves and has committed considerable amounts of money for this endeavour. This includes a training program, and they're planning on training their people in conjunction with a college in British Columbia. The people living on these reserves are also residents of this province and, while jurisdiction falls within the realm of the federal government, I would urge your government to co-operate closely with the federal department to ensure adequate fire prevention and protection facilities are in place.

Fire training colleges exist in both Alberta and Manitoba, as I mentioned earlier. These centres are serving the needs of both rural and urban centres in their provinces. They are excellent facilities and should, and do, provide us in this province with a wealth of experience in the field.

While they serve as a model for us, it is important that in developing a Saskatchewan college, that that facility have the flexibility to meet the needs of various volunteers throughout the province. I believe that our report envisions that flexibility, and I urge the government to keep that as a prime consideration as the recommendations of this report are implemented. And I do assume, Mr. Speaker, that the government will implement the recommendations of this report very quickly.

In my reference to the recent fire at White Fox, I dealt mainly on the dangers of hazardous materials stored throughout the province. It is a problem for fire-fighters, because they must know how best to handle varieties of situations that may develop in their attempt to fight the fire.

In addition, these types of materials also call for specialized knowledge and treatment of individuals who may come in contact with the chemicals or fumes. Through the training college, volunteers and others can receive the background required to handle these situations. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that this type of training will become a significant component of the curriculum.

Mr. Speaker, I stated at the outset that it was with great pleasure that I am speaking to this report this morning. I believe that our committee has worked hard and diligently in fulfilling the directions given to us by this House.

This report provides the government with the direction it needs to establish a first class fire protection and fire prevention program in the province. I hope that in the very near future we, in this House, and the people of this province, will see concrete evidence that the recommendations we placed before you today have been implemented. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SVEINSON: — Mr. Speaker, members of the Assembly, fellow participants on the fire protection committee . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And I would just ask the member for Regina Centre if he would save his remarks until we've completed our discussion, on a bipartisan manner, on a very bipartisan manner, and treat it that way — as has been mentioned by the two previous speakers, but also members from your side of the House And I just ask the member from Regina Centre to respect, somewhat, a bipartisan committee that was structured by the whole legislature. I know we can't ask for miracles, but I think he will respect my request . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

And now we've got another one in the race over there, the member for Quill Lakes. He has to participate, because he's usually got nothing to say when he's on his feet, but that, again, is outside the parameters, outside the parameters of the present discussion.

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I'd like to initiate this discussion on three points that I felt were very important to the committee, and will be very important to the residents and taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

First, the involvement of the communities of Saskatchewan in putting together the select committee and its report on fire protection. I will say that the communities participated in a very forthright and a very co-operative manner. And thanks also to the Fire Chiefs Association of Saskatchewan, who, with their help, the communities of this province were able to air in a very concise and very co-operative manner the problems that they're having, not only in the two cities, Regina and Saskatoon, but also the volunteer fire departments in rural Saskatchewan. The second point are the benefits to the taxpayer, ultimately, of the activities of our committee. If, in fact, we do respond as communities in Saskatchewan, and as a government of Saskatchewan, to enable a training base that will improve the present training base of the fire-fighters in this province, there is a good possibility that our insurance rates for fire protection will improve. So the benefits to the taxpayers are those of improved insurance rates, and with co-operation, and as the process proceeds, and we do improve the access to training and better equipment, this will be an ultimate goal.

Last, but not least, I would like to discuss the process. In four months we went from striking a select committee to a report to the legislature. I'm not certain that that's a record in this House, but it certainly comes very close to it. It was acknowledged by the chairman of the committee, and he thanked the committee for their very diligent effort in this respect. I would like to also say that, personally, I feel that the committee worked very co-operatively. Both sides of the House worked very co-operatively. The clerk of the Assembly, Mr. David Mitchell, was able to put together a group of people who, through his direction, were able to co-operative very unbiasedly on a problem that faces all of the province of Saskatchewan.

I think that one of the most important . . . As a part of the process, one of the most important points that was raised by most communities, most volunteer fire departments, was accessibility to training. I know that the committee has structured its report, and that accessibility to training is outlined as one of the primary recommendations. I would like to, at this time, mention that the new Fire Chief of the Regina department, Mr. Bun Cook, who is with us today – sorry, Bun – Mr. Bun Allin. Bun Cook was a hockey player from Kerrobert, a very illustrious member of an older hockey team. But Mr. Bun Allin, in his recommendation to our committee, did recommend that possibly, at a future date, when a fire college is in fact built, that Regina would certainly accommodate . . . Bun, along with the Mayor of Regina, Mr. Larry Schneider, mentioned the accommodation of this college could very well fit into the skyline of the Regina community. And I'd certainly like to support that position.

And last, but not least, I'd like to again thank everybody that participated in the committee. I would like to thank all the communities across Saskatchewan who did so diligently present their reports to our committee. I would like to commend the entirety of our committee. I know their names have all been mentioned, and if we ask them to stand once more, they may drop into our Assembly. But thanks very much for your diligent effort, fellows, and thanks very much to the member of the opposition, Mr. Allen Engel, who co-operated so very, very . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — He's a good man, a good man.

MR. SVEINSON: — He was a good man on this committee. I'd hate to get into any further discussion on the personality of Mr. Allen Engel.

And thanks to the Assembly, and thanks to the member for Regina Centre, for respecting my address to this Assembly today on the Select Committee on Fire Protection. And your support is anticipated as the process moves along . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, thank you very

much. I know your observations are well taken, but thanks again to the Assembly. I could say something, member, but I'll hold it for the next time on the floor. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PETERSEN: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Oh, look at the moustache!

MR. PETERSEN: — You like my moustache? I like it, too. I like it, too.

I think that we should try to stay in a serious note, because what we are talking about is a fairly serious item in the minds of the people in Saskatchewan – fire protection and prevention. And that's what the whole committee was all about.

I enjoyed working with the members, and I could go through thanking them all again, and the fact that there seems to be a lack of female fire-fighters in the province of Saskatchewan. Those two areas I pursued with some diligence at the various hearings.

And some of the recommendations that I think we came up with were that, in our technical institutes, there is a lack of adequate training. We should at least have basic training for everyone going through many of our courses – mechanics, welding, what have you. It would greatly alleviate the problem that we have out there today, of people not understanding what they're working with, not understanding chemicals, not understanding how to prevent fires.

Prevention is the key. You can go in, and you can throw lots of water on it, and you can fight, and you can work, and you can try to stop it once it's started, but it's a lot easier to never, ever, let it get started. And with a little bit of training and information, many of the people out there in our work-force today would certainly do a lot to help us in that regard.

As far as female fire-fighters are concerned, we heard from a number of places where they do employ female fire-fighters in a number of different capacities. Meadow Lake was one, I believe. We also found a volunteer fire brigade where the entire brigade was made up of women, and they did a very, very good job. So my recommendation to the volunteer and the professional fire-fighters across the province and, indeed, the country, is: don't ignore that one area. There's a lot of expertise there, and they can do a lot for us.

The other area that I'd like to comment on is the fact that we came in on budget and, indeed, I believe, below budget. I think it's about 20 per cent. That also must be a new record for this Assembly. In times of restraint and accountability, I think we were very, very, very diligent in the spending of the Assembly's dollars.

David Mitchell, the clerk of the Assembly, pardon me the deputy clerk of the Assembly, co-ordinated our activities and made certain that we made connections, our hotels were set up, meetings were set up, accommodations were perfect, travel was all set up and arranged, and we were very, very conscientious of the dollar factor. I don't know if that has something to do with the lineage of our chairman or not, but we were very conscious of it. We took such measures as travelling by van rather than by plane where possible. We took some consideration into the accommodations when we stayed in various hotels. We doubled up in rooms. We allowed the member of the opposition his own room so his mind would not be damaged or changed in any way by associating with members of the opposite party. We also allowed the deputy clerk the advantage of a private room as well after a busy day of co-ordinating and refereeing, and so on, and so forth. He needed a little bit of time to be alone. I certainly can't blame him.

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We also took advantage of the fact that there were some of us with varying skills. We didn't bring along secretaries, recording people, so on and so forth. I handled the recording equipment.

As a matter of fact, I've got some lovely recordings of Ralph snoring. The member from Rosthern and I had the pleasure of sharing a room together, and we had lots of discussions sitting over, or around the coffee table in the evening, discussing the matters of the day. We worked very well together as a unit. I would like to work with these members again as a unit. I think we produced a report that is both relevant, and one that meets the demands of the people out there today. So, once again, I would like to thank the Assembly for allowing me the opportunity to work on this committee.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to express my thanks to the committee for the work that they have done during the last couple of months. There is no doubt in my mind, as minister in charge of the Fire Commissioner's office, it appears that there is no doubt in the minds of the fire safety committee, and certainly no doubt in the minds of the Government of Saskatchewan, that fire safety is a priority of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the chairman of the committee, my colleague, the member from Rosthern, and his entire committee, for their endless hours, and the effort that this committee has put into a very important report. There's been a number of accolades passed back and forth across the House today, and I think I would be remiss if I didn't thank the many people that turned out to present their briefs and their oral suggestions to the committee throughout the province, and certainly the fire-fighters of this province who also attended the hearings with their suggestions; and that kind of input has certainly meant that we've got a report tabled here today. I'm sure that we are all aware of the number of tragedies that can occur because of fires which affect our families, and friends, and relatives, and the people of the province, due to this very serious thing called fire.

The committee has heard both sides during their tour, the citizens of Saskatchewan, and also the fire-fighters of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, at this time, I want to assure the Assembly, the members of this House, the members of the fire safety committee, that I look forward to reviewing this report in much greater detail immediately, and I will meet with my officials to begin laying the framework, so that the recommendations in this final report can be implemented as quickly as possible.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, once again I truly want to thank the committee, the people of the province, the fire-fighters of the province, for presenting this report, and again, for the countless hours of work and effort that they have put into it. Thank you very much.

MR. TUSA: — Mr. Speaker, as the chairman of the continuing select committee which struck the Select Committee on Fire Prevention-Protection, I am very pleased to rise this afternoon to offer my congratulations to the committee on the work they have just completed. I might say that when we struck this committee, Mr. Speaker, our committee was concerned that this committee carry out its work in a non-partisan professional manner, the reason for that being that this committee was the fire committee of its kind that has been struck and functioned here in Saskatchewan.

I am pleased, after listening to the members of the committee, and after listening to the Hon. Lorne McLaren, the Minister of Labour, after listening to their comments, that I believe I can say, on behalf of my committee members, that the committee chaired by the hon. member from Rosthern, and the members on it, have indeed carried out their functions, their role, in a very, very professional manner, and they have set an excellent precedent for any committees which may follow.

Mr. Speaker, continuing select committees were originally established to give hon. members from both sides of the House an opportunity to have input into the decision making of government. I was, therefore, especially pleased to listen to the comments of the hon. minister from Yorkton who stated that he will be meeting immediately with his officials to begin to lay the groundwork for the implementation of recommendations contained in this report.

That, Mr. Speaker, clearly shows the responsiveness of the minister responsible for this area. But it also clearly indicates to other members of the House that any select committees which will be struck in the future will, in fact, be listened to by the government. And I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to encourage other members to strike similar committees, and to tour the province to get direct input from the people of Saskatchewan.

In closing then, I would also like to pay tribute to the technical advisers who helped serve on this committee, and to Mr. David Mitchell, the Clerk, who has always carried out his functions in a professional manner in this House. And I'm sure that all members will miss him when he leaves. I would like to thank him for the help he has given the continuing select committee in getting it off the ground.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TUSA: — And my final comment then, Mr. Speaker, is that the people who will benefit from this report are the people of Saskatchewan, and those people who, perhaps, may have lost their lives had not this report been brought in, and had not the minister acted on it, which I'm confident he will. Thank you very much member from Rosthern and your committee, once again, for the excellent job you have done.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief with my comments. I will say that I listened to what the members had to say. I thank them for what they had to say. And I especially thank the minister for his comments, so now that the report will not gather dust on the shelf and will be looked at to see what they can put in immediately to implement.

Mr. Speaker, to put our report in a very brief comment: outreach, modules, training, but above all, the safety of the people of Saskatchewan in fire protection and prevention. Let me finish. Let me take my seat with this comment.

The volunteers of Saskatchewan and their fire chiefs' association said they had a problem. We heard them. We have made our report. We hope the report will solve the problem, and that technology and the training will go hand in hand for the betterment of the people of Saskatchewan. On that note, let me leave this comment. God bless them, and thank you for what they have done in the past.

Motion agreed to.

Appreciation to Clerk Assistant

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, I have a few words just prior to adjourning the House a little early today. I think all hon. members are out to go to their riding, and I'm sure all the members on the opposition benches, as well, will be willing to get out to their ridings and sell the budget and tell the people all about how important it is.

But, first of all, Mr. Speaker, as all hon. members are, I'm sure, aware, today is David Mitchell's last day with us as Clerk Assistant, Procedural, in this Assembly. David has been with the Assembly for more than three years and, during that time, many of us have come to know him rather well through his work on such committees as the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations,

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the Non-controversial Bills Committee, and most recently of course, as we've heard this morning, the Committee on Fire Prevention Protection.

While at the Table, he has provided many members with procedural advice on matters of particular concern to them, as well as doing research work for the Clerk on various procedural questions. David's involvement with our Commonwealth Parliamentary Association has been much appreciated by all of us, and it has assisted, certainly, in Saskatchewan's increasingly active role within our association.

And I might say, regardless of our efforts to keep him busy, and certainly we have done that, David, it hasn't kept him from another career, which he just embarked on last fall, and we're all aware of, in the literary field, where he published a very successful book on a politician of some note in this province, W.A.C. Bennett. I was thinking in reading that book, David, that you were able to present a very human side to politics, and I wasn't sure if that was because you were sitting in the middle of this House that you were able to present that human side, or maybe it was something that you brought before you arrived in this House. I'm not sure, but we'll let you be the judge of that. But as well as presenting a very human side to a politician, and to politics itself, you certainly demonstrated to me a certain political acumen as well, which I think we can discuss at this stage of your career at the Table, anyway.

But I would say for all members on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, and to you, David, we wish you very well in your further ventures in the literary field, and most of all, certainly the very best in your future endeavours in the business field. Thank you very much.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to join my colleague and friend from Meadow Lake in – I suppose with some sadness – recognizing the services of one David Mitchell, who has acted as the Assistant Clerk for the last several years, but I think also at this time welcoming a librarian extraordinaire, Craig James, who will come to take his place. And I suppose it's with sadness, but also optimism, that these kind of changes take place.

I would like to say, as well, that David will be missed for several reasons. One, of course, in the daily proceedings he has been here probably more days than most of the members. I say that with some frankness. Being so far from Regina, it's not every day you can be here.

But as well, I would like to say that David, in travelling on several committees, and several times when we had an opportunity to go out-of-province (and I'm sure the member from Prince Albert will back me up in this), that he has not only been a hard worker on those trips, but also an able companion and friend, and is able to draw together the members from both caucuses in a friendship and feeling, as has been mentioned by the member from Rosthern and my colleague from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg today.

I remember, very well, a night in Toronto when the member from P.A. and myself were busily making plans of how we shouldn't fight so much in the legislature, but should co-operate more. David was busy taking notes, and when he read them back to us the next day, we were a little surprised at some of the solutions to the problem that had come out.

I would like to join with the member from Meadow Lake as well, in recognizing another area that David is now involved in: a major biography of one W.A.C. Bennett, a very well-known politician from B.C. We can only hope that he will be as easy on us, I suppose, if he ever would get around to writing about the Saskatchewan legislature, as he was with Mr. Bennett. But he does bring out the human side in people, and I think that that will be one of his strengths when he moves to B.C. to work for the B.C.R.I.C. corporation as one of their directors of government relations.

And so, while I suppose it is a sad day, it also is a day of opportunity for both David and for the Assembly. We look forward with a great deal of anticipation to the new assistant coming in, Craig James, who has done a good job in the library. He will be sorely missed there, but we welcome him here, and say farewell to David.

We look forward to hearing from you and watching your progress, because I think there's a great future ahead for you. Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the other members who have spoken here today to extend, on behalf of our caucus, and as whip of our caucus, our appreciation to Dave Mitchell for his very gracious and thorough manner in which he carried out his duties.

I want to say that I understand that David Mitchell will be heading for British Columbia. Our loss, of course, will be the gain for British Columbia.

If we look at the Clerk's office and the people who attend to our needs here in the Legislative Assembly, I think we're rather unique in Saskatchewan in that we have so many young people that grace the Legislative Assembly, headed by Gordon Barnhart and Gwenn Ronyk and Dave Mitchell. I think it's unique. But I think that the calibre of service that the members have had from each and every one of them is really remarkable. And I know as it stretches across Canada, there is a high regard for each and every member that I've mentioned.

And so, to Dave Mitchell, we want to thank you on behalf of the people of this province, and certainly all members of this legislature, for your contribution here in carrying forward the important business of the people of Saskatchewan. We want to wish you the very best in your future endeavours, and should you return to Saskatchewan, and the House is in session, we invite you back to grace this Legislative Assembly again. Thank you so much.

The Assembly adjourned at 11:43 a.m.