

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I present the sixth report of the said committee which is as follows:

Bill No. 58 — An Act to amend The Arts Board Act

Mr. Shillington: — As chairman of the non-controversial bills committee, I wish to report Bill No. 58, An Act to amend The Arts Board Act, as being controversial.

Mr. Speaker: — Bill No. 58 — second reading.

Bill No. 31 — An Act to amend The Commissioners for Oaths Act

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the non-controversial bills committee, I wish to report Bill No. 31, An Act to amend The Commissioners of Oaths Act, as being non-controversial.

Mr. Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration in committee of the whole on the said bill be waived.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move the said bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 37 — An Act to amend The Teachers' Life Insurance (Government Contributory) Act

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I wish to report Bill No. 37, An Act to amend The Teachers' Life Insurance (Government Contributory) Act, as being non-controversial.

Mr. Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration in committee of the whole on the said bill be waived.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move the said bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 54 — An Act to amend The Statute Law (No. 2)

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I wish to report Bill No. 54, An Act to amend The Statute Law (No. 2) as being non-controversial.

Mr. Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration of the bill in committee of the whole be waived.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 57 — An Act respecting Lotteries

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I wish to report Bill No. 57 — An Act respecting Lotteries, as being non-controversial.

Mr. Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration of the bill in committee of the whole be waived.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the said bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 59 — An Act to amend The Department of Finance Act, 1983

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I wish to report Bill No. 59, An Act to amend The Department of Finance Act, 1983, as being non-controversial.

Mr. Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading of this bill and consideration of the bill in committee be waived.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 63 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from

amendments to The Department of Finance Act, 1984

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I wish to report Bill No. 63, An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from amendments to The Department of Finance Act, 1984, as being non-controversial.

Mr. Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration of the bill in committee of the whole be waived.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the said bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 76 — An Act to amend The Legal Profession Act

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I wish to report Bill No. 76, An Act to amend The Legal Profession Act, as being non-controversial.

Mr. Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the second reading of the said bill and consideration of the bill in committee of the whole be waived.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the said bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 77 — An Act to amend The Mentally Disordered Persons Act

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I wish to report Bill No. 77, An Act to amend The Mentally Disordered Persons Act, as being non-controversial.

Mr. Speaker: — when shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move second reading and consideration of the bill in committee of the whole be waived.

Motion agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 70 — An Act respecting Urban Municipalities

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the non-controversial bills committee, I wish to report Bill No. 70, An Act respecting Urban Municipalities, as being non-controversial.

Mr. Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration of the bill in the committee of the whole be waived.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move the said bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 88 — An Act to amend The Planning and Development Act, 1983

Mr. Shillington: — As chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I wish to report Bill No. 88, An Act to amend The Planning and Development Act, as being non-controversial.

Mr. Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading of this bill and consideration of the said bill in the committee of the whole be waived.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move the said bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 90 — An Act to amend The Teachers' Superannuation Act (No. 2)

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I wish to report Bill No. 90, An Act to amend The Teachers' Superannuation Act (No. 2), as being non-controversial.

Mr. Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration of the bill in committee of the whole be waived.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the said bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 94 — An Act to amend The Summary Offences Procedure Act

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I wish to report Bill No. 94, An Act to amend The Summary Offences

Procedure Act, as being non-controversial.

Mr. Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move second reading and consideration of the bill in committee of the whole be now waived.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the said bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 95 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the enactment of The Urban Municipality Act, 1984

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I wish to report Bill No. 95, An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the enactment of The Urban Municipality Act, 1984, as being non-controversial.

Mr. Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move second reading and consideration of the bill in committee of the whole be now waived.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move the said bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 97 — An Act to promote Regulatory Reform in Saskatchewan by repealing Certain Obsolete Statutes (No. 1)

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I wish to report Bill No. 97, An Act to promote Regulatory Reform in Saskatchewan by repealing Certain Obsolete Statutes (No. 1), as being non-controversial.

Mr. Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration of the bill in committee of the whole be waived.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Finally, Mr. Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Special Committee on Regulations

Deputy Clerk: — Mr. Koskie, from the Special Committee on Regulations presents the third

report of the said committee as follows:

Your committee has completed its review of 1983 regulation. Satisfactory responses have been received to 11 committee inquiries while ongoing consideration is being given to 10 other 1983 regulations.

Your committee has also examined responses on 12 matters outstanding from the review of the 1981 and 1982 regulations and has decided to follow up further on four of these items.

Your committee does not wish at this time to draw the special attention of the Assembly to any regulation on the grounds set out in its term of reference.

Your committee has also considered the by-laws, regulations, and amendments thereto of various professional associations, tabled as Sessional Paper No. 5 of the 1983 session and Sessional Paper No. 59 of the 1983-84 session to May 1, 1984. Your committee reviewed the by-laws and amendments to ensure that each had proper legislative authority and was in the public interest, with further information being sought with respect to two by-laws. The committee also considered responses to three matters outstanding from the review of 1981-82 by-laws, and has decided to follow further on two of the said by-laws. The committee reserves its ratification of the following by-laws pending satisfactory resolution of the committee's concern:

Saskatchewan Association of Architects

Saskatchewan Association of Chiropodists

Saskatchewan Funeral Service Association

Your committee recommends that the by-laws, regulations, and amendments of the following professional associations be ratified and confirmed:

1981-82:

Saskatchewan Funeral Service Association

1983:

Saskatchewan Pharmaceutical Association

Saskatchewan Association of Architects

Law Society of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan

1983-84:

Saskatchewan Optometric Association

Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists

College of Dental Surgeons of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association

Chiropractors' Association of Saskatchewan

College of Dental Surgeons of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Dental Therapists Council

Law Society of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Psychiatric Nurses' Association

Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association

Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association

Saskatchewan Pharmaceutical Association

Saskatchewan Association of Architects

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan

Association of Professional Engineers of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Society of Occupational Therapists

Saskatchewan Teachers Federation

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to move, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Nutana:

That the third report on the Special Committee on Regulations be now concurred in.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and the members of this Assembly, the executive members of the Saskatchewan division of HUDAC, which is the Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada.

Seated in the west gallery are Ken McKinlay, the executive director; Art Weber, Joel Teal, Grant Robertson, Glen Salie, and Doug Schmidt.

These people are here to take part in the continuing dialogue they have with myself and the government and they've contributed to our directions and policies in the past and will do so in the future. And I'd like all members to welcome these people with me, and I'll meet them in room 336 as soon as question period is over.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

E. Robert Lee of Western Earth Moving Ltd.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to address a question . . . He disappeared! I tell you, Mr. Speaker, he knew I was going to come at him and he ran out — the Minister of Labour. Where is he?

In view of the escape of one of my prime victims today, I want to address a question to the Premier, and I want to ask you, Mr. Premier, in light of the admission in the House yesterday by two of your cabinet ministers that special consideration was provided to a very prominent PC Party supporter on a matter still before the courts, and I want to ask the premier: will you undertake to review the actions of the Minister of Labour and Minister of Justice in this case, and report back to the House as to whether or not you find their conducts to be, indeed, acceptable?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I have the fullest confidence in the two ministers. With respect to more specific information, the Attorney General, the Minister of Finance, is much more familiar with it than I am, and for specific responses, I'll turn it over to him.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — For some reason the hon. member is still confused, Mr. Speaker. Let's put it in perspective. I made the decision. I was the minister responsible that made the decisions in my role as Attorney General. The hon. members have stated that there was some type of special treatment that . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Well, I'm going to — because the hon. members wouldn't take the information that I gave them — indicate some other facts that had gone on for some period of years. The problem, Mr. Speaker, is when I try and answer the question . . . When I try and answer the question, for some reason the hon. member from the Quill Lakes does not want to listen to the . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. You've asked a question. Give the minister an opportunity to answer it. Order.

An Hon. Member: — To the Premier. He's not answering. How can he answer on behalf of the Premier?

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. I've just called for order. The House cannot operate with the amount of commotion that's going on here. Give the minister an opportunity to answer.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I'm going to indicate again to the hon. members the basis on which I made the decision to ask the former chief justice to look at the file and to review it — and that was the matter raised.

First of all, we had allegations — untrue — that the previous attorney general bought off the trial judge. And I'll show you the information. We had allegations that the departmental lawyers were lying. We had allegations that the departmental officials are corrupt. And, Mr. Speaker, we have a letter, personal and confidential, that I'm prepared to ask the lawyer involved whether I could release it — I'm quite prepared to do — indicating in his view — and this was after the trials — there were serious blunders by the Department of Highways staff which goes back to 1975; that, in fact, there was an injustice.

When I have allegations of injustice, I have an obligation as Attorney General to look at it. And I do that for any citizen of this province, and I will continue to do so, Mr. Speaker, for any citizen of this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — And when the allegations come from the individual's lawyer after the appeal process and everything is passed, I have an obligation, as I would take from any individual.

What action did I take? What action did I take, Mr. Speaker? I asked the former chief justice to look at the file.

Have I reviewed files before? Yes, on a very regular basis, whenever complaints come in. I will continue to do that on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Have I overruled court decisions in the past? Yes, I have, Mr. Speaker, and I table that document before the Assembly on penalties and forfeitures remission. That is a common practice.

Mr. Speaker, the public of Saskatchewan knows full well that if they believe there's an injustice, they can come to the Attorney General. That's been the historic fact in this province, and I will maintain that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Premier could address himself to the question directed to him by the member for Quill lakes. Will he review the actions of the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Labour with respect to the E. Robert Lee matter?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I said to the hon. member's question: I have full confidence in the two ministers, and I have confidence in the Minister of Justice. They've informed me of their activities, and I have all the confidence in the world in their behaviour.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary. I'll ask a new question of the Minister of Justice. Could he advise the House the approximate date on which he was approached by the Minister of Labour with respect to this matter?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I will certainly undertake to supply you with that information, and I will indicate that the letter that I had from the lawyer, indicating that he believed there was an injustice, was August 11, 1982. But I will undertake.

I also undertook to see if any payments had been made. That was a question that had been made over the last two days. I've been advised by my officials that no payments were made of any kind.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister of Justice concede that on August 11, 1982, the matter was still before the courts, that the matter was under appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada; that he, as Minister of Justice, or his counsel, were litigating with counsel of Mr. Lee; and that the matter was, in fact, about to be argued before the Supreme Court in respect of whether an appeal would be heard; and that the matter was not finally disposed of by the Supreme Court until February of 1983?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Yes, except that there was some indication from the lawyers involved that they expected that the court would not hear the appeal.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Do I take it from the Minister of Justice that when somebody is litigating with the Crown in the right of Saskatchewan, and that they feel that they may not succeed in the courts, that they are free to come to the Minister of Justice and that he will set up a tribunal to deal with the matter, even though, at the same time, they are litigating with the same persons before the Supreme Court?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — If I am faced in the future with allegations of corruption against judges, or if I'm faced with allegations of corruptions in Department of Justice officials, or if I am faced with allegations of corruptions within government, made by a disappointed litigant, yes, I will review it and I review it in the best way. And in this case, in my view, the best way to review it and

ensure that justice was done, that there were no basis to allegations . . . The most appropriate person in my mind was the former chief justice of Saskatchewan. I asked him to review it; he did review it; and I think that, faced with that situation again, I'm not sure that there is any choice but to make the decision that I made.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the Minister of Justice. I ask the Minister of Justice, when he's making information available, whether he will make the terms of reference of the inquiry conducted by former chief justice Culliton available as well. And will he now admit that what the chief justice was asked to do was whether or not money should be paid to Mr. Lee, this PC supporter, and not whether or not the conduct of the judge was appropriate or inappropriate? Will you not admit that?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Not at all. Not at all. And it's typical of what you've been doing this session, and . . . In fact, he was asked to look at the file and make sure that things were done properly and correctly, and he did that, and there were no constraints whatsoever on the former chief justice other than I did not want to leave the impression that this was a whole new judicial process starting all over again, that the individual had had his day in court and had, in fact, gone through the process.

And that was for the limitation that I indicated and that you have as to why I did not want the impression left that it was another full judicial process starting all over again. Because the individual had, in fact, exhausted his remedies before the court.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Further supplementary. In view of the fact that the individual had not exhausted his remedy, but was litigating with you at the same time, will you cease stating the fact that he had exhausted his remedy at the time when he was attempting to appeal the matter before the Supreme Court?

Will you also acknowledge that there was nothing on the written file alleging impropriety on the part of the judge? Will you acknowledge that?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I think it would be inappropriate to have those type of allegations. The material that was given, was given to the chief justice to look at, and I don't think that it would be appropriate to get into that type of inquiry when, frankly, I did not believe the allegations. I took them simply as the allegations of a disgruntled litigant.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Justice has now conceded, (1) that chief justice Culliton was looking at the file; (2) that there was nothing on the file alleging any impropriety on the part of the judge, ergo, that was not under consideration; (3) that what was on the file was allegations that the litigant had not been properly dealt with and that he deserved money from the Crown.

That's what Chief Justice was asked to look into. Will you not concede that that is the fact, and that you are offering a further avenue for this particular litigant to get compensation from the Crown, even while he was pursuing his remedies before the Supreme Court?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Not at all. As a matter of fact, I was of the view and had indicated to the litigant that, in fact, the remedies were exhausted. The allegation of injustice came from, amongst others, the litigant, the lawyer for the litigant.

And as I say, and the public of Saskatchewan are well aware, that when there are such allegations made, any attorney general has the obligation to investigate, and that is precisely what I did.

I might indicate to the Leader of the Opposition, if the Leader of the Opposition is in any way of the view that the former chief justice of the province of Saskatchewan could be made to do

anything, he is sadly mistaken.

Retail Food Prices in Regina

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask a question of the Minister of Consumer Affairs, who has not been called Madam Fix-it. She has yet to deal, I think, with any of the consumers' problems that have been dealt with to her.

Madam Minister, I want to ask you about two reports issued this week, which show that Regina continues to suffer with some of the highest food prices in Canada. The retail food price report published by Agriculture Canada, shows that Regina has the third highest retail food prices in Canada during the first three months of this year. Only Toronto and Vancouver had higher retail food prices.

Within Saskatchewan, the latest survey conducted by the consumer association shows that the retail food prices in Regina are 10 per cent higher than they are in Saskatoon. We first raised this issue with you, Madam Minister, in December. You reacted with wild indignation at what you thought was my suggestion that your department wasn't on top of the problem.

Madam Minister, after four months, I'd like to know what you and your department have done to try to pin-point the cause of the higher retail food prices in Regina.

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, in response to the member's question, historically Regina has always had amongst the highest food prices, not only here in Saskatchewan, but across the country.

As some of the reasons, perhaps he would be better to address his questions to some of his colleagues, party colleagues, on council. One of the reasons Regina's food prices have been higher have been because, historically, taxes in Regina have been higher, wages in Regina are higher, land costs are higher. There's a lot of reasons why the difference in prices from city to city.

I might say that the department has been monitoring it and looking into it. We, as a government, are not prepared to say to the council of Regina, lower your taxes, lower your land prices. Perhaps they would have as a government, but I doubt it.

Mr. Shillington: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, if higher taxes imposed by the city council were the cause of the problem, all prices would be higher and not just food prices. There is a marked difference in food prices from other living costs between these two cities.

I'm surprised that Madam Minister doesn't know that one of the root causes of higher retail food prices in the city of Regina is the lack of competition at the retail level. Madam Minister, what plans . . . and the problem is the Safeway chain which has 60 per cent of the Regina market.

Madam Minister, what plans do you and your department have to encourage increased competition at the retail food level in Regina, so that Regina people may have reasonable food prices?

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no basis to the whimperings of the member from Regina Centre. There is ample competition in Regina. What he fails to recognize, that there is an aberration going on in Saskatoon. There is a price war going on in Saskatoon between two stores. It is an aberration, because that will settle down eventually. But he fails to recognize that.

I might also say, Mr. Speaker, that you cannot, you cannot compare prices — definite prices — from city to city, from province to province, unless you know the buying patterns. It might also

interest the member to know that in Regina the average disposable income per person is higher than it is in Saskatoon, and maybe that's one of the reasons. There's a lot of reasons that come into play. But that side of the House choose to ignore everything.

Mr. Shillington: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Only this minister in this government could, with a straight face, blame the city council of Regina and cover for Safeway, with respect to these high retail food prices.

Madam Minister, you have not denied that there is a lack of competition in the Regina market. Madam Minister, have you examined the possibility of encouraging the creation of more food co-ops like the Regina Service Fee Co-op? . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Ah, it's a great joke to the members opposite, the co-op movement, but I suggest it might be a solution.

Have you and your colleague, the Minister of Co-ops, looked at some form of assistance and encouragement to this budding co-op? That kind of grass roots support might produce some results. Have you and your officials examined the possibility of encouraging this co-op?

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — I don't know why the member would encourage me to encourage the co-ops to establish more stores. They're one of the highest-cost stores in the city.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order. Order! When I'm on my feet and calling for order, if the member from Quill Lakes persists in speaking, he'll be asked to apologize or leave the Chamber.

Mr. Shillington: — Madam Minister, you continue to cover for Safeway. You've now broadened your attacks on the city council to share with Co-op. Madam Minister, I'm going to ignore that bit of libel. I'm going to ask you to direct your attention to the question which I asked you and that has to do, not with the Sherwood Co-op, but with the Regina Service Fee Co-op. Have you and your colleague, the Minister of Co-ops, given some consideration to encouraging this attempt at the grass roots by the city of Regina to cope with a problem which you and your department seem to studiously ignore?

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I have had no inquiries from the co-op movement, the one that the hon. member has been talking about. Perhaps the minister, Mr. Sandberg, has had some contact with them. I haven't. I maintain, Mr. Speaker, that there is competition in the Regina market, as there is competition in Swift current, in Yorkton, in Maple Creek. People will go where they can get the best dollar . . . spend their money wisely. People will do that. And I think what the consumers' association really does is heighten people's awareness that there are places and moneys to be gained out there by shopping around.

The allegations that the member from Regina Centre has stated has no bearing on the Regina market. He chooses to ignore what's going on in Saskatoon.

I might also tell the member they think they have a corner on the co-operative movement. I can tell you, I'm a member of the Maple Creek Co-op and I have been for 20-some years.

Proposal for Stimulating Residential Housing Construction

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. He will be aware of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation monthly statistics report which covers housing in Canada for the first four months of the year. And he will also be aware that, for example in Regina, housing starts are down this year - the four months of this year, January, February, March and April of this year - compared with last year by something over 50 per cent, and that housing starts for single, detached dwellings are down about two-thirds, 66 per cent. Does the minister have any proposals for stimulating residential house construction in Regina, or elsewhere in Saskatchewan, in view of

the sharp drop in the first four months of this year?

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, in view of the fact that his nostrums to date, in the first four months of this year, have proved singularly unsatisfactory in stimulating house construction, would he elaborate on what he intends to do in order to remedy the situation which we now are faced with?

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Mr. Speaker, I don't intend to elaborate what I'm going to do to the Leader of the Opposition. I find whatever he said in this House in this session is being destructive rather than constructive, and there's no reason for me to believe that he's changing his pattern. The gentlemen that are seated in the gallery are here to discuss further programming ideas with me. We discuss with housing groups, we discuss with seniors, before we come out with any specific program. And I wonder what the Leader of the Opposition means when he says we can't stimulate housing. We stimulated 6,000 new units with our Build-A-Home program.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Quite frankly, if I wasn't paying, if this government wasn't paying \$3.5 million for the vacancies that were build under their administration, I'd be able to do more in this year.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Do I understand the minister to say that in the fact of a drop of more than 50 per cent in housing starts in Regina, and a drop of close to 50 per cent of housing starts in Saskatoon, he is proposing to take no action, but only say that his problems stem from what happened three, four, or five years ago? Is that what he is saying? Or does he have a proposal to deal with this, and if so, will he tell the people of Saskatchewan what his proposals are?

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Mr. Speaker, I think that the irony of the situation is that the only people in Saskatchewan that don't believe that we're coming in with new programming ideas which are going to be what the people want, are the eight members sitting across. They should know by now. They saw our Build-A-Home program. It worked. They saw our other programs; they all work.

So I want to encourage them to have the confidence in us that the people of Saskatchewan have in us.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — One last supplementary to the minister. May I advise him that I add to the list the small contractors in my constituency who don't have housing project work. Will you tell us now what you're going to do to offer some opportunity to build homes by smaller contractors, in this city and in other cities, or are you going to allow the housing starts to continue to be 50 per cent lower in 1984 than they were in 1983?

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the answer is: no, I will not say today what we're going to do, because I don't announce things unless we're sure it's going to work, like the Build-A-Home program. But I can reassure the members opposite that we're not coming in with a program to build housing when housing is not required, because the taxpayers cannot afford it.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, order.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 99 — An Act respecting the Government Re-imbursement (Unjust Dismissals) Act

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a bill, An Act respecting the Government Re-imbursement (Unjust Dismissals) Act.

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

Bill No. 100 — An Act to amend The Limitation of Civil Rights Act

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a bill to amend The Limitation of Civil Rights Act.

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

Bill No. 101 — An Act to repeal The Department of Northern Saskatchewan Act

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a bill to repeal The Department of Northern Saskatchewan Act.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the bill ordered to be read a second time later this day.

Bill No. 102 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the enactment of The Northern Affairs Secretariat Act

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a bill respecting the consequential amendments to certain acts resulting from the enactment of The Northern Affairs Secretariat Act.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the bill ordered to be read a second time later this day.

Bill No. 103 — An Act to amend The Coroners Act

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a bill to amend The Coroners Act.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the bill ordered to be read a second time later this day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Annual Ball Game

Mrs. Bacon: — Mr. Speaker, I should like to report on the annual ball game to the House. The ball game between the press gallery and the MLAs was held last night. Mr. Speaker, even unfavourable weather was unable to deter the 40 hearty souls that took part in the action last night.

It is my sad duty to report to the House that, although the game was extremely close, it was won by the keen observers in the gallery. The score is not really that important. Let us just say that it was close, and I'm sure that next year the trophy will be with the MLAs.

For the record, Mr. Speaker, let me review for you the highlights and the stars of the game. There were two home runs belted out in the game, one for each side. John Gerich, the MLA for Redberry, slapped a three-run homer to momentarily put the MLAs in a commanding lead. However, George Bentley, of Broadcast News, replied for the press gallery with a two-run homer to take away our lead.

Pitching, Mr. Speaker, was obviously a secret for the MLA team and certainly prevented the gallery from totally running away with the game. The press gallery also had a pitcher who, I am sure, is responsible for that blatant display of the trophy today.

There are several outstanding defensive plays, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the most noticeable was turned in by the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, Joanne Zazelenchuk, who turned a sure line-drive home run into a routine fly ball. It should be pointed out that the Premier showed his versatility at a number of positions, although his weakest and most uncomfortable seemed to be in left field.

The lack of a night sitting certainly left the pages with nothing to do, and all were in attendance to lend moral support to both sides. Mr. Speaker, the list of players is too long to name individually. Let me just say that not only are the Saskatchewan Roughriders the only Saskatchewan Tough. Mr. Speaker, that concludes my report.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 89 — An Act to amend The Rural Municipality Act

Hon. Mr. Domotor: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in Assembly to move second reading of An Act to amend The Rural Municipality Act. This act contains three types of amendments, and I would like to take this opportunity to briefly explain each of them to this Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan.

First, we have made several housekeeping amendments. Sections 3, 5 through 17, and section 20 of this act are all basic housekeeping changes that have been necessitated by amendments to other acts and have been made with the approval of both the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities and the Rural Municipal Administrators' Association.

Secondly, we have proposed amendments that are in keeping with our policy of consultation with our 299 R.M.s and their organization, SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities). The amendments, listed in section 4 and 18 of this bill, have been proposed by the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities as needed changes which will improve their day-to-day operations.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this act contains one new item in section 19. This amendment permits exemption from property taxation for greenhouse operators. Property taxes in Saskatchewan's greenhouses have been traditionally higher than in other provinces because municipalities have been allowed to tax all land and buildings, as well as assessing a business tax upon these operations.

Greenhouse operators, together with the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists, have expressed their concern about this inequitable tax level to the government on several occasions.

This proposed exemption will simply allow the same property taxation rules to apply to Saskatchewan greenhouse operations as is in effect in neighbouring jurisdictions to allow them to become competitive with operations in other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, while the amendments proposed are all relatively minor in nature, they are proof once again that the government is response to the needs and concerns of rural Saskatchewan. I am, therefore, pleased to move that an Act to amend The Rural Municipality Act be now read a

second time.

Some Hon. Members: — — Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my colleague from Pelly, who is rural municipal critic, I would suggest that, on looking at the bill, we find no substantive changes in this bill. There are some minor adjustments to the administrative procedures that we will likely be raising briefly in committee. Therefore, we will be supporting this 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.

Bill No. 98 — An Act to amend The Vehicles Act, 1983 (No. 3)

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Assembly to give second reading to The Vehicles Act. For clarification, the amendments can be grouped into two categories. Amendments 1 through 3 change the wording of the respective clauses to offer more precise definitions conforming to the legal specifications.

As we are aware, the section in question is constantly being challenged in the court and, from the act's perspective, it is important to ensure these definitions are accurate. The intent of the legislation remains unchanged by these amendments.

Amendment 4 concerns executive clemency for drivers applying for restricted licence — is of a housekeeping variety. This clause in the act was in place to give drivers an avenue to apply for restricted licences until proper regulations were in place allowing drivers to appeal to the Highway Traffic Board proper. These regulations are now in place, and there is no longer a need for this clause.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would move second reading of The Vehicles Act legislation.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Seeing as the timing of this bill has only just reached the floor of the Assembly within the last day, I would ask that we would adjourn the debate, and give us an opportunity to do some research.

The number of bills coming in in this last couple of days makes it very difficult, not only for the opposition, but for the public to have any input or any review of the legislation. It makes it very difficult.

And I would like to, at this time, recommend to the government and the Assembly that in future years that the process of bringing in 40 bills in the last three or four days simply has to come to an end because I think, not only is it bad for the process of the legislature, but I think the public will not tolerate a government that attempts to slide by this great number of bills without the proper debate.

And, Mr. Speaker, for that reason I will be moving adjournment on this bill. But I think it is relevant to all the bills we're dealing with at the present time, where we're trying to force through a large number of bills in the dying days of the session.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 91 — An Act to amend The Land Contracts (Actions) Act

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, The Land Contracts (Actions) Act is an act that requires, before a mortgage can be foreclosed, or an agreement for sale cancelled, leave must be obtained from the Court of Queen's Bench.

The purpose of this act is to provide basic protection to landowners to ensure that their land is not taken away from them without clear and substantial reasons, and that a reasonable opportunity is given to them to rectify their financial situation to avoid losing their land. The role to be played by the provincial mediation board under this act is particularly significant.

The court can consider a number of factors such as economic conditions, state of cultivation, value of the land, the state of accounts between the parties, and the income and the assets of the parties in coming to its determination on whether or not the plaintiff will be permitted to proceed with foreclosure, or the defendant landholder will be given a chance to redeem.

In two recent judgements, the Court of Appeal of Saskatchewan has ruled that if a plaintiff decides to side-step the leave procedure and go directly to his action, the defendant may plead the provisions of the act in order to get the benefits of it. In other words, before the granting of a decree, a defendant must complain that the plaintiff had failed to obtain leave.

The effect of these judgements is to leave many farmers and home owners without some basic protections. Unless the landowner sees a lawyer before an order is made, there is nothing that can be done. Previous to these recent rulings, the court of appeal had ruled in 1959 in the case of Sherban versus Robertson that any action commenced without leave was a nullity. The Saskatchewan bar, and lenders, have proceeded on that basis for the past 25 years.

The amendments contained in this bill reaffirm Sherban versus Robertson, and place the law in exactly the same position most had thought that it rested prior to the court's ruling on April 30th of this year. Following its enactment, all actions can be commenced only with leave.

To overcome the court's ruling, two amendments are proposed to The Land Contracts (Actions) Act. Firstly, section 3 of the bill clearly states that failure to obtain leave voids any action. Further, because the court of appeal suggested in its judgements that a mortgagee could waive the protection of the act after an action was started, new subsection 5(1) is added to the act prohibiting any agreement to waive the act's protection.

This subsection is the same as section 40 — subsection (1) of The Limitation of Civil Rights Act to section 40 of The Limitation of Civil Rights Act. The two acts are usually associated one with the other in relation to foreclosure proceedings, but the corporate waiver is left intact.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Land Contracts (Actions) Amendment Act, 1984.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister has indicated, the previous subsection (3) merely stated that no action shall be commenced except by leave of the court grant upon application under this section, and it further goes on in the amendment that the action that is commenced without obtaining a leave pursuant to this section is a nullity, and I think that is a benefit to the individual.

In respect to the amendment in section 5, subsection (1), I suppose the question I would ask is whether that section applies to those which are existing mortgages, those which are out there already under the previous law, or whether it deals just to future contracts of mortgages. Because it could have an impact if, indeed, as the Minister of Justice is indicating, that it is reverting it back to the '59 position — a departure from the two recent cases — then I think for the existing mortgages that are out there, there may be some indications.

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 10

Item 1 (continued)

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I want to return to some of the comments made by the Premier in his closing remarks yesterday.

And I want to point out to the committee that the Premier, first, has a large staff to give him facts, and secondly, has a background in economics and is familiar with many of the facts that he discusses in the course of his remarks. And I say that because some may think that his remarks were made casually without background and knowledge of the facts. But I say that isn't so. I say he knows the facts, but doesn't wish to tell this committee the facts.

Now I just want to touch on a few of the things he said. And I'll start:

Mr. Chairman, let's make a couple of points very clear in the few minutes that we have, probably before we break. One: I don't think that Saskatchewan, in the history of our province, ever had lower unemployment than Alberta.

Now that is pure nonsense. The Premier knows it's pure nonsense, and I want to underline that he knows it's nonsense. I point out that in 1982 when he came to office, the province had a lower unemployment rate than Alberta; it was the lowest rate in Canada, and he knew that.

But again, this professor economics will have known that in 1974 the annual . . . for the calendar year 1974, Saskatchewan had a lower unemployment rate than Alberta, that in 1975 Saskatchewan had a lower unemployment rate than Alberta. And I'll give the figures for '75, for example: Alberta 4.1, Saskatchewan 2.9; for 1976, Alberta 4.0, Saskatchewan 3.9. In 1977, they were both the same at 4.5. But for three successive years — lower. Again in 1982, lower, and those are facts that have to be acknowledged.

True, we are now lower. We were lower in '74, lower in '75, lower in '76, lower in '82 when he took office, and we're still lower. It is true, of course, that Alberta's unemployment rate has gone into the stratosphere, but compared with other provinces we are doing not as well as, let us say, Manitoba. We used to be a couple of percentage points better than Manitoba; now we're only marginally better than Manitoba.

So that's one point. The Premier tells us:

I don't think that Saskatchewan, in the history of the province, had a lower unemployment rate than Alberta.

May I point out that that's not true for 1982, for 1974, for 1975, for 1976, for 1977.

And then he goes on to say:

At a time when we are receiving record tax revenues from large companies like banks . . .

I'll just make one more comment, and then I'll allow the Premier to comment:

. . . we are receiving record tax revenues from large companies like banks, railroads, and oil companies.

He will probably quote higher rates, and if he had said, "higher rates" he could have perhaps defended the statement. What he said was, "We're receiving higher revenues." All I can say is that the corporate tax income fell from 93 million in '81-82 to 87 million in '82-83. Those are his figures, not mine.

So I point out those two statements that he made which are not supported by the facts. The latter statement is perhaps defensible on some basis saying: this rate is higher, or that rate is higher. Facts are, we're collecting less money.

The former is not defensible in any terms. As the Premier well knows, we have on many occasions had the lowest unemployment rate in Canada, including the time when he took office. It is true today, but it was true on the day he took office, and was true, for several years indeed, during the 1970s. I make that point.

I'll stop to see whether the Premier wishes to make any comment.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, in the last full term of office of the previous administration — 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981 — we found, as is the case, that Alberta had lower unemployment than the province of Saskatchewan.

When we go back and review the facts from 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, and right on through till 1977, when they were the same, we found, as the hon. member says, from '71, '72 and '73, there was a rapid decline in the population in the province of Saskatchewan. I think it added up to something like (we'll check this) 20 to 30,000 people that left.

Now in '74 and '75 and '76, he is right that the unemployment rate in the province of Saskatchewan was lower than it was in Alberta. Alberta was experiencing rapid growth and increase in population. Saskatchewan had come off a time period of rapid decline in population.

Now, for the first time since their term, their last term, since the '78 election, in '82 we found, as we finished 1982, that we had turned it around, where we were growing in population and the lowest unemployment rate. And if you go back and check the records, I don't believe you'll ever find a situation where Saskatchewan was experiencing a rapid increase in population and at the same time had the lowest unemployment rate in the nation, and certainly beat Alberta's.

So I will acknowledge that in 1974, '75 and '76, given the population changes, that Saskatchewan at that time had a lower unemployment rate than the province of Alberta. Given the last series of years in the last administration, obviously Alberta was much lower than the province of Saskatchewan.

With respect to taxes and tax revenues coming into the province of Saskatchewan, what I said yesterday was that we have never provided such tax cuts to ordinary families, and have never raised taxes against large business, like we have in 1984. And the tax revenues obviously coming in from railroads aren't here yet. We've just brought it in. That's the highest tax rate and revenues, both, that have ever come into the province of Saskatchewan from railroads. It never happened like that before.

With respect to the large corporations like banks, we find that our taxes have gone from 14 per cent to 16 per cent. That's the highest they've been in the province of Saskatchewan, at least in recent years and through the NDP administration. So we are increasing taxes to large corporations like railroads and banks, and passing it on directly to ordinary families with interest rate protection and lower taxes on various kinds of things that they face themselves. And I added it up for farmers yesterday, it's in excess of \$100 million annually.

So I would just . . . And with respect to oil revenues, the Leader of the Opposition agreed yesterday. He said, "All right. Assume you're right. \$185 million is collected more in oil revenues." Well, that's the case. So we're raising taxes and the tax rates on railroads and banks, and the tax revenues coming in from the oil patch is up \$185 million. So we are cutting taxes for the ordinary people, tax rates, sales tax, income tax, and so forth; gas tax.

And where are we getting the revenues? We're getting the revenues from taking more from the oil companies, more from the railroads, more from the banks, and so forth. And they've never seen such a change in the direction of both those taxations in the history of the province, and I can see that the ordinary folks are having their taxes reduced, and the large corporations are paying a higher tax rate and revenues. And I will just add, to the Leader of the Opposition, obviously we don't know what they will be this year, because we haven't collected them and we just raised them, but the forecast, the estimate, is . . . It'll be about \$19 million from the railroads, which wasn't ever collected before . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. With leave I would like to introduce students. I see they are departing, and if they could wait just a minute, we could have them introduced. Is leave granted?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Schmidt: — We have in the Speaker's gallery, and I wish to introduce them on behalf of my colleague, the member for Esterhazy, Mr. Johnson, who is absent on government business right now . . . I would like to introduce P.J. Gillen Elementary School. They are grade 55, with 55 students, their teacher, Randy Shramm; and chaperon. I would like the members to welcome them to the Assembly, and advise them that I will be meeting with them at about 10:30, at which time they will be taking pictures and having drinks in Room 218. Excuse me — 11:30. I would like the members to welcome them here and wish them a pleasant stay.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 10

Item 1 (continued)

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — That's the member for Saltcoats, rather than Esterhazy, just to correct the record.

Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Premier, I think we have now got you to concede that statements about, that, "I don't think Saskatchewan in the history of our province ever had lower unemployment than Alberta." . . . That was inaccurate, and was substantially inaccurate.

Now, you have now modified it to a period when population was rapidly increasing, and you say that that has never happened. May I refer you to the period from 1976 to 1977. I don't carry a library around with me to answer the statements of alleged fact that you so frequently make, but I just happen to have Mr. Andrew's economic review here, and may I point out that between 1976 and 1977, according to — it's Mr. Devine's economic review, dated December of 1983 — the population increased from 921,000 to 935,000, which was an increase of 14,000; which is a rate of increase which, if we are equalling it this year, barely . . . And we have rarely had 14,000 increase in a year. That, by any Saskatchewan standards, is a rapid increase in population — by any Saskatchewan standard. During that period we still were not above Alberta in

unemployment.

This was a period of rapidly increasing population for Saskatchewan. As you indicated, in the very early years, 1970 . . . I don't know when we were at the bottom, probably '71 or '72 — coming out of the very bad agricultural times of '69, '70, and '71 — the population bottomed out, and it rose very, very rapidly from 921,000, here I have, in 1976, to 979,900 in 1982, which is a rapid increase, a period of rapid increase in population. So I make that point.

The Premier has attempted to justify his position with respect to receiving record tax revenues from large companies. As he attempted to modify it, he's going to receive them in the future, because they haven't got here yet, as he says.

May I say that he has misinterpreted (I will say it that way) my remarks when I say that I agree, because I certainly do not agree that we're going to get \$185 million more from the oil companies. By no means. We are going to get \$150 million less than we would have got had we had any type of a reasonable royalty regime. But I will leave that. We've heard the Premier's speech on it numerous times, and I think that we all know the arguments.

I turn to his next statement, and a very brief statement — this one which just says:

The fourth thing we found, Mr. Chairman, was no Heritage Fund at all in the province of Saskatchewan in April 1982. There was 10 billion in the Heritage Fund in Alberta. Here in Saskatchewan there wasn't any. There was no Heritage Fund.

Now that's an interesting, interesting remarks, and I want to refer — and this is, again, the Premier. This is the professor of economics talking. Now I want to refer to the economic and financial position of the province of Saskatchewan, issued in July 1982 by the Hon. Bob Andrew. That, surely, is something which the Premier has difficulty denying the authenticity of, and I refer him to page 6:

Province of Saskatchewan's statement of combined position and Saskatchewan Heritage Fund, total Saskatchewan Heritage Fund assets, \$1.133 billion.

So according to Mr. Andrew there was \$1.133 billion at March 31st. If there was none by the first of May, I think that the auditor would have noted the fact if the fund had disappeared. So we have the fact that the assets are there.

Now look at the figure and it says: current assets, \$215 million. Current assets — current. Sort of cash or money's worth. Pretty hard to say that that wasn't there. If the current assets weren't there, then it seems to me that it would be — would have been incumbent upon the Provincial Auditor to mention the fact.

There were the other investments which were there. Saskoil: there was an investment there of \$63 million. I want to hear somebody stand up and say it was a bad investment, that Saskoil is not going to pay any dividends, that Saskoil can't make any money. Well, whoever is allegedly turning it around to suggest that that is not a valuable asset, I think, is a remarkable judgement, a remarkable judgement.

The Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. If the Premier thinks that that's not a valuable asset, he may be right. It may now be not a valuable asset because he has decided to operate that corporation as an appendage to the private potash industry and make no money. But that is his decision, not a decision on the value of that asset. That asset made a whole lot of money in the immediately preceding year, a whole lot of money — cash — cash flow. A look at the cash throw-off of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan would show that it was \$300 million over a period of less than three years. True, it was reinvested in potash mines for which, I think, the previous government and the current government believes were good investments, otherwise they wouldn't have continued them.

Here was a cash throw-off, almost unequalled in the history of Crown corporations in Saskatchewan. Indeed, unequalled - \$168 million in one year plus depreciation, amortization, and depletion. This is the sort of asset which was valuable, and if the Premier now says it's not valuable. I'll be interested in the comment, and so, indeed, will all the potash workers — so, indeed, will all the potash workers, who believe that there is a valuable asset there, who believe that we can produce wealth from that asset.

The Premier yesterday was saying that he is pinning his hopes on the profitability of the potash industry. If he is pinning his hopes on the profitability of the potash industry — not only PCS but the whole industry — I am asking him to explain how he thinks that this is not an asset, how he thinks that this is not a valuable asset which will produce for the people of Saskatchewan.

So he has got to say . . . Keep in mind what he said: not that the assets were tied up, that's not what he said; not that they couldn't be turned into cash, that's not what he said. He has said:

The fourth thing we found, Mr. Chairman, was no Heritage Fund at all in the province of Saskatchewan. In April of 1982, there was \$10 billion Heritage Fund in Alberta. Here, in the province of Saskatchewan, there wasn't any. There was no Heritage Fund.

Now these are your words yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

“Saskatchewan Heritage Fund, \$1.133 billion,” says the Hon. Bob Andrew. “Of that, \$250 million in current assets,” says the Hon. Bob Andrew. Now how, under those circumstances, can the Premier say: there was no fund; there was no money? In the same sense, Alberta had \$10 billion, and much of theirs was invested in assets which would have taken some time to turn into cash. So there's that point to be made.

And I'll make one further point, one further point. Housing starts were at an all-time low. I would like him to compare the record of his government with respect to housing starts. He has never got above 9,000 in his two years.

There were years in this province when we had 13,000 starts, 11,000 starts — certainly not in the last two years, and certainly not in the quarters immediately following his assumption of office. I don't particularly blame him for that. I don't suppose you can crank everything up. He's cranked up some extra housing with the federal program, so he had some good months in 1983. But look at 1984 again when we're down to half of 1983.

So when it comes to housing starts, it's an unimpressive record, unimpressive record. Particularly if, as he says, people are pouring in from outside the province. I don't know where they're living because the housing starts are very much lower than they were some time in the mid '70s when he said we were not growing that rapidly. Those are hard facts. Housing starts were at one time as high as 13,000. They have not been anything approaching that figure in the last two years.

Mr. Chairman, I am pointing out what the Premier said yesterday. Housing starts were at an all-time low. Now let's understand what those words mean — all-time low. Now that is sheer nonsense — sheer nonsense — and he knows it. This man is a professor of economics. He's not saying that they were lower than normal. An all-time low. And that is false. And my bet is, Mr. Chairman, when I sit down the Premier will not stand up and say, or attempt to defend that as a true statement. He will acknowledge that that is not true, that housing starts were not at an all-time low, and that that statement is false. And it's a false statement about an economic issue spoken by a professor of economics who now has charge of the statistical bureau of Saskatchewan and has readily available to him all of those facts.

Now I just point this out because I want the committee to consider the other statements made

by the Premier in the light of these three or four that I've highlighted here, which are simply not true. And they were known by the Premier to be at least questionable. I'll put it no higher than that. Housing starts at an all-time low. All time, you know, goes a long time back, and surely he doesn't believe that. He can't believe it. He's a reasonable man, and he knows that's not true.

Similarly, there was "no Heritage Fund". He knows that's not true. He has got these reports from Mr. Andrew of 1.1 billion in the Heritage Fund, of which 215 million is current assets. So any way you slice that, that is not true.

Going back once again, I don't believe in the history of the province there's ever been — the province has "ever had lower unemployment than Alberta." He is now modifying this. He's not saying that's true, because he knows it's false. So this one is false, another one is false, another one is false.

This is in, oh, just about two pages of *Hansard*. Two pages of *Hansard*. If I took time to go over all of the pages of *Hansard*, identify what he says are facts, offer what his statistical reports say are facts, we would see that many, many, many of the Premier's statements are not supported, are not supported by the statistical statements which are put out under the name of Grant Devine, Premier of Saskatchewan. In fact, they are contradicted by those statements, and I'd like the Premier to comment on whether or not he still believes that when he assumed office, housing stats were at an all-time low.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, let me address the question of the Heritage Fund to begin with. No government, and particularly the former administration, can take credit for the value of the assets in the province of Saskatchewan, like potash and oil and timber and uranium. And just because an administration decided they were going to buy some of the things that are in the province of Saskatchewan that were already here and then say they created that wealth, is utter nonsense. And the people of Saskatchewan know that.

So they could have said: well, we bought farmland. Mr. Chairman, the former . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order! Allow the Premier to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, the former administration bought a lot of farmland, and then they would go around and say, this is what we have accumulated in wealth for this government. And the former minister of agriculture used to do it all the time. And it was very unpopular because the government didn't create the land and the government didn't create the potash mines and the government didn't create — or the potash — and the government didn't create the oil or the timber.

And the whole point is this: the Alberta Heritage Fund which was accumulated, say, in '82, of \$10 billion, cash - \$10 billion cash — was created without Alberta saying that they bought oil for the government, or they bought resources for the government. Those are royalty revenues that went into a Heritage Fund, a real Heritage Fund.

The previous administration said, "Well, we bought all this; now we've got a billion dollars in assets." They took a billion dollars worth of debt; they borrowed the money; and they bought assets. And then they said, "Well, look at what it's worth." It was already there; it was already ours. It's fictitious. It's paper money. And then they said, "Well, couldn't you sell it?" Couldn't we sell it? Couldn't we sell it when it was already there? . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order! Allow the Premier to answer the questions.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, when I said that there's no Heritage Fund, I mean that the people of Saskatchewan knew that there wasn't any Heritage Fund that had cash. They said . . . They had bought all these resources, and if you turn around and sold them, you wouldn't even

get your money out, and they know that. So they could borrow money, and borrow money, and borrow money, and buy some oil wells, and buy some property, and buy this, and buy that. Then they say, "Well, lookit, we've got ourselves a Heritage Fund." In the province of Alberta, they didn't buy anything to do that. They created, they collected royalties, and they built \$10 million worth of heritage. Now it's probably 13 billion.

In Saskatchewan, the previous administration bought these things. They bought, and they bought, and they bought, and they bought. And then they said, "Well, look at what it's worth." But if you turned around and you said, all right, we would market, put on the market today, the potash mines and what you paid for them, and let's see what they're worth. Do you think we'd get the money out? That's a very good question.

You've already said you made a major mistake, Mr. Chairman, the former administration already said they made a major mistake in spending hundreds of millions of dollars in uranium mines. Mr. Chairman, the members opposite already admit they made mistakes in buying hundreds of million dollars of uranium mines, and they want to close those mines. They want to close them. Now, if you close the mines, what are they worth? And they include that in the something they say it's a one-point-something in billion, in a Heritage Fund.

To be worth 1.1 billion, it has to have some value; you have to be able to take the goods and services. The \$10 billion in the Alberta Heritage Fund is real; it isn't something that you have to sell. In Saskatchewan, the previous administration tried to buy farmland; they tried to buy uranium mines; they tried to buy potash mines; they tried to buy all kinds of things, and then said, look what it's worth. Isn't that terrific? It was already there, and it was worth more before they tried to buy it than it was after they brought it.

Mr. Chairman, those resources were God-given assets to the people of Saskatchewan. The people of Saskatchewan inherited those when they formed the province of Saskatchewan. They didn't have to have the Government of Saskatchewan buy them . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. Order, order! Allow the Premier to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, my argument is simply this.

Mr. Chairman: — Order! Allow the Premier to answer the questions.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, my argument is simply this: the so-called heritage fund developed under the previous administration was based on the fact that they borrowed money to buy something that was already here. The potash was here, the oil was here, the uranium was here. They already have admitted, they've already admitted, Mr. Chairman, that it was a mistake in the case of uranium. They've decided, as a political party, to close those mines and get out of that hundreds of millions of dollars, and that's my whole point.

Then they say, well, look at all that we created. They didn't create anything. They took hundreds of millions of dollars and borrowed it from the United States, paying interest to Americans, to buy something that was already in Saskatchewan, already here. Then they said, well, look at what it's worth. Isn't that really something? And then they said, well, we'll set up a heritage fund and we'll call all this the Saskatchewan Heritage Fund.

They piggy-backed on the idea of Alberta, which took revenues and royalties and taxes, and put into a fund. And they said, well, we should do something like that in Saskatchewan, but they couldn't do it here because people weren't investing, so they decided to buy it themselves. So they bought it. And then they said, well, now look at what we can do because we have created this potash. We have created this oil, we have created this uranium.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, they didn't create potash, they didn't create oil, they didn't create

farmland, they didn't create timber. Those assets were already here, and those assets are already value. So if a government decided to buy the whole province again, I suppose they could buy everything. They could buy it all and say: this is what we've created.

The second thing, with respect to . . . Mr. Chairman, with respect to housing starts, with respect to housing starts, I will concede that all history, all history is a long time. All time is a long time. And there could be aberrations that go back years and years and years.

If I look at recent times, if I look at recent times, if I look at the recent administration, and if I look at the recent times that we are publishing, then I find in 1980 that the housing starts declined 46 per cent, minus 46 per cent. In 1981 they declined minus 4 per cent. What happened in '82? Up 14 per cent.

All time, I concede, could include 1912, 1913, 1842, 1200 B.C. And obviously I'm not going to try to make comparisons between all time that might include 700 years or the turn of the century. In recent times, when you look at the publications, 1980 is minus 46 per cent in housing starts, and when you get a decline of minus 46 per cent, that is extremely significant and it's statistically significant.

Mr. Chairman, when we look at the state of the economy in 1982 in the province of Saskatchewan, after years and years of very, very good prices, very good potash prices, very good oil prices, very good economic conditions, what do people do? They say, "I reject the whole concept of the government trying to buy back Saskatchewan." They rejected it wholesale, didn't want it anymore.

The Saskatchewan family of Crown corporations — they were saying that they were going to buy everything, including mines, including farms, including all of Saskatchewan. They said they reject that because they could see that taxes and royalties can be taken from resources without the government trying to buy in every business.

And we could have had a much bigger Heritage Fund if we hadn't have been taking the money to try to buy back what was already ours. I believe that; the member opposite believes it; people all across Saskatchewan believe it. Because it is not profitable, or as profitable, as collecting the tax on royalties and not buying it.

For example, if we would have taken several hundred million dollars that the former administration spent on uranium mines to develop, if we just put that money in the bank, we could have had over an extra billion dollars in the Heritage Fund. But they decided that was a bad idea. They want to close all those mines and say, well, it was a big mistake. Hundreds of millions of dollars was a mistake. We should have never done it.

I agree they should have never done it. We're not going to do it. And when they try to say, well, their big investments were worth so much — the money and the resource and the value was already here before they decided to buy it.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, we hear these speeches. May I just ask the Premier a relatively simple question. Housing starts were at an all-time low. Will he concede that that was not true, and that, in fact, housing starts in the 1970s — we'll just go back 10 years — housing starts in the 1970s were a good deal higher than they are now? And I'll ask Mr. Smith-Windsor to refer me to the right page and we'll both follow the same one.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, housing starts in the last year of the former administration — and I'm looking here at the *Economic Review*, 1983, page 18: in 1973, the starts were 6,000-and-some; in '74, there were 7,000; in '75, there were 10; and '76, there were 13; '77, there were 12; '78, there were 9,000; '79, there was 11; '80, there was 6,000; and the last year of '81, they were the lowest they had been since 1973, and that . . . (inaudible) . . . recent history there

were 5,972 . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Now they want averages. In this history book, Mr. Chairman, that was the lowest they'd been.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — So we now have all time being 10 years. And so long as we understand what the Premier is saying, that an all-time low, that his horizon never goes back more than 10 years; and that they were similarly at an all-time high in, oh, let's say, 1976 or '77 or '78, and that they are still nowhere near the levels they were in 1976 or 1977 or 1978 or 1979. I doubt very much whether they're up to the 1981 levels yet, and they were savaged by interest rates. But I don't think you've recovered to the 1981 levels yet; we will see.

With respect to the Heritage Fund and your allegation that potash in the ground is worth just as much as potash with a mine on top of it, and therefore if you owned the potash in the ground you have the same asset as if you owned the mine to remove that potash — I think that everybody in Rocanville who knows what the town was like before the mine was there and knows what the town is like now appreciates that there's some value in a mine, and that the fact that you may own the potash does not make it a productive asset until you have a mine, and in the case of the Rocanville mine, an expanded mine, a mine that makes a good deal of money, or made a good deal of money, before the current government took office.

Now I want to ask the Premier . . . And he says that the potash mines, he apparently feels that they're of no value. I want to ask whether he has been approached by any financial agency to purchase the potash mines or to amalgamate them. Correction — I will change that. I will talk about the uranium mines.

Has he been approached by anybody to purchase the uranium mines or to amalgamate them with any other uranium mines? Has he been approached by anybody?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, we have had inquiries with respect to interests in uranium mines, with respect to oil, oil companies, with respect to any number of the assets. We have continuing inquiries. We will set out policies. Our policies to date include mostly the participation of the public in the sale of bonds, for example energy bonds and power bonds, and so forth, because people have never had that opportunity. They've said the government has always had an opportunity to buy, but not themselves.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Premier, I ask a fairly simple question: with respect to the Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation, of which you were the chairman at one time, has your government been approached with a view to the purchase of the mines by the private sector, or the amalgamation of Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation with any other uranium company?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, put it this way: not many people want the uranium mines. The former administration admits that it shouldn't have done what it did, and that's public. The rest of the country, the rest of the country is not all that interested in uranium mines, particularly looking at the amount of money the former administration put in there.

We have had some people make some inquiries, but they, frankly, Mr. Chairman, they haven't been just rushing into Saskatchewan to buy them. So there have been some inquiries.

And I want to point out — this is something that's very significant, and the member from Quill Lakes just reminded me — there is a significant difference, a significant difference between the people, between the people having control and the government having control, and the member from Quill Lakes, the member from Quill Lakes has never figured that out. But what's good for the government is not necessarily good for the people. And he forgot that, and he may never learn it. But the people of Saskatchewan want to own their own property, they want to own their own houses . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order, order. Will the members please maintain some order so that the speech can be heard. If there was anything wrong with any of the speeches here, I couldn't tell, because I can't hear them, so I couldn't make any ruling. So would we please have order.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, I ask again, would you give information as to who has approached the government with a view to acquiring Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — No, Mr. Chairman, I wouldn't want to do that with respect to anything that might . . . They may be interested in development in Saskatchewan. They may be interested in developing new mines. They may be interested in a joint venture or something. I wouldn't want to jeopardize any economic development by saying: well it was this body, this person, or that one, or so forth. There has been some, but limited interest, and I'll just leave it at that.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Premier. I want to ask the Premier about his policy concerning Crown corporations, but I think I'll ask . . . We just have a brief time before 12, so I will ask him whether or not he would give a brief statement on his policy with respect to the development of northern Saskatchewan, and whether or not he believes his government is making adequate progress in making the citizens of northern Saskatchewan the same as citizens of southern Saskatchewan, which I take it to be the announced policy of his government. And I would ask him, particularly, to talk about whether he thinks that equality is being achieved with respect to the provision of goods and services, whether people in the North are enjoying substantially the same standards of education, health, highways, and other social services which are provided by the government across the province?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Chairman, I would move that the House do now recess from 12 o'clock until 2 o'clock. We would come back at 2 o'clock and continue with the estimates in Executive Council.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly recessed until 2 p.m.