

December 10, 1985

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly a pleasure for me to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Assembly, 50 students from the Yorkton Regional High School. They are the law class of the school in Yorkton, and they're accompanied today by their teacher, Mr. Ed Magis. I welcome you here. We hope that you enjoy the proceedings of the legislature and that you will enjoy your trip to the capital city of Regina. I'll take a few moments after question period for pictures. I would ask all members of the Assembly to please welcome these students in your usual manner.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SCHMIDT: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to this Assembly, 23 students from grade 7, 8 and 9 in Killaly school in Melville constituency. They are in the east gallery. They're here with their principal, Mr. Paul Nieminen, and their bus driver, Mr. Kelly Leik. I hope they have an educational stay. I'll be meeting with them at 2:30 for a brief meeting. I would like you to welcome these students, please.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Pork Processing Plant

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Economic development and Trade, and it has to do with the reports that your government has offered some tax breaks and incentives to a multimillionaire from Alberta, Peter Pocklington, to open up a pork slaughtering and processing plant in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, can you confirm that you're involved in negotiations with Peter Pocklington, and can you provide this assembly with a status report on these negotiations?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Well the answer, shortly put, Mr. Speaker, is that any announcements relative to economic development in this province will be made at the appropriate time on our agenda and not the member opposite.

MR. ENGEL: — So the minister is agreeing that you've discussed this with him. Can the minister explain why his government is considering tax breaks and gifts to a multimillionaire from Alberta when there's already a pork processing plant in Saskatoon, Intercon Packers? Have you approached Intercon, and are you offering them the same kind of incentives and tax breaks should they expand their processing in Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there will be appropriate announcements at the appropriate times. I'm sure that the hon. members understand that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And additionally, Mr. Speaker, there is no sweetheart deal contemplated in any way, shape, or form.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to repeat that first question then. You reported on the news media that you've offered incentives and tax breaks to Peter Pocklington. My question, simply put: are you offering or are you negotiating and talking the same kind of deal, the same kind of tax incentives, should Intercon expand their operation?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, we have industrial incentive programs in various departments in our government, and they're available to all who expand or create new plant in manufacturing and processing. We believe that processing is a very important part of where our future economic development lies, and I'm disappointed to hear that the members opposite are against expansion in the processing sector.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, I can speak for myself and I didn't say that. What I'm saying is: are you offering the same kind of a deal to a long established Saskatchewan company that has capabilities now of processing more than 10,000 hogs a day? Are you offering them a same kind of a deal to expand, to take care of the additional market of 4 or 5,000 or whatever the slaughtering could be in Saskatchewan? Are you offering Intercon the same kind of deal as you've offered to Peter Pocklington?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, our Industrial Incentives Program is well known to people across the province and across the country, and the benefits that would flow from industrial incentives are there for all to take advantage of, and if Intercontinental Packers, or if Du Pont Plastics, or if any one of a number of other manufacturing or processing plants want to establish in Saskatchewan — Phillips Cable in Moose Jaw, yesterday; I'm sure that some of you will have heard of that announcement, and they had access to the Industrial Incentives Program. The Canada packers poultry plant in Saskatoon had access to our Industrial Incentives Program.

I think, Mr. Speaker, there have been something like \$75 million so far of capital expansion brought to Saskatchewan through our Industrial Incentives Program in less than two years. This touches something like 60 or 70 communities in the province, and our Industrial Incentives Program is there to be accessed by all of those in the manufacturing and processing sector who are interested in establishing or expanding in the province of Saskatchewan.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, one final question to the minister. The deal that you've offered to Peter Pocklington, the deal that he was getting, is a sweetheart deal. It's over and above what you'd offered to any company in Saskatchewan. There's a better deal there. This Tory is getting a better deal than would anybody else. And I'm saying to you, if we're going to expand pork processing facilities in Saskatchewan, are you offering the same kind of a deal to a Saskatchewan-based company that employs 800 people, or are you offering a deal to somebody who will put those 800 people out of work?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — The fact is, Mr. Speaker, industrial incentives are part of what we're about in the manufacturing and processing sector, and they can be accessed, as I said, by anyone who is establishing new or expanded facilities in the province of Saskatchewan, and that's what we're about.

What we will not do, Mr. Speaker, is move in and buy part of Intercon as the previous administration did, and if you want to talk about a sweetheart deal, we can open that one up.

Possible Expansion of Gainers Limited In Saskatchewan

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Economic Development. The minister will know that Peter Pocklington has spent the past two years in Alberta trying to destroy the Alberta Pork Producers Marketing Board. He claims the board is charging his plant too high a price, and in fact he's saying that the farmers of Alberta are getting too much money for the pork they produce. He's even gone so far as to break the law of Alberta, Mr. Speaker, and buy hogs directly from producers rather than through the marketing board.

My question to you, Mr. Minister, is: why are you trying to get this former PC leadership candidate to set up shop in Saskatchewan, and is it to take a run at the farmers of Saskatchewan who now market their pork through the Saskatchewan Pork Producers marketing Board?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I just want to thank the member, I guess, for reminding me that this fellow as a PC leadership contender. I had forgotten about that. But the question: why are we trying to attract this fellow? — as I understand it, your question is, why are we trying to attract this fellow to Saskatchewan. I think that if Mr. Pocklington and Gainers do, in fact, come to Saskatchewan, it's because they would find the opportunity in Saskatchewan as something that appeals to them, and they would be here to add to the value of diversification in the manufacturing and processing sector. They would be here to create jobs for people in Saskatchewan, and if and when, Mr. Speaker, any or all of the suggestions of the members opposite come about, the appropriate announcements would be made at the appropriate time.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Supplement to the minister, Mr. Speaker, I have here a quote from Fred Mitchell, the president of Intercon Packers in Saskatoon. He, who has much more experience than the minister, I assume, says, 'This province needs another meat plant like a moose needs a hat rack.' He says, 'Our Saskatoon plant has already got over-capacity of about 50 per cent.'

Now I say to you, sir: have you considered what bringing these three plants in will do to Intercon in Saskatoon and what will happen to the 800 workers? What guarantee have you got from Pocklington that these 800 people in Saskatoon and other places will not lose their jobs?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, the member is obviously dealing in the arena of the hypothetical. I don't know of three plants that are coming to Saskatchewan from Gainers or anyplace else to get into the hog industry.

And as I said earlier, no one is interested in seeing Intercontinental or any other packer — Moose Jaw Packers for instance — no one is interested in seeing them suffer in any way, shape, or form. And the jobs at Intercon, there's nothing to worry about. They are secure.

I don't have the luxury of speculating on press reports, Mr. Speaker, as the opposition do. All I know, that if and when these things come about, the announcements will be made at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Final supplement to the minister. I wonder in your negotiating that you're doing with the former PC candidate leader for the leadership of your federal party, when you're doing your negotiating with him, whether or not you will get guarantees that, in return for the tax breaks and incentives, that all the jobs that are presently in place with Saskatchewan people will be left there, and that reports that Pocklington intends to bring about 50 people from the plant in Edmonton, that he's going to shut down, will not come to fruition.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, I've already said that there is no one that has any desire to see Intercontinental Packers, or the employees, or the families working at Intercontinental Packers, impacted negatively by any thrust in expansion in the hog industry, or diversification in agriculture, or any of the other exciting things that are happening in the economic development of Saskatchewan.

And no one, certainly no one on this side of the House, has any desire to see agriculture miss an opportunity for diversification. And quite frankly . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I think I've struck a nerve, Mr. Speaker.

The fact is, and the short answer is, that any announcements, if and when this comes about, will be made in the appropriate way at the appropriate time.

Strategy of Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address a question to the minister responsible for potash, and it has to do with your failure to get out and to aggressively pursue markets on behalf of the PCS.

Yesterday, Mr. Minister, you confirmed that you and the PCS board had indeed considered a long-term possibility of a closure of one of the PCS mines earlier in the year. You went on to say that there are no plans to close the mine at this time.

I can tell you, Mr. Minister, that there is grave concern on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan and indeed the employees of those mines. So what I ask you: have you rejected the closure option for a few months? Is it a few years, or are you saying that you have rejected the closure altogether?

HON. MR. SCHOENHALS: — Mr. Chairman, I'm saying that the potash corporation board of directors has considered many options, several of which were mentioned in the material that was introduced into this Chamber yesterday.

We have considered them in light of the circumstances that exist, and in light of the projections that we have as the best possible knowledge. I suggest it's probably at least as good as the knowledge with which they expanded the mines inadvertently. And in fact we have decided that it is not advisable at this time to close a mine.

MR. KOSKIE: — Supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I have asked you in respect to your definition at this time because it is apparent in your management strategy paper which we have access to that your long-term plan, which you don't want to discuss prior to an election, is either to close down a mine or to sell off one of the PCS mines. Clearly it's set out as one of the possible solutions for the debt-riddled position of the PCS mines. Could you confirm whether or not you are, in fact, looking at a potential sale of one of the mines.

HON. MR. SCHOENHALS: — Mr. Chairman, as I indicated, we have considered many options in terms of what we might do now and in the future. We have rejected the two concepts that have been mentioned. We have had approaches from several private sector corporations. We have also had one looking at the possibility of PCS making a purchase at this time. At the present time those have been rejected.

MR. KOSKIE: — Supplementary to the minister. In your management paper that has been produced by the executive officers of PCS, Mr. Minister, it says, in respect to selling assets:

Selling Assets is a controversial strategy consequently difficult to implement because of political, social, business and marketing implications.

But you go on to say in this paper:

Other than selling assets, there appears to be no viable way to improve the debt situation for the rest of this decade.

Mr. Minister, in view of that statement, can you indicate whether, in fact, in view of that statement, whether you are not, in fact, in the process of proceeding to sell off some of the PCS mines.

HON. MR. SCHOENHALS: — Once again I repeat that the corporation has been approached; we have considered; and we are not at this time in the process of selling off any assets.

MR. KOSKIE: — New question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I have here a copy of a 10-year projection plan. It's a 10-year plan for production for Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, and it says the production capacity is 7.5 million. And it has set out the year, the sales, the excess, and the percentage of capacity that they'll be operating at.

In that document it shows that in 1986 you plan to operate PCS mines at only 51 per cent of their total capacity. And you don't even plan to see those mines producing more than 65 per cent by 1993.

Mr. Minister, how can you stand there and claim that you're doing everything possible, that you are

pulling out all stops to help this public corporation, when your own figures show that you'll be producing only 65 per cent capacity eight years hence?

HON. MR. SCHOENHALS: — Mr. Chairman, once again, we're been over this several times, and I talked about it yesterday. The percentage of capacity is an element of the amount of expansion that has taken place in recent years. By the member's own knowledge and own admission, every mining division in PCS was expanded since the take-over.

At the same time the previous administration, through the PRPA (Potash Reserve Payment Agreement) tax system, in effect prevented the private sector from expanding. And the private sector, as well as PCS, as well as other international competitors at that time felt, on the basis of information available, that expansion was the right thing to proceed with.

As it turns out, those projections were very inaccurate, similar to the projections that led to the national energy policy. They simply haven't materialized. The problem, of course, is that PCS's additional capacity, as well as capacity in New Brunswick and in Israel and in Russia, have come on stream at a time when demand is down, and consequently further sales are virtually impossible. Consequently the corporation will operate at less than capacity. There is no opportunity to operate at full capacity based in this case on the projections that we have at hand.

Now if it turns out that our projections are as wrong as their's were, and in fact the market picks up, we will be very well prepared to step in and access that additional capacity.

MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Minister, in light of the statement in this management document which says:

There is a general agreement that the sales force should be strengthened (strengthened) to pursue the strategy of recuperating (recuperating) market share in the domestic market.

Mr. Minister, obviously your own officials are saying you have lost the domestic share of the market. Mr. Minister, do you have any plans to increase the marketing performance of PCS, and will you pull out of the privately dominated cartel, Canpotex, and aggressively pursue sales on behalf of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. SCHOENHALS: — Mr. Chairman, the question is, will we pull out of Canpotex to increase domestic sales? The answer is obviously no, because Canpotex doesn't sell on the domestic market.

MR. KOSKIE: — I ask a supplement again to the minister because he's trying to be a smart aleck again like he was yesterday till he got caught. I indicated to you, Mr. Minister, that in the admission of your own document, that what the corporation should do on the domestic scene is to aggressively undertake to sell potash to recuperate the market in the domestic market.

So I ask you, what are your plans in respect to recuperating the sales in the domestic market? And, furthermore, in view of your actions that have destroyed the presence in the offshore of having the PCS having 62 per cent of share, being reduced down to 42 per cent, now are you prepared also to go it alone, step aside from the private cartel, Canpotex, and go out and sell in the offshore, as well, to recapture the market that we once had?

HON. MR. SCHOENHALS: — Mr. Chairman, on the first issue, the paper that he deals from talks about recuperating lost markets. The reference is very clear in the domestic market. While it's impossible to purchase market share, at the time of the take-over . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Obviously, they don't want to hear the answer, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please.

HON. MR. SCHOENHALS: — At the time of the take-over, the mines that were taken over were

providing about 38 to 39 per cent of the domestic market. That immediately slipped to 31 per cent and has remained ever since somewhere between 26 and 30 per cent. The element of recuperation requires aggressive marketing. PCS has been instructed to market aggressively in the domestic market and, in fact, in November and December accepted some sales that were below the cost of production. Obviously that is aggressive marketing in the extreme.

We will continue to market. The target for 1986 will be somewhere in the area of 30 per cent, and we believe that that is, in fact, an aggressive marketing approach.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a supplementary and then a new question. With respect to the questions directed by my colleague from Quill Lakes, I want to ask the minister this: when the PCS board of directors was considering the possible closure of one or more mines to deal with the absence of market over the next five, six, seven years, which mine were they thinking of closing?

Your senior executives have suggested that the high-cost division should be closed. In the opinion of the board, which PCS mine is the high-cost division which would be first for closure?

HON. MR. SCHOENHALS: — Mr. Chairman, the board did not approach that as a board. The management brought forward recommendations. As I indicated yesterday, those were categorically rejected. Consequently the discussion didn't go any further.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — New question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister in charge of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. I want to pick up on a statement attributed to you yesterday in the Assembly.

As I read the statement, you claimed that the poor performance of PCS in the American market, which we call the domestic market, was a continuation of an historical trend. I want to remind the minister of a number of things said in the document which has been quoted by my colleague. He quoted one:

There is general agreement that the sales force should be strengthened to pursue the strategy of recuperating market share in the domestic market.

He might have referred you to page 3 where it says:

Current strategy has resulted in a loss of both market share and net-backs dealing with the domestic market.

Now, Mr. Minister, in view of the fact that your officials are talking about losing domestic market, action to recuperate domestic market, how can you say that the current low state of sales in the domestic market is due to any historical trend. It is very clear that the market has been lost, and lost under your administration, isn't that true?

HON. MR. SCHOENHALS: — Well, Mr. Speaker, no it is not true. As I indicated, at the time of the take-over, the mines that were taken over were providing about 38, 39 per cent of the market share. That immediately dropped to 31, and has historically been between 26 and 30 per cent. I think those are absolute facts.

The inference, I suppose, that we are not being aggressive, I think has obviously not been borne out. As I indicated, we accepted some sales in November and December of this year that were below the cost of production. In my estimation I would like to know what is more aggressive marketing than accepting sales that are below the cost of production.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The minister is busy telling us what happened immediately. Will he concede that offshore, what happened immediately was a drop of

our market share from over 60 per cent to around 45 per cent. Will he agree with the proposed action of his officials as set out in this document, that PCS should establish a strategy for offshore prices, and if Canpotex' pricing strategy is not the most favourable to PCS sales, we should set up tactics to over come it or go around it. That's what your officials are saying about Canpotex.

Will you show equal backbone and decide that you are going to either go around Canpotex, which is holding back sales, or get out of Canpotex so we can sell in markets where we have a clear advantage?

HON. MR. SCHOENHALS: — Mr. Speaker, we are constantly assessing Canpotex's performance. As a member of the board of directors, we are obviously involved in giving them directions. If in fact it becomes apparent, and it has not as yet, that Canpotex is not the best way for PCS to market its potash, we will look at other options. At this time, Canpotex is doing an excellent job, are working hard, are accepting direction, and we will continue to see how they perform.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

HON. MR. LANE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise in the House to mark the 37th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations. That declaration called upon the members of the United Nations to recognize a wide range of human rights including the elimination of discrimination, the protection of legal and political rights and civil liberties, rights in the workplace, as well as the recognition of cultural rights.

Since the declaration was passed, the people of Saskatchewan have supported and encouraged the governments of Saskatchewan in the extension of human rights in our province. All governments maintain that commitment to human rights.

On April 17th of this year, section 15, the equality clause of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, came into force. Section 15 imposes a heavy obligation upon governments to ensure that our actions and our legislation conform to principles of equality. We will continue to amend those laws found to be contrary to the charter and thereby advance the principles of the declaration. We will act to strengthen the Saskatchewan Human Rights commission by increasing its independence, and as well, we plan to introduce amendments to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code which will extend the protection offered by the code.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to reaffirm that this government remains committed to the principles of the universal declaration of 1948.

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to join with the minister and say a few words, a few remarks commemorating today, December 10th, as Human Rights Day. It is an important occasion and leads us to pause for a moment and reflect on how fortunate we are to live in a free and democratic society where we in this Assembly and all Saskatchewan people can indeed openly and freely commemorate this occasion. It gives us good reason to reflect for a moment on the plight of millions of men and women across the world who do not know the freedom and liberty that we know.

When we think of human rights, we often think primarily of civil and constitutional rights and some of the important institution we have developed to protect those rights. Members of the Assembly will know that here in Saskatchewan we are proud to have had the first Bill of rights in Canada, brought in by the CCF government. We are proud to have our human rights code, our human rights commission, the Ombudsman, important institutions established by people of Saskatchewan working with a New Democratic government in the past.

Now of course, we have the charter of rights as an integral part of our new constitution. While its full impact on individual and collective rights cannot yet be known, we must all acknowledge that at

least it embodies the hope of our generation for a fuller and better protection of our rights as Canadians.

Whether the charter, in practice, actually lives up to the hope, of course, is yet to be seen. But we should not, Mr. Speaker, restrict our reflections and our comments on fundamental human rights only to the civil or constitutional issues. For there are other issues as well, basic and fundamental issues of rights. The right of children to food and clothing and shelter, the right of young people to an education, the right to a fair opportunity to make their contribution to our future, the right of our senior citizens to live in peace and dignity, the right of all to live rewarding lives free of tyranny of ignorance, fear of hate and want.

It is particularly fitting, Mr. Speaker, that on this day, Human Rights Day, we in this Assembly have before us on our agenda three very important Bills introduced by my colleague from Regina Centre — three Bills which together will further advance the rights and freedoms of Saskatchewan people, Bills which will further strengthen the democracy in which we are blessed to live.

Mr. Speaker, I join with the minister with those words and certainly again echo the remarks that we here in Saskatchewan, and indeed in Canada, have much to be thankful for, but always we must guard and continue to guard those rights which we have developed.

CONDOLENCES

HON. MR. DEVINE: — I would like to move, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, by leave of the Assembly:

That this Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing of a former member and Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

James Auburn Pepper, who died on December 5, 1985, was a member of this legislature for the constituency of Weyburn from 1964 until his retirement in 1982, and Deputy Speaker and chairman of committees from 1975 to 1979.

James Auburn Pepper was born at Goodwater, Saskatchewan, where he received his schooling. He worked the family farm until 1963 and then he moved to Weyburn. As a result of his farming interest he became an active member of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, co-op movement, and credit unions in his area.

Auburn Pepper was dedicated to his community and to his church.

During his legislative service, Auburn Pepper attended many commonwealth Parliamentary Association functions as a delegate on behalf of this Assembly in Saskatchewan.

In recording its own deep sense of loss and bereavement, this Assembly expresses its most sincere sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, a number of my colleagues will be adding a word or two to this proceeding. Accordingly I will attempt to make my remarks brief.

Mr. Speaker, the motion which has just been moved by the Premier, and which I was pleased to second, sets out the formal aspects of Auburn Pepper's career. I would like to add that in addition to his duties strictly associated with the Assembly and his performance as a legislative secretary, Auburn also served as the chairman of the caucus of our party for many years.

He was a member of whom any party leader would be proud. He was quiet, solid, utterly dependable. In Weyburn he quietly and slowly established his role as an MLA representing all the people of that constituency, and I think was so regarded as representing all the people of Weyburn.

Many people disagreed with Auburn. That's the fate of anybody in politics. People do not necessarily agree with you or your views; they hold differing views. But if anybody actively disliked Auburn Pepper in Weyburn, I haven't found him or heard of him or her.

He was as diligent in pursuing the concerns of an active political opponent as he was of an NDP stalwart. He gained that reputation and he gained it justifiably.

Auburn was able and well-informed. You very soon learned not to pay too much attention to the modesty with which he always clothed his views. He always suggested that he perhaps was not fully informed on something, but he rather felt this way. Know that he was well-informed if he spoke, and that his views were worthy of respect.

It's no secret that I, in my capacity of chief minister, had asked Auburn on more than one occasion to accept a cabinet post. He declined. I believe he felt that his health may not have permitted him to give a cabinet post the 100 per cent effort which he would have insisted it require. Perhaps he felt that it would have hampered him in being the diligent MLA that he felt was his prime responsibility. I don't know that. I didn't know for sure why Auburn felt that he was unable to accept the invitation, and there was more than one.

He made an exceptional caucus chairman. He had the stature and the seniority, the transparent integrity, the loyalty to the cabinet without being in any way beholden to the cabinet — which make for an excellent caucus chairman, someone who can speak on behalf of the caucus in dealing with the cabinet. And we're all familiar with the nature of the relationship between a cabinet and caucus.

Auburn was able to, as I say, because of his stature and his integrity, because of his transparent integrity, because no one could question his loyalty, but no one could gainsay when he spoke, that he deserved to be treated with respect. That allowed that delicate relationship to proceed, I think, at a very, very good level. Auburn was a gentleman, a man of honour, a man of modesty, a man of compassion.

At the huge funeral in Weyburn on Saturday, as I was around there and people were gathered talking about Auburn, they expressed their admiration for him in many ways, as will be true of a crowd. One person saying, a straight shooter; someone else saying, I don't think he had an enemy; somebody else saying, sure a good neighbour; someone else saying, look who's here — Catholic priest, who I saw there; Protestants, obviously, because Aub was an adherent — more than that — a diligent member of the United Church. There were PCs, the president of the PC association, the hon. member for Weyburn, the Minister of Agriculture. There were obviously New Democrats. There were young, there were old. A wide group of people gathered to pay their respects.

A legislature needs people of differing personal attributes. It needs some strong partisans, some solid performers with facts and figures, some wordsmiths who can put ideas into understandable language, and some, at least a few, voices of conscience.

Auburn's great strength was the depth of his moral convictions, the modesty but firmness with which he expressed them and applied them to government, and the respect with which they were received inside and outside the legislature. He was such a voice of conscience in this legislature.

I join with others in expressing our sympathy to Jean, the daughters, and the other members of the family.

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of all Weyburn constituents to speak on this motion of condolence. All people there know of the distinguished career that Mr. Pepper had as he served this legislature and the people of Weyburn for some 18 years. As was pointed out, he was first elected in 1964, and subsequently re-elected in several elections until in 1981 he decided not to seek re-election.

I speak today as much from the perspective of a former constituent as one of a member of this legislature, and one who knew him as a past legislator. The fact that he served for 18 years, served the people of Weyburn for 18 years, is a testimony to the man himself, and a testimony to the respect that the constituents had for him. The fact that, as been pointed out here today, he was active in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Deputy Speaker, I think, underlines as well the respect he enjoyed by other members of this legislature. But perhaps by many he is most remembered as a true gentleman.

In his 18 years, his integrity, his honesty, and his ability were never called into question. People throughout this building remember him for his kindness, for his always having the time to stop and say a few words, just as people throughout the constituency remember him for his kindness too, always time to stop and chat and discuss a concern. I think many people would recall the numbers of times that he's been seen chatting with the people of Weyburn, whether it be in the Co-op cafeteria, or on the main street of Stoughton, or at the fowl suppers throughout the constituency at the fall time of year — very much a man of the people.

He was the same down to earth person whether he was in the halls of this building or in the homes of his constituents. All constituents are truly appreciative and grateful for the contribution he made, not only to Weyburn, not only to Saskatchewan, but in fact to this country, enriching the lives of the very many he touched during his career — and enriching them and always being decent and always being fair.

Others have said, and I tend to agree, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Pepper was perhaps not so much a politician as he was a statesman. And as we've heard also in this previous debate, but I too have to use the adjectives, although his contributions were many, his trademarks perhaps were his quiet diligence and his honesty.

Family to him were very important, as a dedicated husband, father, and grandfather. And to his wife Jean, and his children and grandchildren, I wish to join members of this Assembly in extending our sympathy to the family and to remind them that in the hearts and minds of many, Auburn Pepper will not be easily forgotten.

His role as a legislator could serve as a useful model. His reason for being in public service was well stated in 1981 when he himself said, and I quote:

We are working toward an ever better society, and the cause is greater than any of us.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to join with my colleagues and others in the Assembly who will take an opportunity today to express our sympathy to the family of Auburn Pepper.

Auburn was of course elected in 1964. I, as a new member in 1978, got to know him then. On first brush with the individual you got the impression that this was indeed a very gentle and kind individual. But I was soon to learn, attending a number of what could be termed raucous caucus meetings — those debates that you have from time to time, and we all know about them — or in the Assembly when he would take the Chair — Mr. Speaker will be well aware of those evenings when a strong hand is needed — Auburn soon proved to be not only a gentle person, but to have a strong streak in him that he drew on when was necessary.

But I think outside of the Assembly where we got to know him very well in caucus, there was another aspect to Auburn Pepper that we got to know and appreciate a great deal. Auburn always had time for other people. And interestingly enough, although Auburn was many years older than some of the caucus members, he took time to talk to and to teach, not only MLAs of the NDP caucus but, I'm sure, other members, both Liberal and Conservative, who were around the building and had been there less time.

It was also interesting to watch Auburn when members would bring their children into the caucus office. Auburn would inevitably have the children into his office, and he had a little grouping of flags from across the province on his desk which he would set in front of them and let them play with. I know from experience that he would always take the time to be with children. When they came through the door, Auburn would go to his door and make sure they came in.

I remember a time, as well, when we were in Weyburn to open a home for handicapped people, which some people in Weyburn had put together and set up, and Auburn and I were invited to be there. After the meeting I was on my way to the social service office in the mall. We had to go about 100 feet through the mall entrance and the mall area to get to the office, or to the elevator, and it took us all of 45 minutes to get from that door to the next door, because of people coming up, wanting to talk to Auburn. And it was interesting that Auburn, as many have already mentioned, didn't seem to have an enemy anywhere he went.

I would just like to express on my behalf, and my family's behalf, our sincere sympathy to the family — Janet, Donna, and Doris and Jean, who we all know will be carrying on — but we would like her to know, and the family to know, that we share at least some little bit of the grief that they are going through right now.

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As has been said by others, I join with them to pay a tribute to Auburn Pepper and to offer condolences to his family.

As has been said, he served the legislature from 1964 to 1982, and he represented the constituency of Weyburn. That was a formidable task that he had because that seat had been represented, the constituency of Weyburn, for almost 20 years by the former premier of this province, T.C. Douglas, and those were big shoes to fill. I can think of no man better than Auburn Pepper to have represented our party following the achievements and the accomplishments and the respect that Tommy Douglas had in the constituency of Weyburn.

As has been said, Mr. Pepper was a modest man, and he did not, indeed, have to strut any stage of power to be effective. He had no inflated ego, so characteristic of many politicians. He was simply Auburn Pepper, who was guided by his inner strengths of honesty and integrity and character.

I knew Mr. Pepper well after having been elected in 1975, and I want to say he was a trusted friend, a man that you could confide in with confidence. He was so useful to the caucus, as has been alluded to. He was a quiet advisor to the new and young members of the caucus.

It's a great loss in losing a man of the stature of Mr. Pepper, but I think, while he has passed away, that he has left something for us. He set a unique standard for serving in public life, and I think he leaves a great example for others to follow. And in closing my remarks, I want to offer my condolences to Mr. Pepper's wife and family. Certainly we are all the better for having been able to serve in this legislature with a man of the stature and the depth of Mr. Pepper.

HON. MR. LANE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with members of the Assembly in expressing condolences to Mrs. Pepper and Aub's family. I served in this Assembly since 1971, and of course much of that time Aub Pepper was a member. I remember the first conversation I had with Aub Pepper, as a matter of fact. I was in the hospital with a broken leg, and he was up visiting constituents in the hospital, and we had quite a long, enjoyable visit, and I've never forgotten that. You could always tell, though, — Aub was one who . . . You could tell how the debate was going for his party in any particular days because he'd be coming out and his head would be down a bit, or he'd be bouncing down the steps. But he always had a good word to say about all, and a very easy gentleman to talk to, and that's been alluded to by other members and those that knew him well as a representative. Again, I appreciate the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to join with others in expressing condolences to Aub Pepper's family.

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am also pleased to join with other members of the House in extending our condolences to the family of Auburn Pepper. I had the opportunity to serve in the

legislature with Auburn for about five years prior to his retirement, and I'd have to say that, from the time I first met Auburn, it was not difficult to know or to understand how he could be such a well-respected and liked individual.

Auburn was one that always had time for his fellow man. If you had a problem or something you wanted to discuss with him, Auburn was always available. And you got to know him real well. I think there wasn't anyone in caucus or on our staff, or even members of the opposition, that didn't respect and like Auburn. I know, after taking over as caucus chairman after Auburn retired, I often used to hear some of the staff comment about him. When they wanted a half day off or something, and I would say no, they would say, oh I wish we had Auburn Pepper back again. But I would just tell them that there are very few men like Auburn, and I certainly was not one of them.

It made me feel real good to know that I had the opportunity to get to know and to make a real friend of someone like Auburn, a person that everyone liked, respected, and loved. And I would have to say to the family that while they grieve for Auburn, there are very, very many people that grieve with them.

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join with members of the Assembly in paying tribute to one we all dearly loved, Auburn Pepper, and to extend to the family our condolences. I first met Auburn the very first time I decided to seek an office in this Legislative Assembly, and Auburn came down during the 1967 campaign and campaigned on my behalf. Ever since that time I was reminded of the role we, as MLAs, should play, and the responsibility we have. He was able to handle situations, as was mentioned by others here, and took everything in his stride.

I really appreciated his Christian convictions and his stands he took on moral issues. Here was a man that would choose Christianity and was able to hold an office and represent his constituents without compromising any of his positions or his beliefs. I respect him for that, and I appreciated very much the stand he's taken on many issues. And I think the pastor and good friend of Auburn's, as he talked about that on the funeral on Saturday, pointed that out so clearly, and we all appreciated the word he gave us.

To his wife Jean, and his daughters, I would like to say that both Joyce and I express our deepest grief, and we will miss him very much, but the memory of Auburn will carry on for a very long time. Thank you.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My father once said of a neighbour that the more you get to know him, the better you like him; and you can't say a finer thing about a person than that. That, in a way, describes Auburn Pepper. The more you got to know him, the better you liked him. One would know him for years and think that you had never seen a flaw in his character.

He was indeed dedicated and conscientious in a way that I never ceased to admire. I could give a number of illustrations of that, but one of them took place after the session was over. In the '70s the session used to adjourn some time in May, under normal circumstances. It was followed, usually within a week or so, on a Sunday afternoon, always one of the nicest Sunday afternoons in the spring, it would be followed by a Sunday afternoon when the Girl Guides would take over the Assembly and they would present awards to Girl Guides. It required the attendance of one or more members of the legislature. It had very little in it personally for any member to come, and we could all think of any excuse a week after the session why we shouldn't be there. Auburn usually came. He and Jean were usually sitting in this Assembly as the Girl Guides got their awards . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The gold cords, that's right. Just a dedicated, conscientious . . . His job was as important to him after the session was over, the day it was over, as it was the day it started.

He did everything to the very best of his ability. If he felt that anything worth doing . . . In fact, he used to say that anything worth doing is worth doing well, and he certainly lived that. To me it spoke a certain integrity. Indeed, when I think of Auburn Pepper, I think of two or three other people who shared some of those same qualities — E.I. Wood, the former member for Swift Current; Art Thibault,

the member for Kinistino. They were not the pioneers of the CCF, but I refer to them as the sons of the pioneers. They were of the next generation. All of them shared an integrity, an idealism that the years in office never seemed to corrupt. Their idealism and their integrity was as pure the day they retired as the day they started, and I suppose they must have drawn some strength from their work with the early CCF.

As a constituency person, I tried to learn some lessons from Auburn — I don't know how successful I've been — one of which was his ability to listen. He once said to me that it is your ability to listen, and not your ability to speak, that will get you re-elected. He certainly lived that. He believed that every person had a story to tell. To hear a story, one often had to be a good listener. But if you were a good enough listener and could hear the story, it would help you to understand the individual and your riding. Few people understood his riding as well as Auburn Pepper.

It is true, as someone has said, that he worked every bit as diligently for people that he knew to be opponents as people he knew to be friends. They all go the same service. Indeed, he would rarely admit that he had any enemies, while he certainly did. Anybody in public life does have people who oppose him. Auburn would just never admit it. I think he felt it was beneath his dignity to show that sort of pettiness. I'm sure there were people who did not have a full measure of his respect, but no matter how well you got to know them, you never got the names, or an admission such people ever existed.

Auburn Pepper, throughout his entire life, believed that serving the public was a far more important pursuit than financial gain, and he lived that throughout his entire life. I know that it was a source of very considerable comfort to Auburn that all of his family are of the same ilk. All of them have pursued a similar career path. All of them have put people-oriented goals above financial gains for themselves, and I know that was a sense of comfort to him.

I don't want to take my chair without referring to Jean. Like so many spouses of so many politicians she made a contribution which I think is somehow worthy, and where this system isn't capable of recognizing. She gave him support when he needed it, and on occasion, protection from an ever demanding public when that was needed as well. I know that she was a partner in the fullest sense of the term.

I'm reminded of something that the former member from The Battlefords said in the eulogies to Woodrow Lloyd who was of the same generation as Auburn Pepper. In his own inimitable style, Mr. Kramer said that the Lord must have needed a top hand when he called upon Woodrow Lloyd. That comment applies equally, Mr. Speaker, to Auburn Pepper. No matter where he may be, he'd be a top hand. I suppose we might do no worse, and probably we might do no better, than to wish that throughout our careers, whether they be long or short, that we end our careers with the same idealism, the same dedication to the public good, and the same pursuit of goals which are not selfish in nature.

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — I, too, would like to make a few remarks in the memory of Auburn Pepper and express my sympathies to Jean and the Pepper family. People speak, and always will, of this gentle man, quiet and yet effective. But those of us who knew him well know that he was always in control. His example was worth following. Auburn always had time for everyone, and I appreciate that, as many first-time MLAs will appreciate it, from the period of 1971 and on. He always had time for everyone, even when he was extremely busy.

The thing I found very notable about Mr. Pepper was that he always saw the best in other people. As my colleague from Regina Centre said, he never spoke of anyone in a derogatory way. All he wanted for himself, as a member of this Assembly, was to do a good job for those he represented and served. This he achieved with honour and distinction. Auburn earned the respect of all who were fortunate enough to meet him and get to know him. You could not help but respect this man of quiet nature who knew what he believed and knew what he stood for, and then he pursued it.

This province, the constituency of Weyburn, this legislature and all of us who were associated with

him, are the better because Auburn Pepper lived and loved and served. This Chamber could use more Auburn Pepper at all times. He and his sincerity and his kindness and his dedication will be remembered and missed. I join with members of this Assembly to express my sympathies as well as Shirley's to Jean and Auburn's family, and also to thank them for giving us the opportunity to share the good that was Auburn Pepper.

Motion agreed to.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, by leave of the Assembly:

That the resolution just passed, together with the transcript of the oral tributes to the memory of the deceased member, be communicated to the bereaved family on behalf of the Assembly by Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 128 — An Act to require the Government of Saskatchewan to Observe Certain Standards of Fairness in Awarding Government Contracts

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I introduced Bills 128, 129, and 130 all on the same day. Not by coincidence, all three have to do with open government.

I will be making some comments about that general concept in advance of Bill 128, and unless members opposite insist, I will not repeat the comments on all three Bills.

All three Bills address an issue which is absolutely fundamental to a democratic society today, and that is open government. The public are concerned about the size of government. The size of government in turn leads them to an unhealthy suspicion and cynicism about the government. They believe that governments are self-serving, secretive, and the reason for the secrecy is, in fact, that governments serve their own purposes and not the public's.

In an increasingly complex society only the simple-minded, Mr. Speaker, believe that one can drastically down-size government. There is no way to drastically down-size government without drastically simplifying the problems. Since no one knows a way to do that, no one knows a way to down-size government. I think it is part of the difficulties that Conservative governments have, both provincially and federally — and both are experiencing hard times in a political sense — that I think they come into office on a false premise that there's a whole lot of government which is utterly unnecessary and can be done away without anyone noticing it. That is just fundamentally false.

One solution which has been used with some success though, Mr. Speaker, to the problems surrounding the cynicism of government, is a number of provisions which provide for open government. It's particularly fitting that we have these Bills before us on December 10th, Human Rights Day, for an open government. An access to information about government provides the best protection of the individual's liberty.

Each of the Bills before us, Mr. Speaker, address fundamental issues in a political democracy; fundamental principles. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that those principles are pretty simple and pretty straightforward.

In a democratic society, citizens, of course, have responsibilities and obligations to each other, to the state, and to the government. But just as appropriately, the government, the state, has responsibilities and obligations to its citizens. It has a responsibility to ensure justice, equity, and fairness, the responsibility to be open, honest, candid, and frank with the public. Open government, Mr. Speaker, no more, no less.

The people of Saskatchewan will remember well how members opposite while in opposition used to pay lip-service to these principles, how they used to play lip-service to the concept of open government, and how in that campaign of '82, which I predict will live in infamy, how the government used to make promises about open government. The public, I think, are also painfully aware how short of those promises this government has fallen.

(1515)

I assert flatly and without fear of contradiction, that the present PC government is the most closed, secretive government that this province has seen since the Great War, since the Second World War. The kind of secrecy, the kind of closed government which this government attempts to follow is simply not acceptable in the 1980s. You have to hearken back to the days of Jimmy Gardiner, or that era, to find a government which has conducted itself in the fashion in which this does.

I will, of course, Mr. Speaker, be inviting all members to join me in supporting these Bills.

Some government members opposite may rise and enter this debate and ask about the record of the NDP. Well let us just review that record. In the 11 years we were in office, a flat, a fair and open tendering and contracting policy, which, in spite of an opposition which attempted to dredge up every conceivable scandal, was never the subject of controversy. I do not remember in the 11 years in office the tendering policy of the New Democrats ever being the subject of controversy . . . an Ombudsman Act which I will be introducing an amendment to, which is capable of improvement, but which has certainly served the public well. I suspect that any government who's tried to repeal The Ombudsman Act we have now would bring down on its head the wrath of the public. The public see it as a useful means to redress grievances.

The human rights code, which was changed on more than one occasion, which has often not been the darling of the conservative element in our society, but which has remained unchanged, I think, Mr. Speaker, is a testimony to its enduring value . . . the Human Rights Commission which has continued, I may say, to function in a fashion which has served the public of Saskatchewan.

The Rentalsman's office which has continued the function with great difficulty; Occupational Health and Safety, which has virtually ceased to function at all, I say to the Minister of Labour. We will get an opportunity to debate that in a different forum. Workers' advocates; environmental protection measures, which have also, Mr. Speaker, virtually ceased to function. There are any number of instances where environmental impact assessment statements should have been provided and have not.

All of these, Mr. Speaker, all of these steps in the '70s enhanced the rights of individuals in our society. That's a proud record, Mr. Speaker.

I want to turn to the subject of Bill 128. To put it mildly, the tendering policy of this government has been a subject of controversy, everything from full-blown scandals such as the tendering out of such as that which surrounded the sale of the highway's equipment in Saskatoon a year and a half ago involving some 40 million, to matters which have been the subject of complaint, but have never reached that sort of white-hot pitch of controversy.

Across this city, and across Saskatchewan, when you speak to small businesses, if they have a complaint — and a surprising number of them do — if they have a complaint about this government, it so often has to do with this government's tendering policies; inability of most businesses to compete for government business on a fair basis; and in Saskatchewan the government and the

Crown corporations taken together constitute a very large portion of the Saskatchewan gross provincial product, if you want to put it that way. Businesses cannot compete fairly when all business goes to a favoured few. Mr. Speaker, this causes frustration and bitterness and a virtually endless stream of criticism about this government's patronage.

Patronage, Mr. Speaker, is often one of the hallmarks of a government that has reached an advanced age. Governments, like people, grow old. One of the attributes of an old government is that it is often steeped in patronage. This is virtually the only government in modern times to take office and make patronage a corner-stone of its public policy, as this government has done from the very beginning.

Bill 128, Mr. Speaker, will seek to put an end to that with respect to the purchase of supplies. It will provide that within certain specifications, which must be made public — indeed they must be set out in the regulations — contracts must be awarded to the lowest tender.

With respect to contracts for the renovation of buildings, contracts must be awarded to the lowest tender. If that isn't done, then the government must disclose what the low bid was, the reasons why the lowest bid wasn't accepted, and all of that must be made available in an annual report which is provided to this legislature.

What a difference, Mr. Speaker, this Bill would make to this government's tendering policies; what a difference this Bill would make to the cynicism which now surrounds government. One of the ongoing legacies of this government is that the trust and confidence which Saskatchewan people used to have, which was greater than it was in other provinces — people of this province used to trust government, believe in government — one of the ongoing legacies of this government, after it's gone — and I'm convinced that's going to happen as soon as this government has the courage to call an election — one of the ongoing legacies of this government is that future governments are going to have a work a lot harder to earn the public's respect and confidence, when we have members of the Assembly doing business with the government as we do.

With those few words, Mr. Speakers, I invite all members to join me in legislating a policy that was once taken for granted, and taken for granted, Mr. Speaker, under governments of more than one stripe. So I invite all members opposite to join with me in supporting this Bill which simply recognizes fairly elementary principles of human decency and fairness.

HON. MR. LANE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought that a good idea was blown away by the remarks of the hon. member who just spoke who will have a great deal of difficulty in convincing the people of Saskatchewan, particularly when he was minister, that there was any fairness in government contracts, and the ownership of government buildings around the city of Regina remains a legacy of the previous administration. If he thinks that the business community have forgotten that, he is sadly mistaken.

It will be very interesting — it will be very interesting as well as . . . We'll discuss this with the business community in Regina as fund raisers for the New Democratic Party are running around saying they're going to get people that didn't support them, this, that and the other thing. And the reports come back to us, so . . . The impression that is attempted to be left is a false one, and fortunately the public recognizes that.

As I prefaced, Mr. Speaker, the concept of legislation governing contracts is a good one. But there are some fundamental difficulties with this particular piece of legislation. This does the opposite to what is intended and, in fact, turns over to cabinet, where previously there were far more objective rules in The Purchasing Act. For example, there's no rules as to the invitation to tender, no definition of interested persons. That's all left up to cabinet. In other words, cabinet could say, well I think you're a party supporter; you're definitely interested in this. That's all that we have to tell. The way the legislation is designed it puts completely in the cabinet — completely away from the long-term provisions in The Purchasing Act which were designed to overcome the very problems of this type of legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting that the NDP complains about contracts, but they make no provision in their legislation for contract for services. And of course we know why they make no provision in here for contracts for services because they were blatantly corrupt when it came to contracts for services, and they obviously haven't changed. They haven't changed at all, and I think that's unfortunate. This Bill does the opposite to what the hon. member has stated. In fact it, Mr. Speaker, puts secrecy into all types of government contracts.

Let us, as well, Mr. Speaker, take a look at section 3, 'an invitation to tender is forwarded to all suppliers who are registered with the Purchasing Agent.' Now if you want to talk about potential for abuse, it's having a requirement that everybody has to register with the purchasing agency, and of course, if you're not a New Democratic Party supporter, forget the registry.

I'm very much surprised that the member would bring forth legislation like this that takes away from the detailed provisions, Mr. Speaker, that have built up over the years governing government contracts. There's no regulations. And when I said it was all turned over to cabinet, there are no regulations for the registration of suppliers. That should be in legislation, in my view. There's no provision for emergencies. That should be in the legislation. And there are serious conflicts with The Purchasing Act which, of course, Mr. Speaker, is a result of a long-term development in the rules for government contracts.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, the idea of tightening up the rules in government contracts to ensure that the public is satisfied is a good one, and with the weaknesses inherent in the Bill, Mr. Speaker, it deserves much more further consideration and also, Mr. Speaker, deserves to be distributed to the business community so that they know that an NDP government hasn't changed, that cabinet will make all the rules and govern all the contracts, because that's what this Bill says.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 129 — An Act to provide Access by the Public to Government Information

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much. The concept of freedom of information Bills and freedom of information legislation began in the '70s and has been pioneered, I hasten to add, by our neighbours to the south. Probably the most successful freedom of information Bill is that passed by the U.S. national government has been responsible for, I think making that government a great deal more responsive to public opinion. It is very difficult for people to enforce their views and to impress their views on the government if they don't know what the government's doing. One of the ways that the governments keep people at bay is to keep information from them.

(1530)

That fact, that a government which makes information available to the public becomes a more responsive government, was recognized by members opposite who gave support to this principle when in opposition. Like so much of what they said in opposition, though, it evaporated when they saw a government which they took to be one long trough. Here again, the government has failed to fulfil its promise.

We recognize, Mr. Speaker, that there is private and personal information in the hands of the government which should not be released publicly, and this Bill addresses that and makes provision for that.

It's an important and fundamental issue of public importance in a modern political democracy that people receive information about which their government is doing. There are any number of examples of this legislation in other governments, enabling citizens and citizens' groups to make an impression on the government without which they never would have.

The legislation provides that everyone is entitled to request and receive information relating to public business, and then it goes on to say that no person is entitled to receive any information that's required to be kept confidential by virtue of any Act or law.

The legislation goes on to provide that the Lieutenant Governor in Council shall cause to be published at least once a year a list of all departments, and with respect to each department, a description of the information which that department has, and the name and address of the information officer of the department, so that citizens might get the information which they want in a fairly easy fashion. Anyone whose request for information is denied may appeal to a court for a review of that decision.

That's what, Mr. Speaker, has been done in other Acts, and it has worked reasonably well. This piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is not terribly different than what the Congress in Washington passed over a decade ago. It has worked well in that capital. Mr. Speaker, I expect it would work every bit as well in Regina. I urge members opposite to retain something of the convictions which they had when they were in opposition, and which they shed so quickly on coming into government. I urge members opposite to vote for this Bill, recognize an important instrument in making democratic governments responsible to the public whom they serve.

HON. MR. LANE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course the government is on record as supporting freedom of information legislation. I do call to the attention of hon. members a fundamental weakness to the legislation before us. We can all remember, Mr. Speaker, the family of Crown corporations advertising that went on under the previous administration, and another example that they haven't changed because they moved dramatically to put as much of government under the Crown corporations so that the public had no access to the information. The public can well remember trying to get information as to questionable land practices. I can remember, and the public can well remember, trying to get information on potash nationalization, and nothing forthcoming.

This Bill, of course, before the Assembly, completely ignores Crown corporations and says that they're an entity and a government unto themselves and are not covered by the legislation. Now that's not an argument, of course, Mr. Speaker, for areas where the Crown corporations are in competition with other corporations and that they have a legitimate interest to protect.

I find it surprising that the members opposite would come forth and again restate their positions on Crown corporations and that is that they're a government unto themselves and do not come for public scrutiny, and that the public will no longer know as to how the Crowns operate. It was not until, Mr. Speaker, this government brought in the Public Utilities Review Commission, that there was any scrutiny of the Crown corporations in the province of Saskatchewan. And here the party opposite advocates a retrograde step that in effect, by implication, says that the Crown corporations have no obligation to be forthcoming with information that is legitimately within the public interest.

Having said that, and having restated our government's position of support for freedom of information legislation. Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 130 — An Act to amend The Ombudsman Act

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will deal with The Ombudsman Act. The amendment here is a narrower one.

The Ombudsman Act was brought into being in the early 1970s — '73 I think would have been about the date it was brought into being. There was some controversy at the time as to whether or not we ought to include within the purview of an Ombudsman's jurisdiction the offices of deputy ministers. Should an Ombudsman be able to go into a deputy minister's offices? We had determined that he should not be able to go into a minister's office or go into a cabinet office. That would make

the functioning of a cabinet or a minister very difficult.

We eventually made a determination that we would exclude the deputy minister's office on the basis that to do otherwise would be to make the protection given to the Ombudsman meaningless. It would make the protection given to the minister meaningless.

In retrospect, that was not a wise decision. In retrospect, I think it is clear that the deputy minister's office should be within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman. The deputy minister's office is, in fact, the nerve centre of a department. That is where decisions of any consequence are, in fact, taken.

When you bar the Ombudsman or his officers from the deputy minister's office, you bar the Ombudsman from the centre of the decision-making power and the room where the decisions are mostly taken. To deny the Ombudsman the right to go into a deputy minister's office is to severely emasculate the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman has on repeated occasions asked for this power. Members opposite, when they were in opposition, suggested that this would be an appropriate power. We agree, Mr. Speaker, and we assume therefore that this rather simple, straightforward amendment will receive the support of all members opposite.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, just a couple of words before I adjourn debate, and the member for Regina Centre is quite right when he says that the Ombudsman has asked for these amendments repeatedly. I think going back in fact to 1975 and earlier, that these amendments have been asked for. I remember the arguments offered by the government when I was sitting over there, and I remember our arguments when we were in opposition when we were sitting over there.

I guess what I'm telling the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, is that I'm going to have to take a look at the arguments advanced by both of us back then, so I can fine tune my thinking on this issue, and I therefore beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Debatable)

Return No. 700

MR. SHILLINGTON moved, seconded by Mr. Engel, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 700 showing:

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Labour of Saskatchewan; (2) in each case his destination, the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who accompanied him at government expense; and (3) in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred for each of the following: (a) air fares; (b) hotels; (c) meals; (d) taxis; (e) gifts; (f) gratuities; (g) entertainment; (h) expenses; (i) miscellaneous.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, without spending a lot of time going through all of the arguments that we've heard in the past, I'm going to move an amendment that will answer the questions and provide the returns in the traditional form.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Health:

That motion for return no. 700 be amended as follows: by deleting all the words after 'trip' in subsection (3).

MR. SHILLINGTON: — This I gather, Mr. Speaker, is how this government intends to celebrate

Human Rights Day, by denying legitimate information. I would have thought, Mr. Speaker, that after the resignation of the Minister of Highways, that this government would have been a little more open. It may well be, Mr. Minister, that this government has other skeletons to hide.

(1545)

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the reason why this government has deleted any breakdown of the cost — and that is what, in fact, the House Leader has done — he has said, we will give you cost of the trip, but we won't break it down. I suspect that the reason for that is because they don't want to disclose one item, and that's entertainment.

I suspect, Mr. Minister, that this government has no reason not to disclose air fares, or hotels, or meals, or taxis. I suspect, Mr. Minister, this government does not want to disclose gifts, entertainment. I suspect, Mr. Minister, that in some ways we may have been unfair to the former Minister of Highways. It may well be that he simply got caught conducting this sort of flagrant abuse of Crown property and taxpayers' dollars that other ministers have been guilty of.

I say, Mr. Minister, if this government has nothing to hide, and if the Minister of Labour has nothing to hide, then let's see a breakdown of those expenses because it doesn't tell the opposition very much to simply get a lump sum. That does not do us much good, Mr. Speaker; unless we have the breakdown of what these expenses are, we are not able to do our job in scrutinizing public spending.

I therefore suggest that the government members join with us in defeating this information, give it us, begin to practise a bit of what you believe, begin to practise a bit of what you're saying about conducting an open government.

Amendment agreed to on division.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 701

MR. SHILLINGTON moved, seconded by Mr. Engel that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 701 showing:

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs of Saskatchewan; (2) in each case her destination, the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who accompanied her at government expense; and (3) in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred for each of the following: (a) air fares; (b) hotels; (c) meals; (d) taxis; (e) gifts; (f) gratuities; (g) entertainment; (h) expenses; (i) miscellaneous.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — At the conclusion of some very brief comments I will move an abbreviated motion.

This motion asks for precisely the same information with respect to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs. I hope, Mr. Speaker, in this case that we are going to get the minister's expenses and a breakdown. To give us the minister's expenses in a lump sum is to play games with the opposition, and ultimately the public. I leave it to this government to decide whether or not you are discharging your responsibilities when you play games with us and with the public, and when you refuse to provide us information about which the state, Mr. Speaker, can have no interest in keeping secret.

This is not defence contracts. These are not any state secrets. These are simply the minister's expenses. I would think, unless the ministers have something to hide, they would be prepared to make the fullest possible disclosure.

I therefore, Mr. Speaker, move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 701 showing.

HON. MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, in the, I was going to say, traditional practice — but I remember when we couldn't find, Mr. Speaker, when the NDP were in office sending civil servants down to Vegas, they wouldn't let us, as they are trying to find some money or whatever they were doing down there, they would, of course, not declare any information, I believe, giving the public the full cost of the ministers' expenses.

Well, I can recall as well, Mr. Speaker, when the now Leader of the Opposition took a long, lengthy trip to Russia, and the now Leader of the Opposition refused to give any information to the people of Saskatchewan. And we can recall as well, Mr. Speaker, when the now Leader of the Opposition was sunning himself in Hawaii and several cabinet ministers flew down — several cabinet ministers — to this resort in the Pacific, not having the then premier, the former premier, come back to Regina because it was a little cold out. What was it; five? How many ministers there went on the trip? Were you on the trip? Were you on the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please.

HON. MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, I remember when we found out about the NDP spending money at the Playboy Club in New York. We got it via the back door, Mr. Speaker, and they haven't learned a thing. They haven't learned a thing.

And there's been no change, Mr. Speaker, because the information being given by this government is far more comprehensive than that given by the previous administration. They would do well to stand up on their feet and say, thank you for all the information; that we have learned a lesson not giving you people that much information, but they didn't, Mr. Speaker. They stand up and they have yet to tell the people of Saskatchewan that they would change their ways.

Mr. Speaker, there's far more information being given by this government — far more information — and I believe that the public, Mr. Speaker, will be well satisfied with the information that they receive. Therefore, I move, seconded by the member from Meadow Lake:

That motion for return No. 701 be amended by deleting all the words after 'trip' in subsection (3).

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I want to deal with this briefly. I very much resent the comments of the Minister of Justice, although I've come to expect nothing but that sort of thing from him.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe there was any such incident as was related. The minister, when he doesn't have an argument, simply concocts one. But of far more importance than the minister's fairy tales, of far more importance than that, is the issue of these ministers' expenses.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, why the minister chose not to deal with the question I raised, and that is: why is it not in the interests of the public to have a breakdown? I wait for the Minister of Justice or any other minister to enter this debate and deal with that question. It clearly is, there is no way we can scrutinize government spending without a breakdown. To give us a lump sum is to simply play games.

I say, Mr. Speaker, if this government had any integrity, and I'm not sure it began with any . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member from Maple Creek is very vocal and vigorous in entering the debate from her seat — I might add, whose expense are being debated. This happens to deal with the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs. Since the minister is so vocal in speaking from her seat, I wonder if the minister's going to rise and tell us why she thinks it is not in the interests of the public to have a breakdown.

I wonder, Madam Minister, if you would try to improve, if you can, upon that eloquent address by

the Minister of Justice, a blether that we suffered through. I wonder, Madam Minister, if you'd try and improve upon that and give us a breakdown of your expenses; if you will tell us why you won't.

I know, Mr. Speaker, with a certainty, what's going to happen when we get to estimates. She's going to say, I don't have the information with us. When can you get it? Well I'll give it to you. You know when you get it, Mr. Speaker? You never get it, notwithstanding the undertakings given in this Assembly, which used to mean something.

I say if the member from Maple Creek can enter the debate with such vigour from her seat, I ask her to rise and tell us why, with respect to her expenses, why it is not in the public interest that we get a breakdown of these expenses.

Amendment agreed to on division.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 702

MR. LINGENFELTER moved, seconded by Mr. Engel, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 702 showing:

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Co-operation and Co-operative Development; (2) in each case his destination, the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who accompanied him at government expense; and (3) in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred for each of the following: (a) air fares; (b) hotels; (c) meals; (d) taxis; (e) gifts; (f) gratuities; (g) entertainment; (h) expenses; (i) miscellaneous.

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, as is the tradition of the House and as has been suggested by my colleagues, the member for Souris-Cannington and the Attorney General, we're quite prepared to keep with the traditions of the House and provide the following information as it relates to the trips of the Minister of Co-operation and Co-operative Development. To that end, Mr. Speaker, I move:

That motion for return no. 702 be amended as follows: by deleting all the words after 'trip' in subsection (3).

I so move, seconded by my colleague, the member for Souris-Cannington.

(1600)

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, as my colleague for Regina Centre has outlined, these amendments that are occurring basically cut out any details that might be given over by the ministers or by the Crown on trips taken outside of the country. And as well, what is happening here — this long tradition that the member for Meadow Lake refers to is a tradition that goes back to April 26th of 1982, because when he says that information is going to be withheld which we're asking for, what he is exactly saying, Mr. Speaker, is that they intend to continue on this lavish travel which has been carrying on since 1982. The member for Wilkie, people will well know the extravagance and the travel to Maui at government expense to attend a thinly veiled winter holiday at taxpayers' expense. These are the kinds of things that we're trying to find for the taxpayers of this province.

Because what these people don't seem to understand, Mr. Speaker, is that the money they're spending, these air fares, taxis, meals, hotels, are not their money. That's not their money they're spending or that we're asking for receipts for. What we're saying is we want the receipts for these trips that are taken, not at their expense, but at the expense of the farmers from Assiniboia, the farmers from Shaunavon, the teachers from the Quill Lakes, or the nurses in Regina North East. They're paying for these trips. And when we ask on their behalf where did the money get spent, we're

told, it's none of your business. The people from Regina North East, when they ask where's the money being spent on air fares and gifts, they're being told, it's none of your business.

Well I say, Mr. Speaker, this government hasn't listened very well. When the Premier says that he's going to listen closely to the people who sent him a message, I say he's not getting the message, because what the ministers are saying today is, we're continuing on down the same road; if we want to fly around the world, we'll fly when we want, and when the people ask where was the money spent, we tell them, it's none of your business.

And I say to the ministers opposite who continue to move these amendments that will not allow that information to be given to the taxpayers; they will bear the brunt of the people of Saskatchewan when they rebel against this kind of spending at a time of restraint. Because I say it's unfair when people are being told that there's no money for wage increases; when people on welfare are being told they're living too extravagantly; women, 55, 60, who are widows, have their welfare cut by 40 per cent are being told they're living beyond their means — should have their welfare cut by 40 per cent. When members of the opposition ask for a list of the air fares, meals, the booze account, for example, they say it's none of your business. And I say that's a sad commentary on a government that has just been telling people they're going to listen to them after the Regina North East by-election. This kind of actin is now what we were expecting.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 703

MR. SHILLINGTON moved, seconded by Mr. Engel, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 703 showing:

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Urban Affairs of Saskatchewan; (2) in each case his destination, the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who accompanied him at government expense; and (3) in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred for each of the following: (a) air fares; (b) hotels; (c) meals; (d) taxis; (e) gifts; (f) gratuities; (g) entertainment; (h) expenses; (i) miscellaneous.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I want to move this motion and then depending upon what response is from the government, I may make some comments. If the motion is passed unamended, anything I might say would be secondary, so I'll simply move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 703 showing.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. George McLeod, the Minister of Supply and Services:

That motion no. 703 be amended as follows: by deleting all the words after 'trip' in subsection (3).

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to deal particularly with this one because this was the one case where of the various ministers I dealt with in last year's estimates, this minister did respond and gave me the number of trips and the people who travelled on each one. No more detail than that. There were four or five trips, Mr. Speaker. In each case there was at least one executive assistant travelling with the minister.

Mr. Speaker, we live in an era . . . Well, there's only an initial given in each case so I don't know very much about the identity of the person who travelled with him, and I'm not casting any aspersions.

I do though want to say, Mr. Speaker, that we live in an era when there are line-ups at food banks, and food banks are unable to meet the demands upon them. We live in an era when hunger has reappeared in Saskatchewan as a serious social problem. We live in an era when farmers — and I see the headline in today's paper, 'Farmers face big income drop,' with no . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. I don't believe the motion deals with farmers or with food banks and things of that nature. I would ask the member to stay on the subject.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well it does deal, Mr. Speaker, with the expenditure of public money and the appropriateness of the expenditure of public money.

When this government is unable to meet such elementary needs and such obvious needs as that, one would have thought that they would be prepared, Mr. Speaker, to tighten their own belts. One would have thought, Mr. Speaker, that in an era when we see the sort of social problems we do stalking the land, that we wouldn't have the kind of excess abuses that we have. And this minister, as I say, gave me this information last year. There appeared to be some clear abuses, Mr. Speaker, clear abuses, of executive assistants travelling on each trip.

I've been on a goodly number of ministerial trips, Mr. Speaker, when I was minister. A minister has use of some officials on a trip, but an executive assistant rarely, Mr. Speaker, fulfils any purpose, much less an essential purpose. In an era when the government can't deal with the sort of problems which face this province, I say the sort of luxurious living which these ministers are engaging in is clearly inappropriate, Mr. Minister — Mr. Speaker. I can't make up my mind whether these ministers are just insensitive or whether they have simply felt that there is no hope in their re-election; they might as well live well since they won't be in office very long.

Mr. Minister, I say again, it is the public's right to know what expenditures are going to the ministers personally, and this is money being spent on them personally. This is not a departmental expenditure. This is money which goes for their personal benefit. This outfit, Mr. Speaker, gives the public every reason to be suspicious of them. I have before me the *Public Accounts*. In many cases the minister's expenses exceed their income. That's clearly inappropriate, Mr. Minister. This is an issue with the public, as well it should be. Here again we see this government covering up, refusing to provide us with information for just one purpose, Mr. Speaker, so that the public, through their elected representatives who sit in this Assembly, cannot hold them to account.

Well I say to this government opposite, you may use your majority to avoid being called to account in this session. But your five-year term is eventually going to run out, and if you people don't start to be a little more responsible with taxpayers' money, if you don't stop observing the double standards which are clearly in evidence, then you're going to face a stiff penalty at the time when the public do get a crack at you. I say to members opposite, this is information which the public have. Given the record of this government, we have every reason and every good reason to be suspicious of your spending habits. You've done yourself and your party no good, and you certainly haven't done the public any good.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 704

MR. SHILLINGTON moved, seconded by Mr. Engel, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 704 showing:

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Culture and Recreation of Saskatchewan; (2) in each case his destination, the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who

accompanied him at government expense; and (3) in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred for each of the following: (a) air fares; (b) hotels; (c) meals; (d) taxis; (e) gifts; (f) gratuities; (g) entertainment; (h) expenses; (i) miscellaneous.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Speaker, I'm simply going to move the motion now and save any comments, depending on what happens. I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return No. 704 showing;

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Culture and Recreation; in each case his destination, the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who accompanied him at government expense; and in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred for each of the following: air fares; hotels; meals; taxis; gifts; gratuities; entertainment; expenses; miscellaneous.

I so move, Mr. Speaker. Seconded by the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg.

(1615)

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Meadow Lake, the Minister of Supply and Services:

That motion for return no. 704 be amended as follows: by deleting all the words after 'trip' in subsection (3).

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I want to register my protest here as well. This is a minister whose expenses during the '83-84 fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, came to some \$13,000. That's a significant sum of money for a minister to spend on himself personally. This is not money that is being spent on departmental purposes. This is money that is going for the minister's personal benefit. It's a significant sum of money.

During estimates I thought it significant and I asked the minister; he didn't know, and he has never provided us with the information for which we requested. I do know that he took half a dozen trips or so, but I don't know anything more about it.

I say again, Mr. Speaker, in an era when this government can't feed the people of Saskatchewan — and that is literally true now — in an era when those sort of problems stock the land, we have a right to know what these ministers are spending on their own personal benefit.

Mr. Speaker, this has become an issue. It is something the public want to know and something the public have every right to know. I think it is just ludicrous, Mr. Speaker, that we have this government standing before this Assembly after all the trials and tribulations which they have had, for this government to be offering these amendments steeped in such cynicism that they don't even bother to give us an explanation. So cynical is this government they don't even bother with an explanation; they don't bother to make an argument. I can only assume, Mr. Speaker, that this government is so completely arrogant they assume that nobody's going to know. I tell them people do know, and people do care.

AN HON. MEMBER: — But does it matter?

MR. SHILLINGTON: — It matters, Mr. Speaker. It matters, Mr. Speaker, how these ministers behave, ministers who observe a double standard by crying restraint whenever anyone comes to them suggesting there's a need for public expenditures, and living as if they were Babylonian kings, Mr. Speaker, when they travel themselves, have created an issue.

And this government has made it an issue. This government has made it a serious issue. The

expenditures of these ministers on themselves is well beyond what can be justified. I, Mr. Speaker, don't know how some of these ministers actually spend as much money as they do. When I sit down and try to imagine it, I cannot figure out how some of these ministers are spending as much as they're spending.

Ministers opposite are so arrogant, so cynical, Mr. Speaker, they don't 'even bother to give us an argument, never mind give us an explanation. They don't even bother to give us an argument.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that that kind of conduct wouldn't be tolerated . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the member from Maple Creek is in a state of high indignation. When I invited you to speak on a previous motion you were glued to your chair, signing your Christmas cards. I say, Madam Minister, if you've something to say, you could have left your Christmas cards alone for a moment and entered the debate. You chose not to do it. You are as cynical and arrogant as all the other ministers who adamantly refuse to give us information which the public has a clear right to.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that if this government thinks that they can observe this kind of double standard with respect to themselves personally with political impunity, then I think they're dreaming. And the presence of the member for Regina North East with the bizarre majority that he had — and a 50 per cent spread in the vote is bizarre in this province — with that kind of a spread in the vote it should tell you people something about what the public think about the way you've been behaving. Your behaviour in office makes you unfit for office, and I say you're going to find that out.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 705

MR. SHILLINGTON moved, seconded by Mr. Tchorzewski, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 705 showing:

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Education of Saskatchewan; (2) in each case her destination, the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who accompanied her at government expense; and (3) in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred for each of the following: (a) air fares; (b) hotels; (c) meals; (d) taxis; (e) gifts; (f) gratuities; (g) entertainment; (h) expenses; (i) miscellaneous.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Speaker, I'm once again going to . . . I happened to have signed some orders for return, and I'm strictly speaking of the areas of which I'm a critic, and this is one. I recognize the rules of the Assembly are such that I must speak on them. I must at least move them, Mr. Minister. I'll do that and enter the debate at a later time.

I move an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 705 showing:

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Education of Saskatchewan; in each case her destination, (it wasn't always a 'her' in all cases throughout that entire year), the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who accompanied her at government expense; and in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred in each of the following: air fares; hotels; meals; taxis; gifts; gratuities; entertainment; expenses; miscellaneous.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the member for Regina North East.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to take a moment to reflect back, I believe it's to 1981. And in response to these kinds of questions back in 1981, the answers we got were total

gross cost and gross expenses, and we are attempting to provide them with the information in the traditional way.

Here's one. Reg Gross, I believe, at that time was minister of Parks, and he went on January 4th to Helena. It was from January 4th to 11th in Helena. And lo and behold, Mr. Speaker, one Mr. Lingenfelter showed up there, and you had the minister of Highways there as well. Here's the Department of Social Services, the Department of Highways, and the minister of Parks.

In any event, the point that I'm trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is we are attempting to provide the answers in the traditional way, and that is stating the total costs of the trips without the breakdowns. And the arguments I heard back when I was sitting over there, Mr. Speaker, was the difficulty in going through all of the . . . (inaudible) . . . to do all of this breakdown would be significant.

I therefore, Mr. Speaker, move, seconded by the Minister of Supply and Services:

That motion for return no. 705 be amended as follows: by deleting all the words after 'trip' in subsection (3).

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's rather fascinating to listen to the House Leader to be the one to talk about trips that others have taken, with his record. I would have thought that he would consider some of the luxurious journeys that he has ventured on to be pretty good evidence of why those gentlemen and ladies over there refuse to answer these questions which this here motion is an example of.

And I think that it would be wise on the part of the House Leader to try to salvage what's left of the credibility of this government and stop trying to conceal information that the taxpayers who are paying the bills have a right to know.

Now he referred to an answer that was provided under the term of the former government, an NDP government. Well I want to tell him that the answers were provided to questions which were asked. Strange that he never referred to any amendments to motions when he referred to that answer. I suspect he did not refer to any amendments because there weren't any, and the answer was provided as it was requested.

I also want to say to the member opposite, and he seems to forget — and all the ministers, the silent ministers over there on the treasury benches seem to forget that they are the government today. It's today we're talking about, and we're worried about the future under this government, and it's today that the questions are being asked, and it's today that those people have an obligation to provide the answers to the people who they're supposed to be representing in this legislature, and they're not doing it.

Now this motion, Mr. Speaker, talks about trips made by the Minister of Education, this motion which has been amended, and I find it interesting that when we have teachers being told, you are going to have your salary frozen for a year, zero per cent, while teachers are being told that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . yes, they were. The ministers of this government can spend unlimited amounts of money on themselves and on executive assistants and on their retinues and hangers-on to live the good life. Now if there is any justice in that, and if that is defensible by them, I would suggest they get out throughout Saskatchewan and attempt to defend that.

There are children in our schools that need help. There are children who are coming out of grade 7 and 8 who are not quite able to read and not the fault of the teaching staffs who are working hard, but are unable to read because school boards don't have the funding to provide them with the kind of learning assistance that's necessary in order to give them the help that they require so desperately. This government can't provide the money that's necessary to help those children in those schools, but they can spend money on trips which they are afraid to admit to when these kinds of questions are asked.

Why are they afraid to answer the question, and what are they hiding? They can spend money on those kinds of efforts to live a good life, but school boards are freezing their textbook budgets. Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, school boards have frozen their textbook budgets, so that if I was in the classroom today and I'd got a new student come to my grade 8 social studies class, he now has to share a textbook with another student. That's what's happening. There's some surprise on the look of some of the members' faces over there. It's not the fault of the school boards because they are strapped already with the kind of mill rate increases that they have had, the fault of this government which is not providing the funding because that's not a priority.

(1630)

Mr. Speaker, this motion asks questions that the people who pay their taxes in large amounts in this Conservative era have the right to know the answers to. And I was not particularly going to get involved in this debate, but having listened now for almost an hour to the kind of responses and amendments that we have heard, I really felt that it was necessary to stand up on behalf of our students and our teachers, and our school boards and other people who are being affected in this way and say something on their behalf on this particular topic.

I want to say to the House Leader of the government that yes, answers were provided to questions on the kinds of motions that questions were asked by those gentlemen when they were in opposition, and all we ask is that they do the same, now that they are in the government benches.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much. I want to provide an illustration of the information which I think the public are entitled to have. I believe it was during the year in question that the former minister of education took an entourage to China to study, I am told, educational institutes in China. My information is he took 11 people, and I think it is established that one of the people who went was the member for Redberry. What I am saying is in an era when you can't provide textbooks for school children, to spend what must have cost well in excess of \$100,000 for that sort of a trip is just clearly inappropriate. The only safeguard which the public have . . .

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, just one small point of order. I don't think that at any time a Minister of Education of this government has ever been in China.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I assume Mr. Speaker is not going to dignify that comment with any ruling. As the member should know, but doesn't seem to have learned after having spent as many years in this legislature as I have, that is not a point of order.

Mr. Speaker, if I am wrong about the date of that trip to China by the member from Turtleford, then I invite the House Leader opposite to provide me with the details of that trip, something we have never got. We have never got the details of that trip.

I happen to think it's inappropriate to be taking a dozen people or so to China at a time when you cannot provide textbooks for school children in Saskatchewan. I think that's inappropriate. I think the public think it's inappropriate. It is information which we, and ultimately they, are entitled to have. And I really wonder if there isn't one member opposite with some integrity. Is there not one member in the government benches with some integrity?

Amendment agreed to on division.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 706

MR. SHILLINGTON moved, seconded by Mr. Tchorzewski, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 706 showing:

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Social Services of Saskatchewan; (2) in each case his destination, the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who accompanied him at government expense; and (3) in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred for each of the following: (a) air fares; (b) hotels; (c) meals; (d) taxis; (e) gifts; (f) gratuities; (g) entertainment; (h) expenses; (i) miscellaneous.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I move an order of the Assembly do issue for return 706 showing:

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Social Services of Saskatchewan; (2) in each case his destination, the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who accompanied him at government expense; and (3) in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred for each of the following: air fares; hotels; meals; taxis; gifts; gratuities; entertainment; expenses and miscellaneous.

I move that the order of the Assembly do issue, seconded by the member from Regina North East.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I move, seconded by the Minister of Supply and Services:

That motion no 706 be amended as follows: by deleting all the words after 'trip' in subsection (3).

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to address a few remarks on this motion as well. I really find it fascinating why the government refuses to recognize, by its actions here today, the purposes of an elected government — that is to represent the constituents who elect each of us individually in each of our constituencies; to represent the people of this province as a whole; to explain to them what the government is intending to do, what it is doing, and what it has done, so that they are able to know; and to act on their behalf at all times.

On all three of those counts, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has failed. And I submit that it is failing in many of these cases quite deliberately, and avoiding the responsibility with which it has been mandated by the electorate of Saskatchewan. And I think that probably in Regina North East was a very good indication of their feeling about that.

This motion and the amendment refer to the trips and other things connected with the trips of the Minister of Social Services. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this minister often talks about what he has labelled a welfare reform. Well that's only words that exist. I submit that this was not a welfare reform; it was simply one means by which this government, through their Minister of Social Services, has endeavoured to punish the people who have been forced to be unemployed by the policies of the government opposite. You can see examples everywhere. While these ministers and people who go with them spend money on trips — and some of them are legitimate trips (I mean, I don't want to be unfair) — but while they spend large amounts of money which they do not want to admit to in here and tell the people what it is being spent on, we have cases of single mothers being cut off — single mothers who have been going to university and technical schools, and all of a sudden the Department of Social Services says, sorry, there's a technicality here; you are no longer eligible for assistance.

And if the members opposite want some examples some day, I can provide them in great order and in great numbers, because it's happening today and they call it welfare reform.

While they refuse to answer questions on these motions, Mr. Speaker, hiding I don't know what — I have to assume they have nothing to hide, but yet they're hiding — they are freezing the minimum wage of people who are at the lowest level of the income scale, and a working people. But for themselves and the people who go with them, legislative secretaries and others, there are no limits. I say that not to be unkind. I say that, Mr. Speaker, because if it was not the truth, why would we have all these amendments? Why would we have

all these amendments to these motions?

If there is any reasonable reason, any practical reason, why this information can't be provided, I wish that the House Leader or one of the other ministers who is affected by any one of these motions would stand up in this House and explain why, and explain what those reasons are. Because the people have a right to know. The citizens who pay the bills have the right to know what they paying for. That's a very fundamental principle of any democracy. And so, simply put, Mr. Speaker, as other colleague of mine on this side of the House have indicated, the actions of the government here today seem to be indicating that they're embarrassed about something in their expenditures and therefore they do not want to provide them. And I think that's wrong. I think the people of Saskatchewan have caught on, and there is no way in which even a massive cabinet change or whatever they've got in mind in the future is going to change that opinion that the electorate of Saskatchewan have of a government that's become heartless, unconcerned, and thinks only of themselves.

Amendment agreed to on division.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 711

MR. ENGEL moved, seconded by Mr. Lingenfelter, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 711 showing:

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Tourism and Small Business of Saskatchewan; (2) in each case his destination, the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who accompanied him at government expense; and (3) in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred for each of the following: (a) air fares; (b) hotels; (c) meals; (d) taxis; (e) gifts; (f) gratuities; (g) entertainment; (h) expenses; (i) miscellaneous.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, I'm asking for this return and I'll make a few brief remarks now on this. Basically we're concerned about this government moving these amendments because if you take into account that some ministers, according to the returns, have spent as much as \$63,000 — \$63,000 over and above their wages on expenses.

Now, Mr. Minister, I don't know if you've taken time to break that out or not. But if you look at it and divide 365 days into that, if they would have travelled every day of the year, they would have gotten 20 bucks an hour for travel time — \$20 an hour for every day of the year.

Now when farmers are faced with a headline that their incomes are going to face a big income drop and they're supposed to pick up the tab and not be reimbursed for this kind of travel expense of \$175 a day . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Every day of the year.

MR. ENGEL: — Every day of the year. Mr. Speaker, I know they didn't travel every day of the year. And so I'm kind of interested, when the Minister of Tourism makes a little trip and takes a few families with him, what do they spend on hotels and meals and taxis?

We have an illustration in the House of Commons in Ottawa where one of their colleagues took a little trip and spent as much as \$30,000 just on limousine fare — just on cabs. These people don't know that we're living in tough times. And the farmers that are having to foot the bill, those few of us that are still paying a little tax, are quite concerned about an extravagant government. We're very concerned about minister that make that kind of expenses, if they want to hide their entertainment costs — and when they're travelling to the tune of \$20-plus an hour, year around, more than eight

hours a day every day of the year for one minister, when you take that into a grand aggregate this is serious, Mr. Minister.

(1645)

We're not talking about a few nickels and dimes here. We're talking about enough money to fund some programs that may be worthwhile in agriculture or social services, like my colleague has mentioned. And the various departments where this government is prepared to tighten the belt and have everybody tighten the belt—they can live that high on the hog and live that lavish, I'm not impressed.

I've read into the record in this House when we were questioning the House Leader and the Deputy Premier, and on trips he's made when he was in San Francisco and he travelled on to Hollywood and spent a night in the Hilton hotel and spent \$900 a night and thought nothing of it. Those kinds of expenditures they're covering up. We don't know what they're spending. We don't know what they're spending when they group eight or nine people together on one trip and give us a total cost of a trip. We don't know how much you're spending on the individual items. And I think they're spending too much money; that's why they're hiding it.

And if the Minister of Tourism were here himself — Tourism and Small Business — I'm sure he wouldn't want to be put in the same camp as the big spenders. I'm sure he wouldn't. And I'm sure he'd be disgraced at the House Leader and Deputy Premier moving an amendment to his Bill, as well.

So I would beg that this time we would pass one motion as is, and let's see them come clean and prove that they didn't make these extravagant expenses. I would like to see that. I think we would have a good year this coming year if we would finally have a government that would go to Montana, if they're talking about it — and I use that road a lot; I use the No. 4 a lot — and when my colleagues went down they made a big deal about him going to Glasgow, or to Helena, Montana — a city the size of Moose Jaw. And they compare that with their world trips.

I can remember when the minister stood up in this House and sang that song where, I've been everywhere. And he listed every country in Europe and on the globe, practically, and back and forth from Japan in his little seven-day around-the-world trip. I can see why he doesn't want to give his entertainment costs. Well let's cover his up. We know they're extravagant. But why should he take in and draw in all the other ministers into this same kind of camp? Why draw them all into it, especially from the point of the Minister of Tourism, that is trying to encourage tourism in Saskatchewan?

I think this minister, when he goes out and looks for people and does some advertising for tourists to come and visit Saskatchewan, would legitimately want to say that, this is what I spent on entertainment; this is what my general expenses, my miscellaneous expenses, are; this is as much as I gave on tips; and these are the gifts I bought, to encourage people to come and spend their money in Saskatchewan. And I think he'd want to break that out separately and say, I've done a good job, and tourism is picking up in Saskatchewan. Why not come clean on just one?

I so move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by my colleague, the member for Shaunavon.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Supply and Services:

That motion no. 711 be amended as follows: by deleting all words after 'trip' in subsection (3).

Amendment agreed to on division.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 712

MR. LINGENFELTER moved, seconded by Hon. Mr. Blakeney, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 712 showing:

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Health of Saskatchewan; (2) in each case his destination, the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who accompanied him at government expense; and (3) in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred for each of the following: (a) air fares; (b) hotels; (c) meals; (d) taxis; (e) gifts; (f) gratuities; (g) entertainment; (h) expenses; (i) miscellaneous.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I move that an order do issue for return no. 712.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I move, seconded by the Minister of Supply and Services:

That motion no. 712 be amended as follows: by deleting all the words after 'trip' in subsection (3).

Amendment agreed to on division.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 713

MR. LINGENFELTER moved, seconded by Mr. Lusney, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 713 showing;

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Energy and Mines of Saskatchewan; (2) in each case his destination, the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who accompanied him at government expense; and (3) in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred for each of the following: (a) air fares; (b) hotels; (c) meals; (d) taxis; (e) gifts; (f) gratuities; (g) entertainment; (h) expenses; (i) miscellaneous.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 713 showing.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I move, seconded by the Minister of Supply and Services:

That motion No. 713 be amended as follows: by deleting all the words after 'trip' in subsection (3).

Amendment agreed to on divisions.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 714

MR. LINGENFELTER moved, seconded by Mr. Engel, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 714 showing:

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Supply and Services of Saskatchewan; (2) in each case his destination, the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who accompanied him at government expense; and (3) in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred for each of the following: (a) air fares; (b) hotels; (c) meals; (d) taxis; (e) gifts; (f) gratuities; (g) entertainment; (h) expenses; (i)

miscellaneous.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 714 showing.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Supply and Services:

That motion for return no. 714 be amended as follows: by deleting all the words after 'trip' in subsection (3).

Amendment agreed to on division.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 715

MR. ENGEL moved, seconded by Mr. Lusney, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 715 showing:

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Agriculture of Saskatchewan; (2) in each case his destination, the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who accompanied him at government expense; and (3) in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred for each of the following: (a) air fares; (b) hotels; (c) meals; (d) taxis; (e) gifts; (f) gratuities; (g) entertainment; (h) expenses; (i) miscellaneous.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I move, seconded by the Minister of Supply and Services:

That motion no. 715 be amended as follows: by deleting all the words after 'trip' in subsection (3).

Amendment agreed to on division.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 716

MR. LUSNEY moved, seconded by Mr. Lingenfelter, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 716 showing:

Regarding the period March 23, 1984 to December 3, 1985: (1) the number of out-of-province trips made by the Minister of Highways and Transportation of Saskatchewan; (2) in each case his destination, the purpose of the trip, the name of each person who accompanied him at government expense; and (3) in each case the total cost of the trip separated according to costs incurred for each of the following: (a) air fares; (b) hotels; (c) meals; (d) taxis; (e) gifts; (f) gratuities; (g) entertainment; (h) expenses; (i) miscellaneous.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 716 showing.

And I'd like to make a few comments on it, Mr. Speaker. I know it's going to be amended. I'd only like to say that in light of some of the things that have come out regarding the minister of Highways a couple of weeks back, that I would think the Premier or the Deputy Premier would be interested enough to try and clear up, if they think that it was maybe not as big a problem as we were saying, that they would clear up in the minds of the people just exactly what is happening when it comes to ministers' travel.

We have seen here one minister, the minister of Highways, who has clearly abused the services provided by the people of Saskatchewan — the use of the government aircraft, clearly abused that — and spent something in excess of \$62,000 last year in his travelling expenses.

If you wanted to add that up, Mr. Speaker, and look at all the 25 minutes that we have — some aren't there any more, but did have — and the amount of money that they will spend on travel, if we average that out to only about \$50,000 a year, we would be looking at something in excess of \$1.21 million just for travel alone. If you want to break that down to a daily basis, you'd be looking at something like \$3,400 a day on expenses for ministers travelling around the province and around the world.

If you want to make it sound even worse, you can go down to the hour and look at about \$430 an hour for ministers using the government aircraft, paid for by the people of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it's the responsibility of this government to see that the ministers don't abuse the service; that they don't abuse the expense account that they are allowed to get and what the people are paying for. But the Premier and the ministers of this government should be concerned enough to answer some of the questions that are being put to them in these motions.

Mr. Speaker, we do not ask anything that is unreasonable. We are only asking them to break down exactly where they spent that money. And I don't think anybody would think that that's unreasonable. We would like to know if they spent that on government business to do something that would benefit the people of this province, or if they spent it for their own pleasures. I think that is a concern we have; that is a concern that people have, because they have to come up with the tax dollars to pay for that.

And I think if this government is really serious about saying that they are concerned about the expenditures and that they are concerned about what happens in this province and how people have to cut back because times are hard, then I think they would give us this information and say that they are also prepared to cut back at this time and not spend as much on travel as they are.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Supply and Services:

That motion for return no. 716 be amended as follows: by deleting all the words after 'trip' in subsection (3).

Amendment agreed to on division.

Motion as amended agreed to.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. Being past 5 o'clock, I now leave the Chair until 7 p.m. this evening.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.