

June 18, 1986

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Estimates

Clerk Assistant: — Mr. Lusney, as vice-chairman from the Standing Committee on Estimates, presents the sixth report of the said committee, which is as follows:

Your committee considered the estimates of the Legislative Assembly and adopted the following resolutions:

Main estimates to March 31, 1987:

1. Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 1987, the following sum:

For legislation, \$3,880,550.

2. Resolved that toward making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1987, the sum of \$2,587,030 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund.

3. Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 1986:

For legislation, \$33,780.

4. Resolved that toward making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1986, the sum of \$33,780 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund.

5. Resolved that this committee recommend that upon concurrence in the committee's report, the sums as reported and approved shall be included in the appropriation Bill for consideration by the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member of Saskatoon Mayfair:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Estimates be now concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with a great deal of pleasure that I introduce to the Assembly some 51 students from grade 4 at the Lumsden Elementary School. They are accompanied by teachers Carol Youck and Karen Klippenstine: chaperons, Mrs. Clapworthy, Mrs. Abramson, Joan Achter, and Faye Krumm.

It is my pleasure to welcome all of the students and guests to the Assembly this afternoon. I hope they find it interesting and informative. I look very much forward to meeting with them for questions after question period today, and some refreshments. And I ask all hon. members to join with me in welcoming our special guests from Lumsden to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to bring to the attention of yourself and the House a group of students who are visiting with us today. It's a group of 15 students from Stewart Russell School which is situated in the Glencairn area of Regina. They are here and will be leaving right after question period or soon after, so I've had an opportunity to already meet with them and enjoyed it very much.

They are from grade 7 and 8, Mr. Speaker. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Vargo, and drivers Mr. Bill Parsons and Janice Decelles. I hope that they have an enjoyable and an educational stay here. I know that members will join me in extending to them a warm welcome and our appreciation for having them come to see us here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Birkbeck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would introduce to yourself, and to the other members of the Assembly, a group of students, 40 in number, grade 5, visiting our Assembly today from Whitewood. They're seated in the Speaker's gallery. They've had themselves a tour of the legislature. I hope you found it interesting. And of course I'm sure you'll be involved in other tours later today. I, of course, will be meeting with them, Mr. Speaker, and I will be making sure that they have some refreshments and pictures and the like. I would just ask members to join with me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Threat of Foreclosure of Choiceland Business

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. I want to know whether he or his department is aware that a long-time company which provides jobs and alternative income for many people in the Choiceland area of Saskatchewan is in danger of being forced into receivership by actions of the Royal Bank. I'm referring to Choiceland Dehy Limited — Dehydrating Limited — which sells alfalfa and I believe also barley pellets, both in Canada and on the export market. The plant employs six full-time people, 30 part-time people during the summer, and has contracts with about 50 farmers in the area.

My question is: is the minister aware of the threat to this company, and has his department decided to act to avoid the closure of this important facility?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. Lloyd Muller, the member of the Assembly from Shellbrook—Torch River is at this very moment meeting with Choiceland Dehy, along with various officials . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . So if the members opposite are not interested in my response they can argue from their seat. If the member of Shaunavon would like to know the answer, I'll respond. If he wants to talk on his own . . .

An Hon. Member: — You didn't answer the question. Just give an answer.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — The Legislative Secretary is meeting with the Choiceland Dehy right now and has officials with him, and they're looking at all the options, and we're quite aware of the situation, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, are you aware that a loan guarantee would keep this important company operating with the jobs I've mentioned — between 30 and 35 jobs — and protect 50 farmers who use this plant as a market for their alfalfa products? And are you aware also that this would involve a guarantee, by my calculation, of less than half a million dollars? And will you give an undertaking that this guarantee will in all likelihood be forthcoming, in view of the fact that you've offered more than \$10 million to Peter Pocklington, the Alberta millionaire?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I'm not so sure, if the hon. member compares the Dehy to Peter Pocklington, he's interested in Dehy at all; just making a few political points with respect to an outside company. Of course we're looking at all options. And the Legislative Secretary that's there now, plus the officials, are examining all those. And I will give you my assurance that we're looking at every conceivable possibility that we can to make sure that the Choiceland Dehy stays as viable as possible and has a bright future.

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, you know that this is a Saskatchewan-based company, owned by people in Saskatchewan, and it's an important source of income for the Choiceland region.

Now, Mr. Minister, it is also an important exporting company which provides an alternative source of income for area farmers.

Mr. Minister, why are you so reluctant to move on this case when, Mr. Minister, you could find all that money for Peter Pocklington of Edmonton and for Manalta Coal of Calgary? You can find loan guarantees for those, Mr. Minister, in very short notice. Why wouldn't you act immediately, Mr. Minister, at this point, and not have this double standard for the multimillionaires and then for a small company that's based here in Saskatchewan? Why the double standard, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I will just say, I won't get into the political argument. I'll just say we have officials on the scene, officials discussing it as we speak and as you ask the question. We're been on top of it for some time and, Mr. Speaker, we have legislative secretaries familiar with the industry, familiar with the

area, that will be reporting back to me, and our officials will be looking at all the options.

Incident at Prince Albert Correctional Centre

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Justice. Can the minister confirm that there has been a violent incident in recent days at the Prince Albert Correctional Centre in which a guard was attacked and kicked unconscious by a group of inmates? Can you give us the details relating to that?

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Yes, I believe the incident the member is referring to was in Prince Albert, and one inmate assaulted one guard, and the guard was taken to a hospital. It was a one against one incident, and I believe the guard suffered bruising, and that was the extent of his injury.

Mr. Koskie: — Supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, are you able to find out whether or not the situation took place in which the guard was attending to a total of 23 inmates by himself. There was no back-up staff at the time. And I want to ask you whether this is traditional that one guard would have responsibility for the 23 inmates?

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Mr. Speaker, I don't have the exact numbers that the member is asking for; I could take notice and bring that back. However, I know that in this particular circumstance the guard was attending to one prisoner who assaulted him unexpectedly as he was trying to get the prisoner to wake up, and the assault lasted, I believe, for less than 10 seconds. The guard called for help, and the guard received help within 10 seconds, Mr. Speaker.

So it's obvious the member is attempting to make political hay out of this unfortunate incident. I'll be looking into the incident further, and I'll bring more information back to the member if he requires it.

Mr. Koskie: — A new question to the minister. Mr. Minister, this is just the latest in the series of such incidents that's been happening in the correctional centres because of the overcrowding. And here we sat in the Assembly the other day and you indicated that in fact the number of people in the correctional centres are over 1,160.

But I ask you: the guards have been requesting a meeting with you in order that the overcrowding situation and the assaults that are taking place as a result of the crowded situations — why in fact will you not meet with them to discuss the situations, the deteriorating situation in the Prince Albert, and particularly the Regina correctional centres, as they have requested?

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Well I think it's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP seem to take advantage of unfortunate circumstances of this particular matter. One guard was assaulted by one inmate. It's not the first time that something like this has happened; unfortunately, in our system, it probably won't be the last.

What I'm confident about is the ability of other staff members to react quickly, which they did in this case, and

I have to commend the staff for being on their toes. Within 10 seconds they were at the side of the guard that did get into a problem. The problem did occur in the dormitory, and that's the extent of it. And I could bring more information down.

I haven't received a request to meet regarding this incident from the guards in Prince Albert, and I am sure if they are concerned about this specific incident, they will be in touch with me. But I haven't been contacted yet.

Demographic Trend in Saskatchewan

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question I'd like to direct to the Premier, and it deals with the continuing and growing problem of Saskatchewan's population drain which is getting progressively worse.

Our province, you may know, Mr. Premier, had the worst net migration rate in the country last year — 6,000 more people moved out of Saskatchewan during 1985 than moved in. And the figures which were released today show that this population exodus is in fact increasing and getting; Saskatchewan has lost more residents in the first five months of this year than it did in all of 1985.

Are you, Mr. Premier, aware that between January and May of this year Saskatchewan had net migration loss of 6,420 people as more than 11,000 people moved out of Saskatchewan? And don't you think that this exodus has gotten to the point where your government should act to provide some jobs for these young people who feel that it's necessary for them to move out of the province in order to be able to work?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I could correct the hon. member on a couple of facts. One is that the population of Saskatchewan is growing. We have over a million people, and it's the first time in our history that we've been able to break that record, and it's the first time since Saskatchewan became a province that we're in excess of a million people.

The hon. member suggests that we should be creating more jobs to keep people here as opposed to where — Manitoba or Alberta where the unemployment rate is higher? I mean, where would they be moving to — North Dakota, British Columbia? Well, Mr. Speaker, I mean, the hon. member says, well maybe they're going to Ontario. Well Ontario has virtually full employment in southern Ontario because of a free trade arrangement with respect to automobiles with the United States. Unfortunately we've never been able to carve one out with the United States here in western Canada or with Saskatchewan. But frankly it doesn't make much sense that a young person would move any place else in western Canada when we have the lowest unemployment rate in the west and the second lowest in Canada. And we've had that over four years.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, as a result of a little bit of weather problems and drought problems and so forth, the hon. member says, well Saskatchewan has the lowest unemployment, and that's pretty good, but we've had to suffer; we haven't been able to cope with it.

Well I'll compare the unemployment rate, which we've had the best for women. It's the highest in Canada for women, among the very best for young people, the very best in western Canada, second best in the whole nation, despite drought, despite grasshoppers, despite all kinds of things, Mr. Speaker. And you're saying, well young people are going to go to Winnipeg or Minot or Calgary or Vancouver for work. I doubt that very much. People are coming into the province of Saskatchewan. New businesses are opening.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, every single project, every single project that we initiate in the public sector or the private sector or joint ventures, the NDP are against. They're against rural gas; they're against individual line service; they're against bacon plants and paper-mills; they're against upgraders; they're against all this private sector investment; they're against power projects that are in the public sector; they're against Rafferty; they're against Alameda; they're against the new power plant.

I mean, how can they have it both ways? We've got the lowest unemployment. They're against all projects. They say that the kids should go to Manitoba, and the unemployment rate is higher. They're against free trade with the United States. And in southern Ontario you've virtually got full employment because they trade with the United States. I don't even know why the hon. member raises the point.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Premier. Mr. Premier, in light of the fact that the unemployment in the last four years and some months that you now have governing longer than your mandate allows you to, unemployment has gone up to 47,000 from 20,000, the welfare rolls have increased to 67,000 — there are 67,000 people dependent on welfare — in light of those facts, Mr. Premier, and in light of the fact that there was a net out-migration this year of 6,420 people from this province, how can you justify the arguments that you have made in indicating that indeed there is that kind of population, when all those statistics prove you wrong?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — He doesn't seem to understand demographics. You can have the population increasing, because of the birth rate here, and still have a net out-migration in one month or two months. I mean, he doesn't seem to understand that our population, number one, is growing, Mr. Speaker. The population in the province of Saskatchewan has been a million people for the first time in its history. And third, Mr. Speaker, under 11 years . . . or after 11 years of NDP, it was either declining or flat all the time because people would not invest here.

So, Mr. Speaker, if you look at . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order. It's impossible to carry on with the amount of yelling that's occurring here, and I'm going to ask the members to contain themselves.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the numbers are: we

have well over a million people now, and when we came to power it was much less than a million. So under the NDP it didn't grow. They were in power from 1944 virtually right through until 1981, except for seven years, and the population stayed the same. Alberta's population doubled; Canada's population doubled. What happened to Saskatchewan's under the NDP? Absolutely the same. We exported over a million people since 1936 and . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to raise the point that we've had NDP administration since 1944 to 1982 and the population of the province virtually remained unchanged. It stayed the same or decreased, and in that same period of time Canada's population doubled all over Canada. This was the only NDP administration in all of Canada during that period. The population stays flat; Canada's population doubles. We export children all over the place, and for the first time in our history, under our administration, we have over a million people, and he asks where the people are going.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I will suggest that the young people are coming home; the population is going up, and we are increasing economic activity better than any province in western Canada and . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — This is the third time that I've had to caution the members to control the noise, and I don't want to have to move that way again.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I have another supplementary to the Premier who maybe at some point will answer the question, rather than make a speech during question period.

Mr. Premier, my supplementary to you is this: so far in 1986 people are leaving Saskatchewan at the rate of 1,300 a month. Thirteen hundred people a month are leaving Saskatchewan . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order. I would caution the member from Regina North West. This is the fourth time I'm on my feet, and I'll caution you for the last time.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Premier, a certain journalist a few short months ago wrote in an article indicating how you deal with the truth, and that's how you're dealing with it in this question period today. That's 1,300 people, Mr. Premier, a month who are telling you what they think of your government's job creation record and your many broken promises.

And so I ask you: for all the young people out there today struggling with the decision whether or not to leave Saskatchewan to find a job, what will your government do this summer and this fall — not three years from now or 10 years from now — but what will it do this summer and this fall to provide them with an opportunity to have a job and to work?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I just make the point that the hon. member's political party was in power from 1944 to '64 and 1971 to 1982, and the population stayed about 950 to 960,000 people for 30 years . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well it is true, and that's the facts. Go back and look at the record. You never were over 1 million people under your administration. And the facts are, during that same period, Mr. Speaker, Canada's population doubled — it went from 13 million to 20-some-million people, 25 million people.

So Saskatchewan's population today is higher than it was under the NDP. We broke 1 million for the first time in Saskatchewan's history. The population is going up generally from year to year. He's picked a couple of months, or three months, and he says, the out is lower than the in. We've had the worst drought, infestation that we've had in years, and unemployment in agriculture is difficult, and at the same time he's afraid to admit . . . Why doesn't he just admit we have the lowest unemployment in western Canada . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well say that. We have the lowest unemployment in western Canada, the second lowest in all of Canada, and it's been that way for four years.

Mr. Speaker: — If the members have something to say in question period and have a question, I'll take their question, but I'm going to ask for order when the Premier is answering, or when any other member is answering.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — You want the facts; I'm prepared to give you the facts. In 1986 . . . They're more interested in their summer holidays than they are in what's going on with respect to employment.

In 1986 we have Opportunities '86 for young people. We obviously are creating opportunities in terms of new kinds of projects. We've got industrial incentive grants for companies and private and public people who will participate in creating new jobs, new opportunities. We obviously are building many new projects that the opposition is against. I mean, if they were concerned about young people, why wouldn't you be in favour of new projects in Saskatchewan? Why, in every single, solitary project, the opposition stands up and say, we're against that? Well, I mean, they asked, Mr. Speaker, they asked what I'm doing. Do you want me to read a list of the projects in this province, the new projects that they're against, every one of them? They can't have it both ways. They can't ask and not expect to receive. Bacon plants, and paper-mills, rural gas, individual line service, brand-new university, agricultural colleges, hospitals, nursing home — all those things — plus Opportunities '86, to give us the best employment record in western Canada and number two in the nation in the last four years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Premier, for the first time in a decade Saskatchewan has suffered a new population loss, in spite of all that you say. And your own figures support that argument, Mr. Premier. The single biggest reason for our population exodus continues to be young people leaving Saskatchewan to look for jobs in other provinces. That's the reason.

Is the Acting Premier, or is the Premier aware — he's so seldom . . . it's hard to know that he's here; he's so seldom here. But is the Premier aware that between January and May, a five-month period, more than 4,200 people in their 20s left our province in search of work?

And if you are aware of that, Mr. Premier, how does this exodus of Saskatchewan's young people live up to your 1982 campaign promise, and I quote: "bring home our children"?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, we have 40,000 more people working now than when we took office, 40,000 more people working in industry — 40,000 more people working — and the population up, and the labour force in our province higher than it's ever been. So people are coming in.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if I could just have their attention for a moment. When you see oil prices drop by 60 per cent, the member opposite doesn't think that it has any impact on the oil service industry. He would not support the oil industry to start with, but when prices drop 50 or 60 per cent in a matter of months and we have people being laid off in the service industry and in the oil patch and in drilling — just look at the drop in the oil sales and the land sales. He doesn't think there's an impact in the province of Saskatchewan when oil prices drop?

And he says, well, for Heaven's sakes, look at this. In April, for Heaven's sakes, he says that people, young people, who are working in the service industry might leave and might go to another industry. Well what do you think might happen as a result of wheat prices dropping or, particularly, oil prices dropping that amount in Kindersley, Estevan, Weyburn, Swift Current? Well, he obviously doesn't understand it, or he doesn't understand the oil business. He wouldn't get it going to start with, and then when they leave as a result of a price decline, he says, well what are we going to do, where are they going to go? Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously we had a royalty program to encourage investment in oil so young people could find work, and we've got 40,000 more people working today than when we took office . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please.

Herbicide Spraying of Northern Forests

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the absence of the Minister for Parks and Renewable Resources I'll direct my question to the Acting Minister.

I raise this question, Mr. Minister, because we're concerned about our lakes, our rivers, our streams, our wildlife habitat, etc. — including jobs. Last August, Mr. Minister — or, pardon me, Acting Minister — your government released a report of the task force on the use of herbicides in forest management. That report recommended the use of aerial herbicide spraying in the forests of northern Saskatchewan, and your government said that you approved that recommendation in principle.

Can you advise the people of northern Saskatchewan and

this province the status report of the task force and its recommendations? Does PAPCO still plan to proceed with aerial spraying on the herbicide, Roundup, on forests near Nipawin, the provincial park, this summer, or will the pending sale of PAPCO to Weyerhaeuser delay the project?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that it won't delay the project in any way in regards to Weyerhaeuser. I will take notice of the question, and I'm sure my colleague will be back here tomorrow or the next day and bring you an answer back. I'm not familiar with exactly what's going on up there, but I'm sure that the minister responsible for Parks and Renewable Resources will be, and he'll certainly get you the answer for it.

So I'll take notice and get you an answer for it.

Mr. Yew: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The member that I directed the question to was the former minister for Environment. I would suspect that that minister ought to know the issue related to aerial spraying of herbicides.

My supplementary, Mr. Minister, is this: as you should know very well, Mr. Acting Minister, the people of the North are desperate for jobs. Rather than hire aircraft to spray herbicide Roundup this summer, why not convince PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company) to hire Metis and Indian Northerners to do the work by hand. It is a much safer method of forest management, and it would create desperately needed jobs in northern Saskatchewan. Will your government commit itself to that, Mr. Acting Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if they're inferring that Weyerhaeuser shouldn't go ahead, and go ahead with the paper project or not, but I can assure the hon. member that just a year or so ago we did a bunch of silviculture in thinning the trees out of the white spruce in an area north, I believe, of Nipawin, in the Hudson Bay area and, I'm not sure, some other places. We've already done that. In one instance they're taking a look at it to see how it would work out. I believe it's been very successful.

In regards — in regards to spraying of herbicides in the North, I think the member's well aware that we said there's a hold put on it until such time as we felt it was comfortable if it could be done or not. There's been a task force out; they brought back recommendations. There has been no spraying going on, to the best of my knowledge. There will be none this summer, and I'm sure the minister will answer any other question he needs when he's in the House.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 67 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the enactment of The Highways Traffic Act, The Vehicle Administration Act, and The Motor Carrier Act

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. member, I move first reading of a Bill, an Act respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the enactment of The Highways Traffic Act, The

Vehicle Administration Act, and The Motor Carrier Act.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the said Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 66 — An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984 (No. 2)

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of this Bill reforming store hours legislation in the province of Saskatchewan. This Bill is The Urban Municipality Act amendment, and these amendments will bring Saskatchewan store hours legislation in line with changing economic and social realities in our province. They are amendments which, I believe, will fairly balance the interests of consumers, of families, of businesses, of workers, and of municipal councils in our province.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's store hours legislation may once have been appropriate. Today it is among Canada's most restrictive piece of shopping hours legislation and is not reflective of changed times in which we live. I believe, Mr. Speaker, there is a clear consensus that changes need to be made. This Bill, Mr. Speaker, responds to the changed economic and social conditions which face us.

Today a large proportion of Saskatchewan women are in the work-force. In many families, Mr. Speaker, both spouses are working. Consequently, in recent years the desire for extended shopping hours on the part of consumers and families has grown. People want more opportunities to shop, particularly on week-day evenings. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, there remains strong support for a common day of rest.

There are four problems, Mr. Speaker, with the present legislation as I see it. In the first place, evening shopping is too restricted. The urban Act now allows only one evening of shopping per week, except in convenience stores. And in view of changing economic and social realities, this provision is clearly too restrictive for large communities.

Secondly, the Act is not sufficiently flexible for municipal councils. The present urban Act leaves individual municipalities with very little room for regulating shopping hours to suit local community desires. Municipalities cannot permit more than one evening of shopping a week on a regular basis.

Third, Mr. Speaker, holidays are not protected. The urban Act presently contains only a vague provision that municipalities may require stores to close on holidays. In my view, recognized holidays should be set aside for families and for freedom from the demands of work.

Fourth, Mr. Speaker, the Act is difficult to enforce. The

urban Act's current provisions on store hours are too vague to permit effective enforcement. Fine sanctions lack sufficient teeth to be effective. We need to strengthen the Act to prevent stores from violating municipal by-laws or provisions of the Act.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there has been a strong, growing consensus on the general direction that reform of shopping hours should take, and I would like to speak to that growing consensus for a moment.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that a good majority of people in our province would like to see more evening shopping. As early as 1979 a plebiscite in Saskatoon had shoppers voting over two to one in favour of more evening shopping. In recent years, petitions in both major cities have shown a decided preference for more shopping opportunities.

Similarly, the urban law review committee, which included a majority of municipal representatives, called for more evening shopping several years ago. Various municipalities have recently made similar requests.

Second, Mr. Speaker, there is strong support for the need to restrict shopping on common days of rest. A recent survey of Saskatchewan's small businesses by the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses found that most businesses were opposed to wide-open shopping on Sunday. Similarly, a recent survey of Regina consumers by the Southern Saskatchewan Shopping Centre Management Association, revealed that a majority of consumers supported closing stores weekly for a common day of rest.

Then, Mr. Speaker, there is, I believe, a growing consensus that the Act must be made more enforceable. The larger municipalities have been asking for the provincial government to strengthen the Act to indeed make it more enforceable. Saskatoon has asked for increased fines. Municipalities have asked for more precise definitions to ensure that they can effectively regulate store openings.

Fourthly, there is, I believe, a consensus that the provincial government provide more flexibility for municipalities. There is support for enabling municipal councils to have more discretion to establish the rules on evening shopping. The Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, as well as the provincial Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, have asked the provincial government to place more power in the hands of municipal councils.

In response to this growing consensus, the following amendments are being introduced in this Bill.

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, the Bill will permit up to six evenings of shopping per week at municipal council discretion. This is a key amendment in the Bill. It permits up to six evenings per week of shopping, Monday through Saturday, at the discretion of the local council. The amendment does not automatically allow all stores to open six nights a week. Local councils must pass by-laws determining the number of nights of shopping which will be permitted.

This change will achieve two key objectives. It will leave decisions regarding shopping hours squarely in the hands of urban councils, strengthening Saskatchewan's tradition of local autonomy and responding to the wishes of various councils and the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association. It will allow councils maximum flexibility to determine the level of additional shopping hours appropriate for their community.

I note, Mr. Speaker, that the mayors of Saskatoon and Moose Jaw, and the president of the urban municipalities association, and the executive director of that particular association have all spoken favourably in response to these changes.

Then, Mr. Speaker, there should be a weekly day of rest and holiday closing. This Bill will continue the present provision of the urban Act which requires that stores close from 10 p.m. Saturday and remain closed until 5 a.m. on the next following Monday.

However, a new feature of the Bill is the requirement that stores close on holidays. Some municipalities have had this prohibition in their by-laws for some time, but this Bill makes it uniform throughout the province.

A number of other provinces have specific Acts dealing with day of rest and holiday closing. The recognized holidays contained in this Bill include New Year's Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Labour Day, Remembrance Day, Christmas Day, Thanksgiving Day, Saskatchewan Day, and any other day set aside as a holiday by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, or any civic holiday.

In addition, municipalities will be permitted to require stores to close on any holiday as specified in other Acts, or an Act of parliament, should the municipality choose.

These day of rest provisions are reasonable in order to provide common days for families to be together — a strong Saskatchewan tradition. Mr. Speaker, standard day of rest legislation will also help small businesses, which have had a hard time competing with large retail outlets which have the staff and resources to operate in a seven-day-a-week environment. It will also mean small communities won't have to play follow-the-leader and opt for wide-open weekend and holiday shopping to compete with stores in nearby cities. Convenience stores, Mr. Speaker, will continue to be permitted to remain open on common days of rest, on holidays, and beyond the normal closing hour for non-convenience stores.

Then, Mr. Speaker, this Bill strengthens the enforcement features. It responds to municipal requests for amendments to make the Act more enforceable. In this regard we have worked with municipalities to strengthen their hand.

First, we will be amending the outdated penalty provisions of the Act by providing for stiffer fines. Fines for remaining open in violation will now be up to \$10,000 for the first offence, and up to \$20,000 for the second and subsequent offences. In the present Act, the first offence carries a fine of \$5,000, and a continuing offence after the first offence involved a fine of only \$250 per day.

Second, Mr. Speaker, we've more clearly defined the term "store" to curb the practice whereby a single large store, dividing into two or more smaller stores, attempts to circumvent the local by-law by creating separate corporate entities, partitioning the large store.

Third, we've acted on municipal requests to provide more precise definitions of two key terms: one being "principal trade," the other being "gross sales." Both of these terms will be helpful to the courts in determining what is and what is not a convenience store which may stay open after regular closing times.

Mr. Speaker, I believe these amendments respond to the changing social and economic conditions in our province. They recognize the desire of working women, of two-spouse, working families, and of many, many consumers for extended shopping hours. The amendments balance fairly the interests of consumers, families, businesses, workers, and municipal councils.

Mr. Speaker, I fully recognize that the amendments won't satisfy everyone. That would be impossible, given the complexities and competing interests involved in the store hours question. But I believe the Bill is a reasonable response to the need for change to Saskatchewan's store hours legislation.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the support indicated yesterday by the various mayors and by the urban municipalities association here in our province indicates that the amendments which are being proposed today are reasonable; they are in keeping with the times that Saskatchewan is presently experiencing; they are certainly worthy of the support of all members of the this Assembly.

I indeed would urge all members to support this Bill which will update and modernize Saskatchewan's store hours legislation.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will make some initial remarks, and then I will ask leave to adjourn the debate because this Bill is one in which a large number of members of the public have a considerable amount of interest and have only now begun to realize what the legislation says, and they should be given some time to be able to respond.

I listened with interest to what the minister had to say, and I want to indicate that I think it is fair to say that there will be people in every sector of the Saskatchewan economy concerned about the fact that the minister, in his remarks, did not deal with some very substantive issues.

(1445)

At no point did he make reference to the impact that this legislation is going to have on Saskatchewan small, independent business people. They are the ones who are going to bear the brunt of wide open store hours. Business people, not only in the city, Mr. Speaker, but business people throughout Saskatchewan — family-run businesses who will be expected to, because they're going to have to compete, stay open for seven days a

week. Although the minister says six, I submit to this House that under his legislation it's going to end up being seven.

There are going to be many small businesses in this province that will now be very seriously threatened. They are finding it difficult enough now to compete against the big chains. The minister and his government is now saying to the big chains, you can have your way.

An Hon. Member: — I'm with you.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well the member from Cannington should be with me. He's from a rural constituency where his business people are going to be affected.

The other point, Mr. Speaker, and we will be asking these in committee, but the other point that the minister did not bother to comment on was the impact on rural communities which I have just referred to. Rural communities which are finding and are saying and will find to a greater degree now, business moving from those rural communities to larger centres to do their shopping at night, resulting in some rural communities losing business places. And it needs not be said what impact that will have on the community as a whole.

And the third area which the minister did not address in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, is the impact that this legislation will have on the people who work in this sector of the economy. There are going to be larger numbers of part-time employees. There will not necessarily be more jobs, Mr. Speaker, as has been shown between the situation of SuperValu and Safeway in Regina. There has not been an increase in net jobs. Whereas SuperValu hired some people, Safeway and other stores have reduced their staff, resulting in almost no net increase in job opportunities.

But what these people are now going to be faced with, the people who work in the stores, Mr. Speaker, are growing numbers of split shifts — come to work for three hours; be sent home; come back to work for another three hours. Nowhere in this legislation, or a proposal by the government, is there any proposal that that should be addressed to protect these people. No benefits are provided to part-time employees who are going to be working into the night, in some cases seven days a week.

And those kinds of issues, Mr. Speaker, ought to have been addressed by the government. They chose not to do that.

I want to point out that what the Bill does simply is this: it only legitimizes what is already happening. There already are business places such as the big chains who are staying open seven days a week. This Bill does nothing other than legitimize that kind of an operation, although I submit it talks about six days.

The point that needs to be noted — and it's a very serious shortcoming in this legislation — is this: that the Bill provides no new tools and no new legislative powers to municipalities to be able to enforce any by-law that they pass. They are caught, Mr. Speaker, in exactly the same situation that they are in right now where they may set the

number of nights or the number of days of opening, and they will be challenged, and this legislation gives them no further power to be able to deal with that kind of a challenge.

So what is going to happen, Mr. Speaker, is that the SuperValu's and the similar kinds of stores are going to continue to challenge any by-law that the cities or the urban municipalities pass, and the government in this legislation failed to deal with that question. And that's one of the problems that the municipalities deal with. And the minister shakes his head, and he's going to talk about the increased penalties. That's not the issue; that's not the issue.

The penalties do not decide whether the challenge can be upheld or not. And I simply say to the minister that he has done nothing to provide the municipalities with the tools or any new legislative powers to be able to support the by-laws that they pass if they, for example, in Regina chose to go two days instead of one, or two night openings instead of one, or three night openings instead of one. And that is a very serious shortcoming of the Bill, besides the other three items which I have raised.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that there are many people concerned about the six days. They include people who are in business, particularly small-business people. They also include a lot of people in the general public. And I would like the minister to consider whether, maybe, it would not have been, and still is, possible to look at the possibility of reducing it back from six to two or three, which is probably, in the view of a lot of people, something that would have met with some attraction.

The city council of Regina, and I know other municipal councils, Mr. Speaker, were asking for an extra day or an extra night. That's what the requests were. The mayor of Regina is quoted in the paper today, in which he said the government has done nothing else here but simply taken the problem off their backs and put it on the backs of the municipalities without giving them any power to be able to act and back up any by-laws that they may pass. And that's really what the intent, on the part of this government, is of this Bill.

So I say, Mr. Speaker, having raised these concerns, there are other people in the community and other organizations and business people as well as working people, who are raising these concerns. They have been making phone calls and, in fact, I have received several letters, and it's only been a day. I want to say that it is only appropriate that they have an opportunity to be able to respond to the legislation and, therefore, at this time I beg leave to adjourn this debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 45 — An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984

Mr. Chairman: — Is the minister ready to introduce his officials?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — I'm pleased to introduce Mr. Jim Anderson, who's with me from Urban Affairs today.

Clause 1

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I don't have many questions on this Bill. I indicated in second reading that we were supporting the Bill, but I would like to ask the minister one or two questions.

I note, Mr. Minister, that in the explanatory remarks or in some of the information that was provided, you made reference to that this request was made by the city of Saskatoon and by a particular church in the city of Saskatoon. Can you tell me whether you or your department has been in contact with other municipalities, including the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, and what their response was to this provision?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Yes. The urban municipalities association, Mr. Taylor, and I discussed the matter. We have had no complaints from them, if that was what your particular concern was. I know that the churches in Saskatoon, together as a group, approached the city council there and were discussing the issue. I'm not sure exactly which church was playing the lead in that particular process. I did meet with the mayor in Saskatoon to discuss the matter with him.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, what was the response by the city council of Regina, and Moose Jaw, and Swift Current?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — I believe Regina was opposed to any change whatsoever. We have heard nothing from Swift Current or Moose Jaw.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well that's interesting. I was not aware of that. You're saying that Saskatoon supported it, Regina opposed it, and you went and proceeded with it anyway. Can you explain the rationale for that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Well it's a desire on the part of our government to ensure fairness in equity in the treatment of religious organizations here in the province of Saskatchewan. One would not want to be discriminatory, and it's our desire to ensure fairness in taxation for those organizations.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I don't object to that, Mr. Minister, but you seem to be continuously, on the part of your government, not paying any attention at all to some communities. And in Regina the Minister of Finance has been critical of the city of Regina; you, yourself, have been in estimates, and here again, no consideration given to the views of the city council of Regina. Did you personally meet with the council or representatives of the council to discuss this?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — They did not request a personal meeting with me. They simply forwarded their objection by letter. In this kind of an instance, one has to decide what is the best thing to do from a province-wide perspective. It so happened that the city council here was

in opposition; the city council in Saskatoon was in favour.

I think, when you take a look at the broad question, you would have to agree yourself that it is a matter of fairness of taxation here, as it respects religious organizations in the province, that the best move to make is in fact the decision that we are taking with this particular amendment.

It may very well be that there will be those people who will be opposed to it for one reason or another. One expects that you are never going to make decisions that everybody is going to agree with. That's, of course, not the role of government, to try and make decisions that everybody agrees with. It's to make decisions that are proper and fair. And that's what I am attempting to do and act in a responsible fashion as it relates to the religious organizations in our province.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, as the Minister of Urban Affairs, and particularly as a member of the legislature who represents a constituency in the city of Regina, one would have thought that you would have at least offered to meet with the officials, or the elected officials in the city of Regina.

I really find it quite incomprehensible that you, as a sitting member in this city, knowing that the city fathers in this community were concerned with the legislation . . . I'm not sure very strongly concerned; I suspect a meeting may have explained some things, and the whole thing would have been quite appropriately dealt with.

But you chose — and I really find it hard to believe because I've always thought you to be a fairly active member — but you chose not to even as much as offer to meet with the council of the city of Regina, a city in which you represent a constituency.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, can you tell me how much you think, or do you know how much lost revenue will result in the city of Regina and Saskatoon and Moose Jaw as a result of this legislation?

(1500)

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — I believe in Saskatoon the figure is 25,300, which they are willing to forego by virtue of their support in this. In Regina I believe it's \$8,100; Moose Jaw, 6,800.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, how will this amendment now apply to the property? Is it only on church property which is the church, or will it apply in the event if the church builds an office complex? How broad is it? Can you give a short description to the House, or definition to the House, on how broad the legislation will be?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — The wording of the Act is not changing at all. It remains the same from what it was previously. We're talking about land — if I can read the actual clause it says that:

10 square metres of land for every one square metre of occupied building space used as a place

of public worship;

So the space we're talking about is the same as it was under the old two acre provision. The definition of the building is not changing at all.

Mr. Katzman: — Mr. Minister, just a point of clarification. I believe in the Saskatoon situation that they refunded the money to the churches even though they paid it and got it back, and therefore they were in agreement with this legislation to make things much simpler for everybody.

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Yes, the member from Rosthern is correct. The city council in Saskatoon, they were collecting the taxes because they had to, but then they were rebating them back to the churches because they wanted to do that. And they are quite strongly in favour of this particular amendment.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 46 — An Act to amend The Court of Appeal Act

Mr. Chairman: — Would the minister like to introduce his official.

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Yes, Ron Hewitt is with me from the Department of Justice.

Clause 1

Mr. Koskie: — I want to ask the minister whether or not he can advise me whether the amendments here have been in fact cleared with the bar association, and in particular, can you advise whether it has passed through the rule committee which is established by the benchers?

My understanding is that the amendments that you have been pursuing and also some of the changes in the rules of court have not, in fact, gone through the benchers; that is, the rules committee. That's the information I have, and I'm wondering whether, indeed, you have submitted these amendments. Can you advise whether the amendments came to you essentially, drafted by the benchers themselves?

But my information, in checking it through, whether they were satisfied with what was proceedings, is that it did not, indeed, pass through their rules committee, and I was wondering whether that information is accurate.

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — These particular changes are not proclaimed until the rules are presented and considered. The changes suggested came from the Court of Appeal itself. The consultation took place with a number of senior counsel who practise in that court.

Mr. Koskie: — Well I guess I ask you the simple question that I put forward to you. Why wouldn't you have submitted it to the benchers? They have various committees set up precisely to take a look at it, and then you could come to this legislature and say, it has gone

through and it is passed.

I don't know why you would want to be putting in an amendment indicating: "No appeal lies from a decision pursuant to subsection (1) except where permitted by the rules of court," and ask us to indeed pass that without having said that here are the proposals, here are the changes in the rules of court, members of the bar. You have a legislative body, the benchers have. Have you submitted it to them?

And you say you haven't; I just don't understand it. And in checking with one of the benchers indicates that it did not pass, in fact, through their rules committee. And so I ask you: is there any . . . Do you think you have done enough consultation — because that leads me to the next question — and why wouldn't you have submitted to the benchers, in their committees, which deals with that review of legislation?

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Well I follow the normal procedure that we've been accustomed to, and the process you indicate, I'm not accustomed to. In fact, the clause you read is in law now. The Court of Appeal has requested some changes. We did our consulting. The lawyers that practise in this area will have a chance to provide their opinions, and we will be interested to recognize their views, and that's the process we follow.

It's not unusual; this is how it's been done previously. I'm not sure what the member's getting at or if he simply misunderstands our intent on this particular Bill, but I could assure you that there certainly is no intent to pass a Bill which wouldn't be to the benefit of everyone who practises in the area in Court of Appeal cases.

Mr. Koskie: — I told you, Mr. Minister, that I contacted a senior member of the bar in Regina who's a member of the executive of the bar association of Saskatchewan, a bencher, and he indicates, in discussing it with fellow lawyers, that they do not in fact agree with the provision set forth in the amendments. But what is your answer to it?

And I can tell you which one, and that's in respect to section 4 at subsection (2), where you're indicating:

" . . . no appeal lies to the court from an interlocutory decision of Her Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench for Saskatchewan except by leave as provided for in the rules of court".

And I don't know whether it's sufficient to go merely to the Court of Appeal and have the justices indicate that they would like these particular changes. I would have thought that you'd get a consensus with the bar as well as the justices in order to . . . You say, later they will have an opportunity to have input. Well it seems to me, once you pass the legislation, and that's the process that we're going through, it's kind of late to start having input.

So all I ask you is, I don't know where you got your . . . what consultation you had, but I can tell you that I've contacted, and I've taken the time to contact — and I thought you would have come forward here and indicated what consultation you've done — but I've contacted, in respect to that particular section, a senior

member of the bar and a member of the benchers. And they indicate that they feel that it would not be the right route to go.

They indicate that — and I'm talking about section 4 of your Act here, and subsection (2) — they say, why should you characterize this as a lesser remedy, in that leave is required now. And they refer particularly to such things as an interim injunction, and saying that you should have the right to pursue without leave the right of appeal if you're turned down by the Court of Queen's Bench, to in fact go straight to the Court of Appeal, rather than having to wait, if it's refused at the Court of Queen's Bench, waiting until the full disposition, because interlocutory, I believe, refers to the interim decision.

And certainly the example that we discussed — and I discussed it both with Saskatoon and Regina lawyers — was their concern, and the example they used was in respect to an interim injunction. And they say, why shouldn't you continue to have that particular right?

And so I guess I ask you, Mr. Minister those are the concerns that I bring to you, and I would ask you how thorough your consultation was, and why you find it so compelling to move, particularly with allowing only an appeal from interlocutory procedure, interlocutory decision, by leave of the Court of Appeal.

By the way, in talking to some, in respect to some of the . . . The courts are somewhat restrictive already, they say in Saskatoon, some of the lawyers that are dealing with it. But in Regina, I can tell you that they indicate that they felt that it would not be particularly a step forward so far as . . . and the example they use is the interlocutory . . . or the interim injunction.

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Well I want to assure the member that our intention is to duly consult the . . . You have to remember that the clause that you quoted is already being done in practice. What it does, it confirms in legislation what's being utilized because of common law — the procedure that's utilized today.

We have consulted with Court of Appeal lawyers who practise a great deal in the Court of Appeal in both Saskatoon and Regina, and I haven't heard the opinion that you just gave me. However, having said that, I want to make it clear that because of the proclamation date, the fact that the lawyers will have a chance to review the rules, that consultation process continues.

I am intending to communicate with the law society president, as I do on other occasions, and I feel that if there is a difficulty, the difficulty will become known to us. However, the intent of the legislation is to be sure that, for example, as I indicated in my opening comments, we don't appeal for the sake of delay. And we've had some of that happen on occasion. I think the public, as well as the courts themselves, feel strongly that that shouldn't be a way to utilize the valuable time of the Court of Appeal. So that's really the motive behind this direction, which is really confirmed in case law already and in procedure. So we intend to proceed.

I'll take your comments under advisement, and we'll

continue consulting with those who we haven't yet talked to. However, I'm sure the president of the law society will bring it to my attention if the people in his organization feel that there's something wrong with any part of this particular Bill.

Mr. Koskie: — I don't want to dwell on it any further. I just want to raise those particular concerns. I would ask and appreciate if the minister, in fact, would follow up. I don't want, you know, amendments for the convenience of the Court of Appeal because of the restraint due to the heavy load that they have. And therefore I'd ask you to follow that up just in respect to section 11, where I mentioned also — and then we can proceed through — where it says:

"No appeal lies from a decision pursuant to subsection (1) except where permitted by the rules of court".

Now I take it that no appeal lies from a decision — a decision there, I take it, is not the decision involving the major matter before the court, but a matter which is incidental to the main matter that is before the court. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — This involves more minor matters such as, for example, filing the appeal book, and so on. That's the intent of that particular section.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 12 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 45 — An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984

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

Motion agreed to, Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

Bill No. 46 — An Act to amend The Court of Appeal Act

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

Motion agreed to, Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that Bill No. 59 — **An Act respecting the Establishment of Ambulance Districts and Boards, the Licensing of Ambulance Operators and Emergency Medical Personnel and the Provision of Ambulance Services in Saskatchewan** be now read a second time.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the **Hon. Mr. Lane** that Bill No. 58 — An Act respecting The Saskatchewan Pension Plan and Providing for the Payment of a Minimum Monthly Pension be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, we are again discussing the Saskatchewan pension plan, and there are a number of remarks which I would like to address to the House with respect to it. Some of them are by way of indication of items which I would like to ask in committee of the whole and wish to give the minister some advance notice of my concerns in some areas.

I deal first with the relationship of the Saskatchewan pension plan with the federal government and with the federal income support programs and the federal taxation measures.

We have had no indication, so far as I'm aware, that the federal government will approve the Saskatchewan pension plan as a registered pension plan, and this will be of great importance to citizens who may wish to become part of the plan. If they now pursue their pension security by way of a registered retirement savings plan, they, of course, have certain tax advantages by . . . They can defer taxes in effect by having RRSP, and one can with any registered pension plan. I would expect that this would be a registered pension plan, but I would invite the minister to deal with that issue either when he closes the debate or in committee.

I am also curious as to know whether or not the provincial government's contribution to an individual's Saskatchewan pension plan account would be held to be a taxable benefit in the hands of the contributor. Clearly, if this is not a registered pension plan, it is, in all likelihood, a case where the provincial contribution would be deemed to be income in the hands of the person receiving the benefit. This is perhaps a point which need not be totally disposed of at this time but will need to be dealt with and the results made known before citizens are asked to elect whether or not they contribute to the Saskatchewan pension plan.

The other point is one which I alluded to earlier in my remarks, and it deals with the citizen standing with respect to his guaranteed income supplement entitlement. We all are aware of the fact that the federal government operates a comprehensive, a universal old age security program which is called OAS (old age security) or the pension plan. For people with lower incomes there is a supplementary plan called the guaranteed income supplement, and if one has outside income, one disentitles oneself to the guaranteed income supplement paid by the federal government in part or in whole. If a single person has an income of \$1,700 a month, thereabouts, he is not entitled to any guaranteed income supplement; and for a couple — something over \$2,000, as I recall the figures, but I'm not now dealing with the figures, and they're not germane to my argument.

I will wish the minister to deal with this point to the extent that he can, because it appears to me that it is entirely possible that this pension plan will operate so that the citizen will put in some money of his own, and the provincial government will put in some money of its own, or that it gathered from taxpayers, and the result will be that the participating citizen will not be entitled to old age security, plus guaranteed income supplement. I should make that clear — will not be entitled to the guaranteed income supplement. And this would be very unfortunate.

The guaranteed income supplement is something paid for by the federal government and by federal taxpayers and goes to persons with limited incomes in all 10 provinces of Canada. It would surely be unfortunate if the Saskatchewan government set up a pension plan which had the effect of meaning that the contributions of the citizen of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan taxpayer would disentitle the citizen to the benefit of the federal guaranteed income supplement. And we would have the situation where Saskatchewan taxpayers would be paying federal taxes, but needy persons in nine provinces would be getting the benefits from the guaranteed income supplement and not in the province of Saskatchewan. That indeed would be unfortunate.

I know that the Premier appears from time to time to take the view that it doesn't matter whether we get any money from the federal government, notwithstanding the fact that we have pressing financial needs. We heard him argue that in another debate and on another occasion and outside the House, when he says, when pressed about the situation with respect to established program funding or federal transfers, he remarks that, well, we're keeping up the spending on health care in Saskatchewan. Suppose that to be true. He seems to make no distinction between whether or not the money is coming out of the pockets of Saskatchewan taxpayers or coming out of the pockets of all of Canada's taxpayers. And I think that that makes a very real difference.

Here we have another instance where it may well be that the policies of this government are going to mean that the Saskatchewan taxpayer is going to face even bigger deficits, and the Saskatchewan taxpayers will not get the benefit of taxes they pay to the federal government because our citizens would be disentitled to the guaranteed income supplement.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that the minister will deal with this when he deals further with this Bill, either in his closing remarks or at the committee stage.

All of us I think would agree that a provincially based pension plan like this Saskatchewan pension plan is a poor second-best to a federally administered plan — a poor second-best because it lacks a great deal of portability. The situation with respect to this pension plan will be that a person will be able to contribute to it and get some matching contribution from the provincial government, but if he or she should move to Alberta or Ontario, there would be no corresponding plan, and his pension provisions would cease at that time.

When I say cease, I don't mean that he or she would lose the money. The money in the Saskatchewan pension plan

would continue to accrue and may well produce a small pension when the participant seeks to retire. But there's no way that he or she could have a continuous pension protection the way that a person can have with the Canada Pension Plan when he or she moves from province to province. That aspect of portability is important; it's not decisive, but we would all agree that a federally administered pension plan which was portable from province to province would be preferable.

(1530)

It's also true, I think, Mr. Speaker, and this is going to be a key part of the submission that I make, that the voluntary nature of this plan will mean that inevitably it will not be taken up by some of the people who need it most.

There are many discussions in Canada and have been many discussions in Canada about pension plans. A recent clipping from the Leader-Post indicated that the Ontario and Quebec governments are moving towards home-maker pensions likely to be involuntary, in conjunction with the Canada Pension Plan. And that, Mr. Speaker, has been the nature of discussions over the last several years — a way to get home-makers into the Canada Pension Plan so that they would have portability and a way to have their premiums paid. Because by and large, these home-makers do not have resources of their own and cannot necessarily command the resources of their spouse in order to get the contributions made.

This is a serious shortcoming of the Saskatchewan pension plan as presented in this Bill, and is in no sense a substitute for the inclusion of home-makers and other persons without income in the Canada Pension Plan. That would be very much preferable to having the Saskatchewan pension plan, and I believe all of us would agree with that.

This is not to suggest that this second or third best may not be a useful start, but it is to suggest that it is very much less preferable than having the Canada Pension Plan changed in the way that has been discussed, but hasn't yet come to pass, and I don't think will come to pass with the current federal government.

I want to underline, Mr. Speaker, that from a practical point of view, the Saskatchewan pension plan will not be of use to many who are most in need. The government would have people believe that this scheme is primarily designed for the benefit of home-makers who will make long-term contributions to the plan, and also to people with low incomes and low-income workers who are in shops that do not have in-house pension plans.

But when we think of that, Mr. Speaker, we will know that many of the shops that don't have pension plans and pay low wages have employees with low incomes. That will not surprise us. And employees of that nature with that level of income frequently find it very difficult to make a contribution of \$300 per year. And I suspect that in many, many cases, particularly if they're part-time employees, it simply will not happen.

Theoretically, the pension plan provides a vehicle; in practical terms, I suggest that in many, many cases it will

not happen. And the reason will be because there will always seem to be some more pressing need, more pressing demand on that \$300 for the 30-year-old housewife than the question of what's going to happen to her when she's 65. And I think that that's going to be the problem.

I think that members opposite will know, and all of us know, that when somebody is pressed for income, particularly if they have a small family — and by definition this problem will arise for the most part with respect to home-makers who are home and not in the work-force, and they overwhelmingly are people with families and usually small families — and in those circumstances, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that in practical terms there will always seem to be a more pressing need for the \$300 than providing pension security for that particular home-maker 30 or 35 years hence.

And I think in many ways it's almost a cruel deception to suggest that the government will be prepared to provide \$300 in taxpayers' money for such people when he will know that the situation will be that they will not be able to take up that offer on behalf of the taxpayer.

And that same minister has, for many of them, taken away \$230 of their property improvement grant — which was a lump sum payment that might have been directed to this pension plan — and he has levied a flat tax which has a significant impact on the income of somebody who is making a relatively modest income.

So I suggest that the ordinary low income family will obviously have less disposable income than they would have had, had the property improvement grants been continued and the flat tax not been applied. And that will be one further reason why there will be a lesser take-up of contributions to the Saskatchewan pension plan.

Mr. Speaker, we're not entirely flying blind on this. While there have not been pension plans of this kind launched in Canada in recent years, and perhaps never, there have been a number of voluntary pension plans launched in other countries, particularly in Europe. And the take-up by lower income people has predictably been low. And therefore I think that we ought not to expect that the take-up in Saskatchewan will be significantly greater for lower income people.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, the take-up for some of the people who I will refer to in a moment, will be substantial. Why not? When you can invest your money at the current rate of interest and have the province put in an equal sum of money to invest for your benefit at the current rate of interest, that looks pretty good.

If you can invest . . . put in your \$300 and get 10 per cent in interest and know that the province is going to put in \$300 so you're effectively getting 20 per cent interest, that's a pretty good deal. And for those who can command some free resources, certainly they will take advantage of it.

Let me give you a couple of examples, Mr. Speaker. I will cite some examples of what might be thought of as typical

Saskatchewan families. Two — a man and wife, both working — one makes, say, 27,000 and one makes 35,000 a year. The Saskatchewan pension plan will be of no interest or benefit to either of them since each of them will be disentitled by reason of the fact that they make the maximum contribution under the Canada Pension Plan.

Now let's suppose another family. We've got a low income earner and a non-earning spouse, some smaller children, and a non-earning daughter, age 20, who is a full-time student. This family, I suggest, will not be able to afford to have any of its three members participate in the Saskatchewan pension plan. The low income earner will have some contribution to the Canada Pension Plan. The non-earning spouse, I suspect, will not be able to find the \$300 spot cash; nor will the non-earning daughter who goes to university. And I suspect . . . or a student; perhaps technical institute. I suspect that in that family no one of them will take advantage of the Saskatchewan pension plan.

Now change this a bit, Mr. Speaker, to make that person a high income earner, a non-earning spouse, and a non-earning daughter, still age 20 and still a full-time student. In that case, Mr. Speaker, the high income earner will not be eligible, but the non-earning spouse will be, and the non-earning daughter will be, and I predict that both would take advantage of the plan.

And so we will see, in effect, a subsidy coming from the public purse to the spouse of the high earner and to the 20-year-old daughter of the high earner — the 20-year-old daughter is a full-time student — but nothing going to the spouse or the daughter of the low-income earner. I suspect that that will be the result. And I think that that is, in a sense, perverse because we are directing our attention and our dollars to the persons who do not need it most.

Mr. Speaker, this is a case of the concern of the government opposite being directed to people in an income bracket who ought not to be our primary focus of concern. The minister puts this forward as a piece of progressive social policy and as part of the overall policy of his government, of championing progressive social policies.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't see it that way. This government has, at a time when the consumer price index has increased by 20 per cent, has increased minimum wage by 6 per cent. We have a government which has significantly cut back on many health services — mental health services, occupational health services, the children's dental program. And we've seen waiting lists in hospitals grow.

With respect to social services, we have seen the implementation of a welfare reform which has, at least in my judgement, victimized the unfortunate, and which has been roundly condemned by social and church groups province-wide. And last year we had this government supporting the Mulroney plan to de-index the pensions of senior citizens.

No, Mr. Speaker, the record of this government is not one of championing progressive social policies. And this

pension plan, while useful in some limited respects, will not serve to make the social policies of the government opposite essentially fairer and directed to the people who need it most.

Mr. Speaker, there is one group of people who I think need our concern and need our assistance more than most of the people who will be assisted by the Saskatchewan Pension Plan, and I am referring particularly to those people between the ages of 60 and 65 who do not have a retirement income and who have inadequate income from the work-force. And there are lots of those, Mr. Speaker.

In some cases, the worker who is in the work-force is older and in ill health and not able to earn an adequate income. In some cases, in most cases for that age group, the person is a spouse, and the spouse who was not the ordinary bread-winner of the family unit in the days when family units were composed largely of one working spouse and one non-working spouse.

What we're talking about, Mr. Speaker, is widows out there whose husbands have died when the husband was 59 or 60 and the widow was 59, and they just don't have enough income.

And I think that that group of people . . . I would say the group between 60 and 65, who do not qualify for the old age security pension, who do not have a Canada Pension Plan because they weren't in the work-force very much, who do not qualify for guaranteed income supplement — because those are basically programs for people aged 65 and over — and who do not qualify for the spouse's allowance, and a good number of people between 60 and 65 do, but we've still got a gap in there.

And it is the proposal of our caucus and our party that we ought to address that group of people — that needy group of people — as a first claim on the welfare of this legislature, a first claim on any moves that we make to ameliorate the problems of people, because they simply don't have enough income in their old age. We say that's what we ought to be aiming at first.

Our policy is that the first priority should be to deal with people with grossly inadequate incomes in the bracket between 60 and 65. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that fair-minded people across the province will say, yes, that's first priority — not the Leader of the Opposition's daughter, not first priority — but persons who are between the ages of 60 and 65 and don't qualify for the spouse's allowance — that's first priority, and I think that's one we ought to turn to.

A couple of final points, Mr. Speaker. There is another problem with this Saskatchewan pension plan, and that's its administration. It is going to be administered by the government opposite. The government opposite is going to take the taxpayers' money and keep it, and look after it — look after it, Mr. Speaker.

(1545)

It's hard to believe that this government would have the nerve to say to the people of Saskatchewan: send in your

money to us; we will look after your money; we know how to look after money; we know how to run pension plans; trust us — trust us. Our friends — our friends in Pioneer Trust have demonstrated their competence in dealing with trust investments.

The minister in charge of ... the Minister of Revenue and Financial Services, he has demonstrated his commitment to leaving money in pension plans by reaching his hand into the teachers' pension plan and taking our \$30 million.

Here is the government which not only has purloined \$30 million out of the teacher's pension plan, but has had five consecutive deficit budgets — \$2 billion of deficit — constantly looking around for money, and saying now to the people of Saskatchewan; send us your retirement savings and we will look after them; you can trust us — you can trust us — you can trust us.

Well I think the people of Saskatchewan know who they can trust with respect to management of funds. They know who they can trust with respect to looking after funds and not squandering money. They will know — they will know — that any government that says: send us your money; it's safe; 30 years hence your money will be sent back to you — I'm afraid far too many people in Saskatchewan will say, thanks but no thanks — thanks but no thanks.

But however, Mr. Speaker, this problem will not concern them long. This problem will not concern them long because when the Saskatchewan pension plan is enacted, the government which introduced it will not be administering it for many months. The government which introduced it, if, as, and when they decide to face the electorate, will be retired — if that's the word for the route which is about to take place — and there will be a new administration, a new administration which will administer the plan properly. So while that criticism is valid at this time, it will not be valid 6 or 8 or 9 or 10 months hence, or at least a year hence, since the constitution prevents any greater delay.

I say, Mr. Speaker, this pension plan is a start. It's a start. It's not where we should start because it doesn't deal with the people who are most needy, but it is a start, and it will provide a basis upon which a proper pension plan can be erected.

I very much hope, Mr. Speaker, that we would be able to get a federally administered pension plan. I very much hope that, and if that were the case, then I know that the Saskatchewan pension plan would be melded with it or disbanded in a way where participants would not lose money. I know that all of us feel that that is the best way to deal with pension legislation, but we do not yet have a federal plan, and this one, however flawed, will provide some sort of basis.

I have every reason to believe that there will be changes to administrations both provincially and federally before long, and we can get at the job of constructing a proper pension plan which provides the greatest benefits for those who need it most and provides administration which is, in the minds of the public, reliable and

competent.

And accordingly, flawed as it is, I will be supporting this Bill, but I will be saying that this Bill is not good enough. It does not offer a sufficiently good pension plan for the people who need it. It offers more to those who don't need it than to people who do need it, and this Bill therefore will be changed and will be improved just as soon as this province has a new government, which day cannot long be delayed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise today to speak on and support the legislation that is before this House with the Saskatchewan pension plan. Contrary to the previous speaker, Mr. Speaker, I will try and restrict my remarks to the pension plan and, most particular, its impact on women, because I think that is significant and it deserves some attention.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill has been perceived by many people, men and women, from right across this province from all constituencies, as being fair and being long overdue. There's been a lot of studies and committees and task forces and submissions and more studies. And of course there's also been a lot of talk promises but no action.

I believe it was approximately 1971 when there was promise made — 1971, 15 years ago ...

An Hon. Member: — Who was in power then?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The New Democratic Party was the one that put the promise forth of pensions for home-makers. Well since that period of time, Mr. Speaker, there has been several submissions by several groups, political parties, and of course governments, as it relates to pension plans.

It was about 20 years ago that the council of women, the National Council of Women, first began to lobby the federal government. And of course in our own province the lobby began on government from our own provincial council of women for the pension plan.

The National Council of Women, Mr. Speaker, basically said one thing, and that was: for the acceptance of the principle that women working in the home and the community on an unpaid basis are in fact making an economic contribution to society and that society, through its governments, should recognize that value. Mr. Speaker, this argument has been made over and over again since that time, and it had fallen on deaf ears despite its simplicity. Perhaps that was one of the problems — the simplicity.

Some would defend the lack of action in this area on the basis that pension reform is exceedingly complex and costly. And as anything goes, if you don't support it and you don't agree with it, of course you can find more arguments against it than what you can for it.

Mr. Speaker, our government said it was time and it was

overdue. It was time to recognize in a very concrete way that home-makers do make a valuable economic and social contribution to society, and that home-makers, like everyone else in our society, have a right and a responsibility to provide for their own economic security in retirement.

I, for one, Mr. Speaker, am confident that the Saskatchewan pension plan meets the expectations of many women. In 1983, Mr. Speaker, there was a submission to a task force at the federal level by the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada. Mr. Speaker, that particular institute is basically made up of rural women. In their submission they stated that they favoured a pension plan which provides for equality to all Canadian citizens regardless of sex, colour, or national origin. And their members felt very strongly that the value of work in the home must be recognized as being as valuable as that performed for financial gain. Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House agree with that position.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan pension plan is much more than a pension plan for home-makers. It is designed to extend pension coverage to the people who are now under-represented in pension plans, and that includes employees of small businesses, farmers, self-employed persons, and of course as well as home-makers.

A large number of women are employed by small business, Mr. Speaker, and many of whom cannot afford a pension plan. Even when a pension plan is provided, female employees are frequently ineligible because they work part-time or because their employment tends to be interrupted by domestic and family responsibilities. Mr. Speaker, when you consider that 70 per cent of part-time workers in this province are women, the importance of them being eligible for pension benefits for part-time workers is very clear.

The owners of small businesses, Mr. Speaker, will also benefit from the plan. And once again, women's role as active contributors to the economy is made clear by statistics which show that half of Saskatchewan businesses are owned and operated by women.

Mr. Speaker, historically the major role of women has revolved around her primary duties as wife and mother; and it is long overdue that society and government recognized that everyone has the right to security through a pension plan. And in fact, individually we each have the responsibility.

But, Mr. Speaker, more importantly, it is long overdue that we recognize women first as individuals, regardless of their chosen profession, regardless of her husband's profession or what his financial status may be.

There are those who would argue — and some inside this House, Mr. Speaker — that this Bill will be most advantageous to those who need it least. Those who would argue that way fail to recognize that more than ever before women are faced with changing personal situations, roles, and attitudes. Private pension plans don't help many women who the member opposite would classify as in a good financial position.

Mr. Speaker, over half the single, widowed, or divorced women over 65 in Canada receive no income — absolutely none — from private pension plans. A woman does not automatically receive her husband's pension after he dies for a very simple reason: he may not have had a company pension. Mr. Speaker, only 44 per cent of Canadian workers participate in a company pension plan. Of those who do, only 45 per cent have a widow's pension option. Those widows who do get a pension from their husband's employer usually only collect half of what their husband would have received.

And, Mr. Speaker, in other dismaying statistics, divorce for example, it tells us that upon divorce, the man sees a 76 improvement in his financial status, while the women experience a 46 per cent decrease.

Because the pension plan is based on personal income, Mr. Speaker, rather than family income, this plan will recognize spouses as individuals and not as chattels, as some people would perceive them.

Mr. Speaker, today I have listened to arguments about whose wife should be in it, whose daughter should not be in it or should be in. And I wonder where the rationale comes from the arguments as they were presented. I believe that, if a woman has no personal income, that in fact she should qualify — not based on who she's married to — but on the personal income. I also believe that the time has come that somehow governments have to encourage our young people to take an active interest in pension plans at an earlier age than what they have done in the past.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan pension plan is in keeping with this province's reputation as an innovator. It is also in keeping with what this government sees in our people — their strength and their dignity, male or female. We believe it is an opportunity for those who have previously not had access to pensions, and it is a way of recognizing the value of the work that women have chosen to do when they remain at home in raising their children.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the pension plan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1600)

Mrs. Caswell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak on this bill because I think it is one of the keystones of our budget and of the throne speech.

An Hon. Member: — Of your platform.

Mrs. Caswell: — Yes, and probably of our platform. And I think that what is important, although it touches many people — the small-business man, the farmer, people who are working part-time — it is particularly significant in that it supports the role of the home-maker.

It is not unprecedented for governments at every level to subsidize career choices of women. They subsidize the

career choice of a woman going out of the home through, often, tax deductions for child care expenses; they subsidize the day care where the child may go; they have often programs to accelerate women up the career ladder that may not be available to men. And these may or may not be positive and be popular; that's not what we're discussing today.

But in doing this, it is often the home-maker, who is living on the income of her husband, who is short-shifted. The husband must pay for, provides the tax base that these other benefits come from. So this policy recognizes the home-maker as a viable career choice and one, I'm sure, that no matter how long we go, people will choose and choose very willingly. It is saying that, as a home-maker, you have a right to the type of security that government gives other people in other career choices. And I think that is why this Bill will deserve great popularity.

And we recognize that the Premier of this province clearly recognizes choice, not coercion, in the tax system. People have said that continually that both levels of government have been in a direction in which the tax breaks or the government sponsors would go to women who choose a career out of the home. And many women do that, and many women do it in and out . . . for some time, and they go back into the work-force, and then they may raise a family or be off for a few years and go back again.

And this pension plan is such that they will not have to suffer losing pension benefits. They can opt for the part-time job outside of the home. They can opt for two or three years in the work-place, two or three years at home, and so on. And so this gives a flexibility that has not been provided when government cuts up the taxpayer-based economic pie.

For this reason in particular, I will be most certainly supporting this pension plan. It is also very important to small-business men and small-business women. It is often said that when you have the right to own a business, you have a right to do without all those benefits that may be even given to you or your employees. And so many small businesses really are not making a large income when they tally up the net base, so that they do not have the security, although they're the risk-makers, the risk-takers, and they may be providing jobs for two or three people.

Also, of course, often they cannot provide benefits that, if you are working for a government at a high-paying government job in Regina, that you just don't have those same kind of benefits. So this is helping those people that have been untouched by the benefits plans. It's fairness for home-makers, for risk-takers in the small business area, for farmers and farmers' wives. And for these reasons I most certainly will be supporting the Bill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just have a few short comments I want to get on the record regarding the Saskatchewan pension program. I believe that the Saskatchewan pension plan that has been introduced here in the legislature is very likely the most important piece of legislation we've dealt with this

session, and is in fact a Bill that will be talked about and looked at as a piece of legislation that was forward-thinking and very intelligent, for many, many years to come.

I found it rather strange and rather, frankly, upsetting that the Leader of the Opposition and the members of the opposition skated all over the place and made it very clear that they're opposed to the Bill. They quite frankly have made it clear in any reading of the Leader of the Opposition's comments, make it clear that they're opposed to this Bill although, as he indicated, he won't have the courage to vote against it. But I would hope that the people in the public and the press would certainly report his comments as he said the, because the only conclusion that can be drawn from them is that they're clearly opposed to them.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it was 1980 when the federal government did a green paper on pensions. A number of the things that were talked about in that were: who are the poor, and what's the impact? And what we find in Canada — and Saskatchewan would be no different — is that most of the elderly poor are women. And that is the case, Mr. Speaker, because women have traditionally followed their role as mothers and home-makers, and although we see a change away from that to some extent now, their generations before us followed that. Their one opportunity, their one hope for security in their later lives, in their retirement years, was that the husband they had chosen would either have a pension or be successful and would be able to liquidate his assets and live off of that income.

Mr. Speaker, we're seeing a change away from that now, but certainly we still see that within the general population of people who are employees, 60 per cent are not covered by pension plans — in the general population — and of all of the working women in society, only 40 per cent are covered by pensions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what the Saskatchewan pension program does is make an allowance for these people to get into a pension program which will guarantee that down the road, when it comes time for them to retire, that they will have some security and be able to live a life of dignity and not a life that's dependent on government hand-outs, as the people opposite would have.

In addition, it encourages people to plan, young people in particular. And you would know well, as anyone who has ever had a mortgage, the value of money as it accumulates its compound interest over time, and that's what makes pensions work.

Mr. Speaker, if we could encourage young people in the 18, 20, 25 age bracket to begin to be concerned about such things as life insurance on themselves and for their families and pension programs, we would see a significant reduction in the cost of social programs to governments at all levels. And the Saskatchewan pension program encourages people to focus their thinking on the long run.

Now I know that the men opposite never think in terms of that. They like people to be dependent firstly; they don't

want them to be independent. They don't like people to think for themselves. They want them to believe the NDP rhetoric and garbage that they spew out. And, Mr. Speaker, frankly they would like to be in control of everyone's life, which we've seen time and time again.

Mr. Speaker, women should be valued in their right — and clearly women are going to be the major benefactors of this pension program — but they should be valued in their own right as individuals, and the Saskatchewan pension program allows that to happen.

For the Leader of the Opposition to stand up and suggest that a woman is a chattel of her husband, and if that husband happens to have a good income, the wife doesn't need a pension, is absolutely Draconian. I couldn't believe that I sat here in the legislature and heard that, because he may have a good income, his wife shouldn't have any and his wife should continue to be dependent upon him and she shouldn't be allowed to have her own source of income. That is such backward thinking that I just . . . it amazed me to hear a man of that stature suggest that sort of thing.

He went further and he said that his daughter was 18-years-old and why should she have the opportunity to have this pension. Well I suggest, Mr. Speaker, why shouldn't she? Why shouldn't she be encouraged to plan for an independent future and a self-sufficient future? And, Mr. Speaker, who is to say that that 18-year-old daughter may not meet someone and get married. And, Mr. Speaker, who is to say that they may not have a family — three or four children perhaps — and that one day, if she's a home-maker, her husband may get killed. And if he hasn't provided for himself, she will need that income. But he says, no, she shouldn't need it. That is thinking out of the Middle Ages, Mr. Speaker, and certainly that's all we get from those people.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition made a couple of comments about trusting people with their money. He said, would the general public send in their money to a pension plan that the government will match in some measure, and have them administer it, and have there be a fund to pension down at the end of line. He said, would they trust them. He said, oh, you could trust the NDP to do that. Well, Mr. Speaker, the NDP have unfunded liabilities in the pensions that they administered to the tune of about \$3.7 billion because they pulled out money, or they didn't put their share in and used it to fund other things.

They said, oh, you can trust them with your pension plans. Well their pension plans of people like teachers in this province, of people like public employees, are simply holes in the ground — holes in the ground that masquerade as uranium mines and potash mines because that's where they invested their pension.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province deserve independence, they deserve the right to plan their own future, and they deserve to be able to do that with confidence, and they can do that with this government. And we have shown through the introduction of this Bill that this will be a positive piece of legislation for the people of the province of Saskatchewan, and it goes

without saying that I will be supporting the Bill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

MOTIONS

Extension of Sitting Hours

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if by leave of the Assembly I could move:

That notwithstanding rule 3, this Assembly shall on Thursday, June 19, 1986, meet from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m., and on Friday, June 20, 1986, from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m., and from 7 p.m. until 10 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask leave to introduce guests.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to invite all members to say welcome to a group of young people from the forestry capital of Saskatchewan, and indeed of Canada — Prince Albert, a favourite city of mine. There are 46 students, grade 6 and 7, that are visiting us here today in the legislature. I'd like all members to join me in welcoming these special people to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1615)

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Provincial Secretary Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 30

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Yes, Mr. Chairman. Sitting on my right is Harley Olsen, Acting Deputy Provincial Secretary; and in the seat behind him is Elizabeth Smith, director of financial services, from Revenue and Financial Services.

Item 1

Mr. Koskie: — I thought you'd never recognize me.

In respect to the expenditures in the Provincial Secretary's office, Mr. Minister, one will note that there are but three votes, three items: executive administration, provincial inquiry centre, and expenses of the office of the Lieutenant Governor.

I note that in respect to two of these in this here large portfolio that you carry, that in item 3 the expenses of the office of the Lieutenant Governor is exactly the same as the previous year and exactly the same number of person years.

I note also that in respect to the provincial inquiry centre that the same number of persons are employed — 8.4. And I note that the total expenditure for the provincial inquiry centre has, in fact, decreased. So that leaves us with one essential item, a magnitude of an increase which I think deserves some inquiry.

I take a look at the expenditure here, executive administration in the office of the Provincial Secretary. And I find that in 1985-86 there were 6.5 people, and in 1986-87, person-years is 11 — an increase of 4.5 person-years.

But even more significant, Mr. Minister, is that the salaries in 1985-86 were 174,884; in 1986-87, 410,000; for an increase of \$235,000, or 177 per cent increase. In other expenses, if you can believe it, in 1985-86, the total expenses were 31,640; and today, the 1986-87 estimates has increased to 205,950 — an increase of 174,310, or an increase of 550 per cent. One hundred and seventy-seven per cent increase in salaries for personal services; an increase in other expenses of 550 per cent. And the total overall allocation of subvote is 198 per cent increase — \$409,690.

I guess the question I want to ask is: what are the new administrative duties in this department which in fact necessitated under administration such a huge increase of taxpayers' dollars being spent?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, the very eloquently phrased question of the hon. member, my friend and colleague, the member for Quill Lakes, I will attempt to answer by simply saying that the cabinet office in Saskatoon is now under the Provincial Secretary, and that accounts for the additional positions you see there.

In addition to that, the office of the Provincial Secretary, the administrative costs of that office, was absorbed prior to the recent cabinet shuffle by the Department of Economic Development and Trade. Since I no longer have that department, the administrative costs of running the office of the Provincial Secretary has to be picked up by the Provincial Secretary.

So that is essentially the additional costs. There's one other small additional item and that is the Deputy Provincial Secretary has been seconded to Expo — that's Marge Jermyn — and she's been seconded to Expo to work on V.I.P. services at Expo. I now have an Acting Deputy Provincial Secretary in Harley Olsen, and so that's a small additional cost as well.

Mr. Koskie: — I wonder, in respect to the executive administration, the 11 persons that are listed here, whether the minister could in fact — to speed up the matters — give a list of all of those persons relating to administration, their particular positions, and the salaries that they are being paid. I need that information. We can speed it up if you can provide that.

An Hon. Member: — Send a copy over.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — No, I'll read it to you. I want it on the record so there's no mistake. The names are as follows: Marj Jermyn; Marj Jermyn is the Deputy

Provincial Secretary, and a very good one. Her annual salary is \$49,620. She was seconded to SaskExpo January 1, 1986, and she will be there until Expo closes down.

Ron Larson, \$64,000; Dianne Leib, 22,488; Jim Martyn.

An Hon. Member: — Jim who?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Martyn, 47,316; Joanne Rossiter, 24,444. Oh, yes, and we have an additional one here. I'll send his name over, and the reason that I'm reluctant to put it on record is, while he's in a position, he's on permanent disability, so I'll send his name over to you.

Mr. Koskie: — The number that . . . The individuals that you gave me in respect to personal services under the executive administration is 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 people, and then you said there's someone that's disabled that you're going to send across.

An Hon. Member: — One.

Mr. Koskie: — One. Okay, so that's 2, 4, 5, 6. Can you give me the rest of these birds that you're hiding in the office of the administration.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I neglected to name the people in the Saskatoon cabinet office, and this is as of March 31, 1986; a Karen Banner, and E. Maze — M-A-Z-E . . . Z for you. And, of course, the Acting Deputy Provincial Secretary came since March 31st, that date that we're talking about. There's one position that's vacant. And we have a Kairnes, and I don't know where he is or what he does. Oh, Cheryl Kairnes, yes, a summer student in my office. Olsen you've got. The Karen Banner that was in the Saskatoon office is now in my office on a temporary basis, and you've got Maze.

Mr. Koskie: — In respect, you've assumed taking over the staffing of the cabinet office in Saskatoon, but then you indicate a couple of people here in respect to the cabinet office, and then you indicate that they're now in your office. Well you said Karen, and then . . .

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — She's here on a temporary basis.

Mr. Koskie: — . . . and then a student you said is in your office? Which ones of these birds here, of these people, do you have in the cabinet office in Saskatoon?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I think you're being a little disrespectful calling these find people birds. But I'm prepared to tell you who these . . . I'll tell you who the fine people in my office are.

In my office today I have Harley Olsen, who is the acting deputy Provincial Secretary. I have on a secondment from Justice, Doug . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Do you want me to send one of my people over to write these down for you? Okay. I have Doug Moen, on secondment from Justice. Doug Moen, on secondment from Justice. Doug Moen is a fellow that talks with your staff every day relative to the workings of this legislature. In addition to Doug Moen we have Joanne Rossiter — you've got that name, you were given it a while ago. In addition to Joanne Rossiter is a Dianne Leib . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

She's been around for a long time. And Cheryl Kairnes, summer student in my office. And that's ... (inaudible interjection) ... Yes.

Mr. Koskie: — Who's in the cabinet office?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Okay. I'll tell you who's in the cabinet office, Karen Banner, who is permanently positioned in the cabinet office but is temporarily in my office this week. Okay. You got that? I don't want to confuse you. And E. Maze in the Saskatoon cabinet office.

Mr. Koskie: — In respect to the salaries that are being paid, you seem to forget that I had asked that you not only give the names of the individuals but the salary that's being paid. Could you provide us with a list of the individuals, the amount that they're being paid, and also the position that they're occupying.

(1630)

That's really what we're looking for, and I don't know why it's so difficult to get this information. So could you complete the, at least reading off there if you're not embarrassed, as to what is being paid?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I'll send this over. And the last name on this list is the individual that's on permanent disability.

Mr. Koskie: — All right, interesting information. I can understand why you were not particularly ready to disclose this year. I have a Mr. Olsen, special assistant to the minister, \$67,680; assistant to the minister — \$67,680. This is for this big Department of Provincial Secretary with three subvotes, one subvote being the provincial inquiry centre, the other being the expenses of the office of the Lieutenant Governor.

I'll tell you, that the deputy minister here in salary, April 1, '85 received \$45,881. And the salary on the June 1, '86 is 49,620 — get those from 45,881 to 49,620; percentage change or increase is 8.15 per cent. Treat their friends pretty good. One ministerial assistant, increase of 3.54 per cent. Three of them down at the bottom — no indication as to the amount of increase whatsoever.

I think what we have here, Mr. Minister, is part of the political organization of the Progressive Conservative Party, that's what it is. This is the Tory organization paid for by the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. Here we have an increase of 6.5 to 11 — number of people employed. He indicates that they took over the cabinet office in Saskatoon, but it so happens that all of these people are in the minister's office. And there is no doubt that what is happening here is a very major increase in expenditure. And what is happening is that the taxpayers are paying for a number of political organizers in the Provincial Secretary's office. This is the obvious conclusion that one can come to.

I'd like to know whether during the cours of the year the minister had any expenditures in respect to advertising; whether he can give also in respect to any travel expenses associated with the Provincial Secretary's office.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — While my people are digging that up, I think I should just respond to the allegation of all of those wild-eyed political advisers I have in my office. I want to talk particularly about two, one of them being Marj Jermyn, the Deputy Provincial Secretary, who happens to be seconded to Expo, who you are suggesting is so wildly overpaid. I suggest to you that that particular lady is very much underpaid and has made a very significant contribution to the civil service of Saskatchewan in the short time that she has been there.

The other one that I just want to set the record straight on is the Acting Deputy Provincial Secretary, who is there for a short time and may go on to bigger and better things in a time sometime in the future. But this fellow's name is Harley Olsen, and I want to talk a little bit about this guy.

He has a master's degree in economics. His major subjects were agricultural policy, production economics, and I can go on and on and on. Awards and scholarships: well the Hadley Van Vliet memorial scholarship, Hantelman scholarship, honours tuition scholarship, research grant from the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture, and so on.

Work experience — here's one that you'll find interesting. Well at one point he was chief of staff and ministerial adviser to the Hon. Lorne Hepworth. Prior to that, he was the chief of staff and ministerial adviser to the Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Eric Berntson. Prior to that, he was vice-chairman of the land bank commission. Prior to that, he was executive director of the Farm Ownership Board. I didn't know all of this. Prior to that, he was acting director of the Farm Ownership Board. Prior to that, he was a research officer to Saskatchewan Farm Ownership Board. Prior to that, he was a research economist for the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture. That was way back in August of 1974.

To suggest that this professional individual is in any way politically motivated is a suggestion completely without foundation. He worked in a professional capacity for Edgar Kaeding and Hon. MacMurchy and several others before I got here, and I expect he'll be working in a professional capacity for many, many more Conservative governments after I've gone, and maybe a couple of others after that. But just to set the record straight, I thought I would put that on the record.

Now, to answer your question on advertising. Okay, the new numbers, when the prefix changed in Centrex from 565 to 787, the inquiry centre, there was some advertising done to inform the people of Saskatchewan of the change in number for the inquiry centre, and the cost of that was \$18,969.04.

Mr. Koskie: — Is there any travel associated by staff or the minister in respect to the Provincial Secretary's office, in or outside of the province?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, as Provincial Secretary, my grand total travel expenses were \$781.32.

Mr. Koskie: — Inside or outside? Any other travel expenses associated with any of the officials?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — The total travel expenses of the Lieutenant Governor are \$13,472.92; and of the remaining people that have travelled in Provincial Secretary, \$779.08.

Mr. Koskie: — In respect to the Provincial Inquiry Centre, I note there that there has been a decrease. Same number of people, 8.4 person-years, but there has been a cut-back in the amount for personal services and a cut-back also in the other expenses. Are the same people there? Has there been a cut-back in their particular wages that you're paying? Why the decrease in both instances?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I'm told that the new telephone system just simply costs less. So it's a function of more efficient operation.

Mr. Koskie: — And in respect to the Provincial Inquiry Centre, can you indicate from your statistics whether there has been an increase during the past year over the previous year?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Inquiries, that number?

Mr. Koskie: — Inquiries, yes.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — There's a slight increase in number of calls over 1984 — 0.37 per cent.

Mr. Koskie: — Just in respect to staff, I was wondering what duties are carried on by a R. Larson, at 64,548. I can understand having an acting deputy minister, Mr. Olsen, at 67,680. What is the position of Mr. Larson in the Provincial Secretary's office?

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — He does a variety of things for me in my function as Provincial Secretary and Deputy Premier, including things like communications, etc., etc.

Mr. Koskie: — Well could you outline what particular duties that he is required to carry out in respect to your duties as Provincial Secretary? Could you be more specific in respect to the duties that he would have to carry out on your behalf and assist you in respect to the Provincial Secretary's office?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well you can understand that the Deputy Premier doesn't have a budget. So all of those things that the Deputy Premier does in his role as Deputy Premier have to be funded from some place, and it's funded through, in this case, the Provincial Secretary. It used to be funded, when I was in Economic Development and Trade, through Economic Development and Trade, and prior to that, through Agriculture.

And so those things . . . You know, I get lots of people that want to meet with the Deputy Premier, want to . . . you know, have problems with government, etc., etc. . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I knew that would puzzle you, but those are the kinds of things done by Mr. Ron Larson. And, you know, since Provincial Secretary is the only budget I have, that's where he's paid.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 and 3 agreed to.

Vote 30 agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, I've already sent across to the hon. member a copy of an erratum on the Supplementary Estimates (no. 2) for fiscal year ending March 31, 1986. I'd like to table that at this time.

And, Mr. Chairman, I move, seconded by Mr. Andrew, the member for Kindersley, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade:

That the following erratum which corrects vote 30 of the Supplementary Estimates (No. 2) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1986, which has been tabled in the committee of finance, be adopted.

Due to an administrative error, the following correction should be made: the supplementary estimates of the Provincial Secretary, vote 30, page 12, the details should read as follows:

Further amount required, item 1, executive administration, subvote 2, \$63,520; item 2, Provincial Inquiry Centre, subvote 5, \$7,160; total for Provincial Secretary, ordinary expenditure, to be voted, \$70,680.

Mr. Koskie: — Just in respect to executive administration, there was an over-expenditure of 63,520. I wonder if you could give an explanation.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Yes, that, Mr. Chairman, was when a cabinet shuffle came — it was part way through the last fiscal year — and so the administrative cost of running my office now fell to Provincial Secretary rather than Economic Development and Trade. And in addition we assumed responsibility for the Saskatoon cabinet office February 1, back into the previous fiscal year.

Motion agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1986
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Provincial Secretary
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 30**

Items 1 and 2 agreed to.

Vote 30 agreed to.

**Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Saskatchewan Water Corporation
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 50**

Item 1

Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Chairman, we went over the water corporation yesterday quite thoroughly, and apparently it's just a different way of funding the water corporation to other Crown corporations, as SaskTel and SaskPower get their money from the users, and this is the way the

corporation gets their funds to disperse. So with that, Mr. Minister, unless you have some comments, we're prepared to let this go through.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I don't know if I entirely understood the question, but Sask Water is kind of unique in that it's a utility in one sense, and it also provides a service in another sense; so that there are grants from Consolidated Fund to Sask Water, and it also does generate revenue from rates.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 5 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 50 agreed to.

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Revenue and Financial Services Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 18

Mr. Chairman: — Would the minister please introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to my immediate left my deputy minister, Keith Laxdal; to my immediate right, Brian Smith, who is with the pension benefits. Over there we have Bill Van Sickle, executive director of administration division; Len Rog behind me, who is director of revenue policy and monitoring branch; and Gerry Kraus, who is the provincial comptroller.

Item 1

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I wonder if the minister could . . . I'll just ask a few routine questions. I wonder, could you send your personal staff, a list of them, with the salary increases that have occurred in the last year across to the committee.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Yes, I'll send it over.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, while you're at it maybe you could send across the executive of the department as well. That would include deputy, if there is such an individual, ADM, and the executive director. Here again I would like you to include their salary and any increases that would have occurred since January 1st of 1985.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Yes, I'll send that over. Maybe we could move along until we get a page here to bring it across.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, this is a department. I see you have a staff of five people, some of whom are secretary or clerical help. Still, Mr. Minister, this is your only department, your only function. While the department's important, the role of the minister is minuscule. This is not an area which has . . . Well it's true. This is not a department which requires great ministerial talent or time. The department, like some others, basically run itself.

Mr. Minister, what on earth do you need a staff of five people for, with the Department of Revenue, supply, and

services? I really am curious, Mr. Minister to know how on earth you keep that number of people busy when all you have for ministerial responsibility is revenue, supply, and services.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Well frankly, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the question. We've taken over a great deal of work in terms of the Saskatchewan pension plan, which is going to increase. We're doing other things. I would acquiesce to your suggestion it's a little rich. There's some transition going on there. Some people are leaving as others come in, and what you've seen is the overlap, and that's the explanation for it.

Mr. Shillington: — Well I relate to comments of the former member from Thunder Creek, who commented in his book on the overblown staff, on the large staff numbers, paid, as I think it's a direct quote, "mind-boggling salaries."

I really wonder, Mr. Minister, for a government that preaches restraint, which cannot find fresh food for northern Saskatchewan, which cannot find sufficient food for the people of Regina indeed — when you see the food banks in operation, you see the truth of that statement — with that kind of approach to the public, how on earth do you justify a staff like that? I just don't believe they can possibly be kept busy in a department like this.

Again I tell you, Mr. Minister, that the department is important. But the minister plays a very minor role in the department. It is, by and large, a bureaucratic function that this department carries out.

I don't believe, Mr. Minister that your staff have a whole lot to do with the Saskatchewan pension plan. I just don't believe that. I think your department does that. I suspect, if these people do anything during the daytime, what they do is spend time in North Battleford and the Battlefords attempting to get you elected, and I can see why that would take five people. That indeed is a challenge. But running this department, Mr. Minister, is not a challenge, and I just don't see how you keep a staff that size busy. And I certainly don't see how you justify it.

(1700)

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Mr. Chairman, I've explained the situation to the member. You know, possibly when the NDP were in power certainly the bureaucracy ran the world. It may very well be that I'm a more active minister than they ever saw in their time.

With regard to his comments about the situation in terms of my standing politically in North Battleford, I'll match polls with the NDP any time. And frankly, the member from Shaunavon is worried about there being an election called; I'd be willing to put a side bet on which one of us will be back.

Mr. Shillington: — Do I take it, Mr. Minister, that the first two named are stenographic staff; the last three named are ministerial assistants, or what was once called an executive assistant?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — That's correct. And within the ministerial assistant, as I indicated, there is some transition.

Mr. Shillington: — In brief terms, would you tell me what on earth three ministerial assistants do when they are the ministerial assistant to the Minister of Revenue and Financial Services? Would you just go through those and give me a description of the duties of those three. Because, apart from getting you elected in North Battleford, and I can see that would be a challenging chore which would take the full time of any army of people, I frankly just don't see what they do.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Mr. Chairman, the staff in my immediate office handle a number of inquiries from people, and we have many. We have taken taxes off of things such as clothing, and that's generated a great deal of correspondence and inquiries. We've had other items, which the members opposite are well aware of, that have generated correspondence and inquiries and telephone calls, and that's what they do. Now if they want, you know, a breakdown of what they do on a daily basis, minute by minute, frankly I can't give you that.

Mr. Shillington: — I want a job description for the three of them because I don't think you can give me anything that looks like a job description for these three people. I don't think they have a job description because I don't think they spend much of their time in your office. I think they spend most of their time out of the office doing political work.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — We don't have job descriptions here with us. We can provide them to you if you like, but . . .

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, the . . . Mr. Minister, let me give you some assistance with parliamentary process. You're the minister. You got elected; you're the minister. I ask you the questions. I don't particularly care to ask these people what they do. I wanted you to give me a job description because I don't think you got one.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — I just told you that I'd send you over a job description. I just gave you a verbal one, and if that's not fine, we'll send you over a written one. I told you we don't have one here with us right now. Do you want one in writing, or don't you, or are you a little hard of hearing over there?

Mr. Shillington: — No, my hearing is fine, but I don't believe that with your own personal staff you don't know what the job descriptions are. Mr. Minister, these people report to you, not to your deputy. If you don't know what the job descriptions are, then I am darn sure that they don't know what their job descriptions are, and I'm darn sure you're wasting a good deal of money on their staff.

I could hear you fine. But I think, Mr. Minister, if this is your personal staff, you ought to be able to give me a fairly crisp job description for these three people, and so far all I've been getting is a lot of nonsense. I ask you, Mr. Minister, to deal with the questions and save the nonsense for someone else.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — I have explained to you that they do on a daily basis: handle inquiries from the general public that are related to the different areas that the department handles. They deal back and forth on such things as the pension program; and as required, they deal with the general public as they approach our office for either clarification on matters, information on matters, that type of thing.

Mr. Shillington: — Well all I can say is that you, Mr. Minister, are living proof of the truth of the comment of the former member from Thunder Creek, when he said that one of the problems that ministers had was their staff were far too big and had no idea what they were supposed to be doing. You, Mr. Minister, haven't given me a job description. I gather you don't know what a job description is. I think that's a fair conclusion from your comments. If you cannot properly define what your staff are supposed to do, then I'll tell you, it is a foregone conclusion that your staff aren't going to know what they're supposed to do.

If that description you gave me is supposed to keep \$8,000 per month worth of talent busy, then all I can say is they're some of the slowest people in Christendom when they go about their jobs. That wouldn't keep a good secretary busy, much less three executive assistants.

Mr. Minister, I want to know whether or not any of these people who are run ragged with these duties, I want to know whether or not any of them got any pay increases in the last year to assist them in carrying out these onerous tasks.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — I believe you asked if there had been any pay increase. I believe we provided that to you. I believe we sent that over to you.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I don't . . . Yes, I'm sorry. It's the second page. Mr. Minister, I'm wondering why the pay increases of 4.3 per cent. It's more than what the public service got. It's not 12 per cent, but it is more than what the public service got, and I'm wondering how you arrived at that figure of 4.3 per cent?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — The standard increment.

Mr. Shillington: — Well all I can say is the public are becoming increasingly disillusioned about this government. You certainly seem to have had prior access to some of these documents you're giving me.

Mr. Minister, will you tell me whether or not any of these staff have a residence outside the city of Regina?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Chris Dekker has a resident outside of the city of Regina.

Mr. Shillington: — Let me guess. It might be in the north-west corner of the province. Am I close? Tell me where he maintains a residence outside the city of Regina.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Mr. Dekker has recently come into my employ and has not completed his move to Regina.

Mr. Shillington: — From where — on the record.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — From North Battleford.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, I am really curious to know what an executive assistant to the Minister of Revenue and Financial Services does in North Battleford. I suppose I might be able to think of something they might do in the city of Saskatoon — but in North Battleford, Mr. Minister, it is so patently obvious your staff are working to get you re-elected. I can see why you need a small army of people to do it, but the public aren't supposed to be paying money for political organizers. You're supposed to pay for those yourself.

You are supposed to answer constituency complaints and do your political organizing on your own. Of course your constituency secretary may assist you with constituency complaints.

You, Mr. Minister, have a ministerial staff in North Battleford whose sole function seems to be getting you elected. And I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you'd care to justify that, or are we simply going to go on to some other boondoggle that you're engaged in.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — As I indicated, Mr. Dekker has recently come into my employ. He will be coming down to Regina, and we are in the transition.

Mr. Shillington: — Well he's been in your employment for four months. What's the problem? I seem to recall seeing a bus coming from North Battleford to Regina in the last four months. I don't know what the problem is. Why, if Mr. Dekker is prepared to cash a pay cheque worth \$2,300 a month, why doesn't the individual move to Regina where I presume his duties are?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — I indicated that that will be happening, that the transition is in place.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, how in the name of Heaven do you justify paying \$2,300 a month to a third executive assistant, with the ministerial duties being as minuscule as they are, when the person doesn't even live in Regina? If it weren't a waste of close to \$10,000, it would be amusing to see you try to justify it. Mr. Minister, he's had four months. Do I take it that probably some time after the end of October the individual may find other employment? Is that also a fair conclusion, that some time after the election your staff may once again be reduced to two ministerial assistants?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — I've indicated to you that we're in a midst of a transition. We have people who work in my office who are going to other duties, and we have brought some people in, and we have a bit of an overlap now.

Now what Mr. Dekker may or may not do in the future is hardly, I think, relevant. He will be coming down to Regina to be part of my staff here.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, would you give me a crisp description of what this individual does from 8:30 in the morning till 5 at night. I'm really curious to see how he fills his hours in North Battleford, five days a

week, for the last four months. Just give me an average day in the life of Chris Dekker.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — I have him reviewing the operation of the department so he's familiar with it. We're having some . . . as you may be well aware, there are some problems in taxation in the north-west corner and the west side of the province, on the border, and he is looking into those matters.

Mr. Chairman: — Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — And those are the types of things that he's doing.

Mr. Shillington: — And that comprises the list of duties for Chris Dekker for the last four months. Tell me, does Chris Dekker need an office to carry out these functions? How much floor space does this man need to carry out these onerous duties? Just give me an idea of what his office looks like in North Battleford.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Frankly, I have him working out of my constituency office.

Mr. Shillington: — I knew darn well you did. That's why I asked the question.

Now you got Chris Dekker, who's making \$2,353 a month, more than the vast majority of his constituents make, I'd say. You have Chris Dekker making \$2,353 a month, who has no office space, who has no duties that you can give us, because you haven't described any duties apart from some taxation problems in the north-west corner of the province. Mr. Minister, I'm wondering what his qualifications are. What did this man do to attract your attention? What's his background?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — . . . his office. I suppose that what we could do is go out and rent space for him. You know, he's there and we're using space that's there and . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Dekker has a Bachelor of Commerce degree in finance, with honours in marketing and general business. He's a high school graduate. He was formerly employed with the LEDA group as a market research and financial analyst, involved in development, review, and editing of corporate policies and procedures with the overall goal to enhance economic development in the region. And prior to that he was with Canada Packers in Edmonton. Prior to that he was sales representative for North West Broadcasting, and prior to that he was a news reporter.

Mr. Shillington: — Tell me, does this gentleman . . . Is he able to fit into this terribly onerous day, is he able to work in any other employment during the day; is he otherwise employed, or is he keeping body and soul together on \$2,353?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — He's not otherwise employed.

Mr. Shillington: — Is it an order in council, Mr. Minister, or is it a contract?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — I understand he's appointed in the same fashion as any other ministerial assistant.

Mr. Shillington: — Let's get an answer. There is no consistency in the way that ministerial assistants are appointed. There's different ways of doing it. I want a specific answer, Mr. Minister.

(1715)

Hon. Mr. Morin: — He's appointed in the same fashion as all the other ministerial assistants in my office. I understand the lady who looks after this sort of thing is down, and if there's a more formal answer, we'll get it.

Mr. Shillington: — Are you serious about this — you don't know how your own personal staff were hired? Is that supposed to be a serious answer? Mr. Minister, this is something you've got to know. Mr. Minister, it is very, very difficult to believe you don't know how your own personal staff are hired. I mean, good heavens! You may not hire the staff of other departmental members, but you do hire your own department staff. You've got to sign it, I assume.

So I ask you again, Mr. Minister, how was he hired? Come clean.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — There's no coming clean to be done. I mean, we've answered your question. Now if there's a . . . Certainly we hired him. And if there's a form or a . . . you know, you have a special name for something, we're finding out, and that's the . . . You asked the question; we're finding out.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, how long is it going to take you to find out? because I really am curious about this individual.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — The contract, apparently that's entered into under the ministerial regulations.

Mr. Shillington: — The contract. Mr. Minister, what were the terms of the contract?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Apparently the contract deals with salary, and apparently it's basically the same regulations as under the Public Service Commission, and they can be terminated at will.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I'm delighted to know that it's in the standard form. We've never got a standard form or contract for executive assistant, so maybe you'd like to help us out by giving us one now.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — I expect, you know, it's at pleasure. I haven't got a copy of the actual contract here. But it's at pleasure, and he can be dismissed at will.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I ask you what the terms of the contract are. I'm not asking you what you're expecting. What you're expecting is obviously something quite different than what you're getting, because you're woefully unprepared for these estimates. So would you tell me, Mr. Minister, what the terms of the contract are so that we may know what exactly it's going to cost us when you are no longer a minister. So, Mr. Minister, I ask you to tell me: what are the terms of the contract?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Well I've told you. The terms of the contract are his salary, normal benefits, and he is employed at the pleasure.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Chairman, this is a waste of time. We have spent a half an hour here today and have not got the most rudimentary information out. I rise on a point of order, Mr. Chairman. It's past 5 o'clock.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:21 p.m.