

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Public Service Commission
Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 33

Item 1

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

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. To my right, I have Jim Armstrong, the chairman of the Public Service Commission; to his right, Gary Reid, the executive director of employment services division; and behind me, Jane Eibner, director of administration and information services division; and probably joining us shortly tonight will be John McPhail, assistant chairman.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you. I begin, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, with a letter I wrote you on October 28. I asked for some information, a list of questions, that I indicated if it were provided would considerably speed up these estimates. I sense the mood around here is to speed up the estimates, so if you've got the answers that will help us a bit.

Wonder never cease, Mr. Minister. It appears that at least some of the questions are answered.

Mr. Minister, I want then to begin with what is undoubtedly the overarching issue in the public service of Saskatchewan, and that is the abysmal morale. Mr. Minister, each year that I've done these Public Service Commission estimates, and this is the sixth time now, each year I think it can't possibly get worse, and each year the morale in the public service gets worse, the stress loads get higher. Mr. Minister, areas that never had morale problems begin to have morale problems.

It doesn't strictly come within your jurisdiction, but I indicated in the estimates of SaskTel, for years that had just been a model employer. Everybody who worked there wanted to spend the rest of their working life there; all they wanted to do was work for SaskTel. And the last two years, there's nothing but complaining.

Mr. Minister, that is true as well in the public service. The morale is just terrible. I would be interested, Mr. Minister, in knowing what the sickness rate is. I'll bet that public servants are taking more time off for problems related to stress than they ever have in the past, and in my experience, it's quite valid. Mr. Minister, the morale comes from a . . . for a variety of reasons.

First and foremost is that you people have no understanding of what a professional public service means. The public service in Saskatchewan is losing its professionalism. There was an era, Mr. Minister, which ended about the time you people left office for the last time — it ended about the Second World War — when the way you conduct the public service was the typical

way of doing it. So long as you were in office, it was a private fiefdom. You filled up with your friends, you got rid of your enemies, and I'm not sure whether the public service functioned very well, or whether the problems were just simple enough that it didn't matter. But, Mr. Minister, that hasn't been the norm in Canadian public life for decades except in Saskatchewan. In Saskatchewan that is the norm, Mr. Minister — rid of your supposed enemies, many of whom are just simply career public servants who want nothing more than to serve the public, Mr. Minister, and you fill them up with people who don't begin to have the competence to do the job.

I know you are going to stand up and you're going to list off all the Koskies who worked for the government and all the other supposed political hacks. Mr. Minister, let me say by way of explanation, Mr. Minister, that some degree of patronage is almost inevitable in the public service. To rid the public service of patronage is like trying to rid the human race of any disease or illness, a state of perfection we'll never achieve. Mr. Minister, it's a matter of keeping the patronage within reasonable degrees, and you've long since violated those reasonable bounds.

Mr. Minister, any one of my colleagues here could testify to the experience in the last election of knocking on doors and when you find out the person's a public servant, you know that they are a very, very angry person. And it is without exception, Mr. Minister, that public servants are angry, experiencing high stress loads, and I just simply cannot believe are as productive as they could be if they looked forward to going to work in the morning — and I think many of them do not. It comes about, Mr. Minister, because you people don't understand what a professional public service is. You think the public service is a private playground within which you and your friends revel for so long as you happen to be lucky enough to win another election.

Mr. Minister, it comes about because of your almost endless war with the public service. You began in 1982 by firing large numbers of people, some of whom were sympathetic to the government of Allan Blakeney — I should not have used the name — were sympathetic to the government of the day, some of whom were not, but a lot of whom just got canned for no apparent reason. I think it's fair to say that within two years virtually every deputy minister or . . . one exception and one of them was in the Legislative Assembly today, but with very, very few exceptions, in a couple of years all the deputy ministers changed, most of the senior staff changed. You got rid of everybody. You began to fill the public service up with people who just simply weren't competent, didn't know what they were doing, had no concept of how a modern public service works. And it continues with lay-offs, threats of privatization, some of the most unbelievable stunts I've ever heard of.

Again, I go back to SaskTel, not entirely within your jurisdiction but it does illustrate the attitudes you people have. Everybody in SaskTel had to bid on their own job. Now that really is a clever way of ensuring that people are confident, secure, and prepared to do their very best — just to have them all bid on their own job.

Mr. Minister, the lay-offs, the early retirements, are part of the same problem. You have just conducted a ceaseless war with the public service. I venture to say, today, scratch a member of the government benches and you have someone who doesn't trust the public service, think they're all a bunch of pinkies down deep. None of them have any sympathy for you and that is most unfortunate.

I think the majority of public servants in 1982 voted this government into office. It didn't last very long, Mr. Minister. You came into office with a reservoir of goodwill from the public service. They looked forward to a change in office, welcomed you, prepared to give your government their very best. What happened? You began a war with the public service that just simply hasn't ended. It goes on and on and on and on.

Mr. Minister, I fully expect you to stand up, put your head in the sand and deny the problem exists. I'll probably get a lot of silly nonsense about how terrible it was in the '70s and how much better it is now, how many Koskies are on the public service, and a lot of other tripe which may or may not mean something to the average person, but to the public servant, it's going to be a bad sign because it will mean that you are no better than those who preceded you. You've learned nothing, you've listened to nothing, and you allow these problems in the public service to fester.

Mr. Minister, if I were to pick out the most serious problem in this government today, it would be your problem with the public servants. I regret, Mr. Minister, taking a long time at this stage of the session, but this is just too serious a problem within this government to allow this matter to pass up without commenting on it.

You have the worst problem with the public service I have ever seen. I thought the morale was bad in the dying days of the Thatcher government. Well it wasn't anything compared with what you people have got. You've got an angry, hostile, frightened public service that's overloaded with stress. I'd like to know how many public servants have trouble sleeping with the stress load that public servants are experiencing, and I bet it's very considerable. And the most alarming thing is, Mr. Minister, there is no sign whatsoever that you people have any understanding of the damage you've done.

I'd like some comment from you, Mr. Minister, and any recognition that there is any improvement to be made would be a vast improvement over any of your predecessors.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well the hon. member covered a number of points there, Mr. Chairman, and I guess if I was to give some background or some sense of the situation relative to the public service of Saskatchewan, I would back right up to about one year ago when our Premier put together the Executive Council of the new administration after the '86 election. And with that there was a cabinet struck of 16 members, which I think . . . and a throne speech with a commitment to efficiency and productivity, and I think the fact that we ourselves were prepared to tighten our belts and do more for all the people of Saskatchewan was to set the tone for our expectations across the public service. Certainly we

didn't expect them to carry on their backs only the kinds of challenges we face, any more that we expected any other sector out there, whether it be teachers or nurses or doctors or lawyers, or clerical staff across this province, or whatever sector people work.

But the reality is, we were faced with a situation where we had to decrease the size of government by some 2,000 positions. I think it would have been unfair of us to expect the people of Saskatchewan to tighten their belt if the government couldn't show the people of Saskatchewan it was prepared to tighten its belt first, and that's what we did — a cabinet of reduced size, and then we said we would reduce the size of the civil service by 2,000.

Now I'm not so naive as to think that when you undertake a goal like that of reducing the size of the service by 2,000 that somehow you are not going to have insecurity and somehow you're not going to have some uncertainty, and I recognize that. I recognize very much that those were stressful times for everyone involved.

At the same time, the undertaking was that we would do it in a fair and even-handed and compassionate manner because we recognize very much that you're dealing with individuals and individuals' lives, and that's why we embarked on the strategy we did in terms of having the majority of those positions, that down-sizing, accomplished through voluntary means, whether it be early retirement or position abolishment.

And in fact I think it's a tribute to the officials at the Public Service Commission that they were able to put together a plan, that at the end of the day, I think you have to admit was a very reasonable plan, a well thought out plan, and a very compassionate plan, given that this is not an easy task. And in fact I would go so far as to say that I think other jurisdictions who had to contemplate similar measures have looked at us with some envy.

And I don't think . . . Don't distort my words for a minute or take them to mean that somehow anybody enjoys a down-sizing exercise of 2,000, because we do not. But the reality is, that was the task we were faced with. We were able to do it by voluntary means as much as possible, and I think that's a tribute to the thoughtfulness that went into the plan.

I am also not so naive as to think that any time you make changes, going from the known to the unknown, that you're not going to create some uncertainty, because you do. But having said all of that, I would say this, and I think I myself have had the experience of being a minister of some three, four departments now as well as the commission, and I can say, as I think my colleagues would say, that through all of this we've had absolute tireless dedication by all of the employees who have just continued to give their absolute best in some difficult circumstances sometimes. And I think that's a tribute to the service.

(1915)

Uncertainty, insecurity at times, yes, but I can say as well that that's behind us, and we've reached our goal and it's onward and upward. And in fact it's not all bad, in that

when you go through early retirements, for example, yes, you lose some of your valued long-time experienced employees who opt for that option. But at the same time it opens up in the ranks some new positions for some of those, as I would call them, young broncs, if you like, those people that have got a lot of talent and needed a chance to move up on the career ladder and find their wings, if you like, and certainly that's one of the advantages of an early retirement program.

So I continue to be impressed by the dedication and the service. They are always there. I find the officials, whenever you need them, no matter how hard the task, no matter how frustrating sometimes, they continue to give and to give and to give. And certainly not an easy time that we've had this last year in face of the challenge we face, but it's been a matter of providing responsible government.

In addition though, to address specifically the whole question of professional development and the morale and the positive effect that that can have on morale, I am happy to tell you that we have tripled the number of programs offered to our employees since we took office in terms of staff development. I am also happy to tell you that we've been the first government to sponsor a conference for support staff, and we're planning another one. And I'm also happy to tell you that we were the first government to introduce corporate-wide participatory management approach, something that's been recognized as being one of the best in the field by some of the more eminent authors.

So yes, we recognize there's been some uncertainty; yes, it's behind us; and yes, we've tried to respond with staff development programs and that sort of initiative.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, your comments in a sense confirm what I said: you don't understand what is meant by professionalism.

Professionalism is not professional development. It's a public service which stays in place with . . . no matter how much the government . . . no matter who's in office. It's a public service which doesn't change with the government. When I say this public service lacks professionalism, that's what it lacks.

You regard this public service, as I say, as a private playground. You forget that you're dealing with the lives of real people when you weed people out — to use the current parlance — when you weed people out you don't like. You're dealing with real human beings who have the hopes and dreams and the aspirations that all the rest of us do, and you dash those without, I think, ever realizing that you're not dealing with chess pieces, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, I think the key thing, the key error that you made in your down-sizing . . . I don't in itself quarrel with the down-sizing; don't get me wrong. I wouldn't have done it. It's not my philosophy, but it's yours, and I think it's consistent with what you've done. When the public elected you, they must have known they took this risk or they wanted it. So it's not out of character, so I don't quarrel with the down-sizing. I think you had a mandate to do that, as much as I disagree with it. But I heartily

quarrel with the way the down-sizing was done.

First, and perhaps most important, it was done in a crude fashion. Some departments and agencies are clearly understaffed. We have raised repeatedly the problem of the understaffing of the Department of Social Services. I could name others. One always hates to do that, for fear that someone in the department may get fingered for talking to me. So I'll leave that at the Department of Social Services, but here are some agencies which are grossly understaffed — can't begin to do their jobs. And if you wanted to cut staff, then in some areas you should have cut programs, but you didn't have the intestinal fortitude to do that. You did not have the intestinal fortitude to be honest and admit that if you cut public servants, you're going to cut services, and you've got to at some point in time cut some programs. And, Mr. Minister, that just didn't happen in the areas where it should have.

The second thing I want to say, the second comment I want to make, Mr. Minister, is the crude fashion that the public service, that the public servants were fired. I found it reminiscent of a Fascist state to have employees terminated and then they're given the red box, which became infamous. The red-box treatment — walked into their office with some person who serves the purpose of a hulking guard. He stands over them while they dump the contents in the red box and out they go. Mr. Minister, the treatment of the public servants is less than I think what a criminal would get, less respect for their rights.

Mr. Minister, I don't quarrel with your down-sizing. I wouldn't have done it. It won't happen if we're in office if I've any influence on affairs, but I think it's consistent with your mandate. I heartily quarrel with the way you do it. You've no mandate to treat any human being in the way you treated some of those public servants you fired.

The Department of Education, you stopped just short of tying a ball and chain on their ankle. You stopped just short of doing that, and other departments were just as bad. The Department of Education got a bit of publicity because they happened to be one of the first departments to go.

You've treated public servants abysmally. You say you disliked firing people. Well, Mr. Minister, you didn't act like it.

I recall the former member from Wilkie, Mr. Garner, who fired public servants, fired employees of the Department of Highways, and then had the bad sense and the crassness to laugh about it with reporters in his office afterwards. No one caught you laughing, Mr. Minister, but no one saw any real sympathy or compassion when you did it. You acted like a Roman centurion when you fired those public servants.

As I say, you wouldn't treat a criminal like that and most of us wouldn't treat a dog like that that we had any respect for.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I guess first of all I'd say, you know, I'm happy that the hon. member recognizes that we were faced with some challenges that did require us to down-size government, and I think that was quite a

different situation that we found ourselves in compared to the heady days of the '70s when civil service, corporations generally, had found themselves getting larger and larger in response to inflationary times.

I guess I quarrel somewhat with your choice of words to describe how we did this. You used words like: a crude fashion; reminiscent of a fascist state; described somehow a hulking guard. I mean, I don't think the hon. member really believes his own rhetoric, because the reality is we used the services of two or three very professional firms whose expertise is in dealing with the human relations side of people who face lay-offs and who have extensive programs in place to help them.

And all the words you used to describe that — crude fashion, fascist state, and hulking guard — are really absolutely untrue. I can't put it any more bluntly. Even if you don't buy that, I would ask you in terms of just being a normal, reasoned individual, how do you square those comments with the fact that 86 per cent — at least as far as the ones that the Public Service Commission directly administered — how do you square that when 86 per cent of the 2,000 down-sizing that we administered, in fact, were achieved by voluntary means?

I mean, obviously that doesn't include the situation in Health. It doesn't include the situation in health, but we had 1,264 take early retirements, and we have 561 positions that were vacant and that we just abolished. We had to back-fill 396 . . . or identified 396 for refilling that took early retirement because they were critical positions.

But I ask you, and I ask all reasoned people across the province, if you look at the numbers, we didn't go out there and just hand out 2,000 pink slips. We said, first of all, there are 560 positions that have been in many instances vacant for a long time. Obviously they're not that critical; they have no person in them right now. So if you're looking for, if you like, an easy way to reduce the size and it's not going to affect government, let's abolish those positions. I think there was something in the order of 700, roughly, that were vacant, but obviously some of them were critical. So 561 position were abolished, no hardship to anyone personally.

The next step was this early retirement program. I think we had something close to an 80 per cent participation rate on our early retirement program. So there we were, a long ways to meeting our goal, and not one pink slip had been given. And that's as it should be in this day and age, and we can do things in a reasonable, humane fashion. And that was the approach we took and one of . . . a voluntary approach; one that allowed a lot of flexibility for the individuals; one that keyed on the management sectors.

The early retirements . . . That particular approach was taken because many of those positions, in a relative sense, were heavier on the management side and not the front line side. And that was another big positive for the government, that you weren't going to jeopardize your front line service because of the relative weighting of this.

And as well, in so far as how we determined, if you like, at

the end of the day, position lay-offs over and above that, it was because of the budget process that was going on at the same time. And where programs were cut — which you said that was not the rationale — indeed that was the rationale because where programs were eliminated, that was how the positions were decided upon. And it was unfortunate that any programs, I suppose, had to be eliminated other than if they were serving no useful function.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, again you continue to retreat into a defence — and that's what it is; it's a retreat into the defence of the staff cuts. I don't agree with it. I think this public service was already stretched a bit thin, but I don't say this — that you had no mandate. I think it's consistent with your philosophy and behaviour.

But, Mr. Minister, the gravamen of my charge against you is not the cuts themselves but the way it was done. Would you just deal with the red box, the infamous red box — how you justify marching, giving public servants their walking ticket, marching them into their office, giving them a box, standing there not a lot further than the member is from me, while he fills up the box, then marching them out of the office. You give a criminal . . . You place more trust in a criminal than that, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, some of these people had spent years, and in some cases, decades, serving the public. Didn't do it because it's an easy road to riches. I think in many cases they spent their lives in the public service because they genuinely enjoyed serving the public. The thanks they got was that, the red-box treatment. It just became infamous. Not only did it become infamous, Mr. Minister, it symbolized the whole attitude of this government towards the public service. You don't trust them. You have, I think, very little appreciation of their importance.

There is, Mr. Minister, in rural Saskatchewan an unfortunate antipathy towards the public service. there are a distressing number of people, by no means a majority, but a distressing number of people who believe that all public servants are overpaid, underworked, and the vast majority of them serve no useful purpose and the world would go on a great deal better without them. Little do they know, Mr. Minister, that the public services which they take for granted are delivered by those public servants. The public servants in a sense are the conduit between the government in office, with some ideas and programs, and the public who receive the services.

Mr. Minister, you see to . . . The red-box treatment symbolized all of the worst about your relationship with the public service — your distrust of them; your lack of respect for human beings, and them in particular; your lack of understanding, Mr. Minister, of what these career public servants have done during most of their lives; and the whole war that's gone on between the public service and the Government of Saskatchewan.

It's one of the major reasons . . . Your failure to work with the public service, to understand them, is one of the major reasons, Mr. Minister, why this government has been so unsuccessful in so much of what it has done. So I ask you, Mr. Minister, not to retreat into a defence of the cuts. Let's talk about the red boxes and how you justify treating any

human being in such a fashion.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I know that you, in your own mind, have some view that the process that went through the day that a number of lay-offs occurred . . . I think one of your colleagues called it — the people, the professional people we brought in — called them professional terminators, and I think what an unfair characterization that is of firms like . . . In fact, I think he was specifically referring to Stevenson Kellogg Ernst & Whinney. And they took some fair except to that comment, albeit that it was made inside the House with the immunity that that provides.

(1930)

And, in fact, they went at some fair length to try and meet with your leader, your current leader, to try and set the record straight, because I think they felt that their firm had been severely . . . their reputation had been somewhat jeopardized by those comments.

And as well, I was aware of the commentary at the time relative to this red box. And so because of that, I put my office into a meeting with and investigating — and my officials — this whole notion of the red box. You know what I found out? And you know what I found out? You know what I found out? No such thing. Now how does that . . . Why is it that I get a different story than you get?

What you're saying to me is that my officials and that Stevenson Kellogg Ernst & Whinney and Life Management of Regina are somehow trying to mislead me and the public of Saskatchewan, if we were to buy your line. So we don't know where this red-box story came from. But I'll tell you how it was handled and how it was handled very reasonably and humanely.

When, in fact, the supervisor of a given department notified the employee who was to be laid off, virtually immediately a counsellor from one of these firms, Stevenson Kellogg Ernst & Whinney — I think Murray Axsmith and Associates as well was involved, and a firm called Life Management, Regina — was there on the spot to help provide those employees with a sense of . . . and to provide them with help and to let them know that this isn't the first time that this has happened to somebody and to give them some guidance and direction and the kinds of things they might want to attend to.

And it didn't matter whether we had government employees in Toronto; in Kingston, Ontario, in Vancouver; or in London, England. Where, in fact, we had some lay-offs occurring, there was a representative of one of those firms there to counsel them on the spot. Now I think that a very reasonable, compassionate approach. And if in fact they wished to come back later and be accompanied or helped to gather up their personal belongings and to have to face the trauma of the employees around them that very given moment, arrangements were so made.

So you create this atmosphere of somehow it was a hard-hearted, sinister kind of goings on. I want to tell you that this is a first — never an easy job — and if you're going to try and suggest that I think it's easy or that the

people think I enjoy doing it, you're wrong. And that's why we called in experts to help us and to be there in every corner, literally, of this world, whenever we had an employee that was affected — London, England; Vancouver; Kingston; Toronto; Regina; wherever in Saskatchewan — they were there to help them. And in so far as a process as tough as it is, I think it was handled very professionally and with the best interests of those who were personally affected.

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Mr. Minister, you said that this matter of terminations was handled very professionally. I'm wondering if you could tell me how many counselling staff were employed by the firm of Stevenson Kellogg Ernst & Whinney?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Stevenson Kellogg Ernst & Whinney, we'd of had about 20 of their people that day. And just to give you some idea of their track record, when we were looking at sort of the best options to use on this, one of the things that impressed me when my officials brought forward the services of a firm like this, was their successful track record in terms of placing these people in new careers. And I was very impressed with the numbers. In fact, they're so high, you find it almost hard to believe.

But I want to give you an example as to the best numbers we have today. There were 82 people who wanted to use the counselling — and they hold seminars and all those kinds of things. Presently, there are 27 who are clients of Stevenson Kellogg Ernst & Whinney, and 55 have found new careers. So of those who wanted to use this service, 67 per cent have found new careers. And what are we, about six months since the lay-off notices were given? Now, I think that probably even is further ahead than they normally expect to be.

They give you kinds of numbers over — after one year, after two years. Sixty-seven per cent have found new careers. And that's the kind of professionalism you can get out of these firms who deal with these kinds of situations and know how to deal with it: making offices available for them; making phones available; making job ads available from all over the country available to them; secretarial services; counselling on what their insurance does or doesn't buy or what severance pay does and doesn't buy — all those kinds of things. And I continue to be impressed by the quality of their work.

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Minister, how many counsellors were employed by the firm of Life Management Centre?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Life Management was the firm who particularly helped us with the in-scope side — five individuals particularly — and of course the difference there is the whole bumping process.

Mr. Koenker: — Sir, could you give me the names of the counsellors who were employed by Life Management Centre to do this counselling?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — We don't have that but I would undertake to provide to you.

Mr. Koenker: — Could I reasonably expect to receive that information within the next week?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I would think so, and I don't think Life Management has any difficulty with us providing that to you.

Mr. Koenker: — Was there any subcontracting done by either of these two firms, Stevenson Kellogg Ernst Whinney or Life Management Centre, in terms of provision of counselling services?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Not as far as we know. There were a couple of other firms that were involved. I think one of them I mentioned earlier, the Murray Axsmith and Associates, and as well, Coopers & Lybrand, who didn't particularly take part in the operational side of it, but who gave commentary on the process that we thought would work the best. And I guess you could say we used them as a safety value to check what we thought was the best plan and to have any commentary from them.

Mr. Koenker: — So outside of the firms that you have mentioned, there was no subcontracting for the counselling services themselves. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well we're not aware of any, but we can check with the firms if you like.

I mean, this may help answer some of your questions. I'm just looking at Stevenson Kellogg Ernst & Whinney, a relocation calendar of special meetings. For example, we had leaders on . . . these special workshops for things like this: job search workshop; health care industry; the market opportunity; telephone techniques; making information and advice, interviews work for you; effective interviewing; marketing as your skills strategy, should you set up your own business; opportunities for senior management in the federal government; pitfalls of small business; individual interview. Those were some of the kinds of seminars that these people could attend to help them looking at new career options.

Some of the leaders were people like Tom Hale of Regina, Ron Scott, Calgary; Charlene Mason, Toronto; Barbara Billings, Ottawa; Ken Adie; Lynn Pearson. Some of those were the people involved in putting on the seminars that these people could attend.

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. minister, could you give me a list of those leaders and where they were from, and which firms they represented if they were firms other than a Stevenson Kellogg Ernst & Whinney, Life Management, or the other firms that you've mentioned?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — For example, you know, opportunities for supervisors in the federal government, the leader there. And obviously a key resource person is listed was Lynn Pearson from Regina, Government of Canada, Barb Billings; obviously, they have some sense of what's available there. So I can send this across to you.

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you very much. That would speed the process up considerably.

On a very different subject, Mr. Minister, I'd like to inquire concerning a memorandum I received from the Public Service Commission regarding student summer

employment. There is really no date on this memorandum received from the commission, but I take it this was sent out to MLA constituency offices indicating the number of students from individual constituencies across the province who were successful in obtaining summer employment in 1987. And it's only logical to assume that each MLA received such a letter.

I'm wondering if you could provide me with the information as to how many students were employed across the province this past summer, and in which constituencies they were employed?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — To September 30, 1987, there were 856 students hired in executive government and 373 students through Crown corporations.

Mr. Koenker: — Could you give me a breakdown as to which constituencies the students were from, the information that I received from my constituency office for the other constituency offices across the province?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I don't have a breakdown like that and so . . . I don't believe we even have a breakdown like that. I would suspect that, you know, a goodly percentage — give that 873 were in executive government, and given the size, if you like, of government that exists in the city of Regina — I would suspect a goodly percentage of them found work right here in the city of Regina, albeit I have no doubt they were spread across the province. But I suspect it would be that kind of distribution, wherever there's Crown corporations and governments that needed summer help.

Sask Power, I suspect, has traditionally hired students, and I think many of them go back to the same jobs they maybe even had the year before. So I don't have what you're looking for because we don't generate it that way.

Mr. Koenker: — Would you endeavour to generate that for me. The information is there; it's simply a matter of generating it. And again, I don't expect it tonight, but if I could have that within a week, that would be fine.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I can send you a sheet. I'll have to get this one redone because we have some wrong totals in the column for 1986. But it gives you a breakdown by department, which departments hired them, that's the basis we have — Agriculture, Health, Highways. For example, Highways had 150 summer students; Parks, Recreation and Culture, I think are traditionally a big employer — 141. Those are some of the kinds. I can get this done up for you and ship it to you.

(1945)

Mr. Koenker: — Well, Mr. Minister, I fail to understand why it's so difficult for you to generate that list when it must have been generated at one time in order for me to learn how many students were employed in my constituency. And presumably every other MLA received a similar letter indicating how many students were employed in their constituency. So I simply ask you if you could endeavour to break the list down by constituency as it obviously had to have been broken down at the beginning of this summer when I received the letter from

the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I can endeavour to give you what we've got if it's by constituency, if it's by centre, if it's . . . I know what we have here is by department. If we have something more, I'll endeavour to get it for you.

Mr. Koenker: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm asking for a commitment that you will generate the information by constituency. That can't be that difficult. It was done once only three or four short months ago. Surely that information can be generated again with minimal trouble. I'm asking if you can give that to me. I'll even receive it in two weeks.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I give you the undertaking to see what I can provide you in that regard.

Mr. Koenker: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm asking if you will provide it. I'm not asking for you to . . . an undertaking to see if you can provide it. I'm asking you if you will provide it. It was provided once. Will you not provide it for all constituencies across the . . . What's the big problem to provide it for constituencies across the province?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — If it was provided once, I'll provide it again.

Mr. Koenker: — Well thank you. I appreciate that commitment then.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, you people are fond of quoting resolution passed at our convention. Surprising they do you so little good. You apparently pour over those conventions and get none of the wisdom out of them.

Mr. Minister, one of the conventions which you might have read . . . one of the resolutions which you might have read is a resolution which endorses the concept of pay equity, a concept whereby men and women are paid equal amounts for similar work. Easy to state and sometimes difficult to actually apply.

Mr. Minister, the idea is not as revolutionary as it once was. It's been adopted by the Government of Manitoba, and I see in a recent edition of *The Globe and Mail*, it's been adopted by the Government of Ontario. Mr. Minister, I wonder when the Government of Saskatchewan is going to join the 20th century and adopt this principle.

The principle itself, I think, is impossible to argue with, that women should be paid the same amount as men. I wonder, Mr. Minister, when you're going to make this obvious change, which could make the work place of the government so much fairer.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well some background and then a specific comment relative to the issue you raised, at least relative to some of the points you make relative to what other jurisdictions have done.

As you probably know, the Government of Saskatchewan through the Public Service Commission, I think is fair to say, we very much strive to establish fair and equitable compensation for all of its employees. All classification

systems within the public service are gender neutral and do not discriminate on the basis of sex.

As well, a recently introduced management and professional classification plan embodies pay equity principles by allowing for comparisons of diverse occupations; example — nurses and engineers. Single salary ranges were established for different occupations deemed to be of comparable worth. All pay ranges for in-scope classifications are negotiated with employees with the employees' authorized union representatives, are gender neutral and do not discriminate on the basis of sex.

Further to that, the pay equity concept, I can say, is under examination and study by a number of government agencies, and the experience of Canadian jurisdictions who have implemented pay equity legislation is also being evaluated and monitored. As you may well be aware, the Labour Standards Act provides for equal pay for similar work, and clearly this government, I would say, has achieved this objective.

I guess the essence of your question is . . . You made mention of Manitoba. Yes, we are evaluating and monitoring that, and I'm in no position to make any further statements at this point in time except to say that it is something that's under active consideration.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Chairman, I would beg leave of the Assembly to make an introduction.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Chairman, and members of the Assembly, I want to welcome through you, former MLA from Prince Albert, a good friend of mine and a good friend of many of the people who are sitting in the House right now, Mr. Mike Feschuk, who represented the constituency that I now represent; and with him is his good wife, Helen Feschuk; and their good friend John Constantine. Welcome to the Assembly, Mike, it's good to see you back here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Public Service Commission Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 33

Item 1 (continued)

Ms. Atkinson: — I have a question to the minister. Mr. Minister, is pay equity a concept that you could personally endorse?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — In response to your question, I guess, I would deal with it this way. In terms of the public service, I think it's fair to say — albeit that we have contracts and negotiations in so far as what's worked out there relative to the classifications, etc. — I think it's fair to say, yes, we've embraced it because I think everybody's

interested in fairness and equity and all of those kinds of things.

As it relates to the larger question of pay equity operating in society as a whole, I guess I would repeat what I said to your colleague. There are some other jurisdictions that have made some changes there. I think it's fair to say that in Manitoba, for example . . . As I understand what's been in Saskatchewan versus Manitoba, we were ahead of them, certainly ahead of them in some of our legislation here in terms of how we treat our own employees. And I think maybe it's fair to say we were ahead of a lot of jurisdictions.

There are some plans that have come forward addressing the whole question of pay equity in the larger society. As I said earlier, they're under review, evaluation, being monitored, and I don't know as I can say much more than that tonight except they are under active review.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, if I were the distaff side of the public service, I wouldn't be very heartened by that comment, that you're looking into it.

We have become somewhat numb to this government's processes, but you gave birth to the phrase, "paralysis by analysis." Mr. Minister, you've raised the art of procrastination, you've raised the whole business of procrastination to a fine art. You people can study something for years.

I will venture to say, Mr. Minister, that when we're back in six months doing your estimates, I'll be asking you your position on pay equity. If I'm still the critic, and I'll venture to say, I'll get the same thing — we're looking into it; that's a concept we're considering seriously; and what can I say. Well, I'll say it for you, Mr. Minister. You don't seem to have much interest in the subject. No one can quarrel with the principle that if they're doing the same work, they should get the same pay, and they don't. The statistics, Mr. Minister, on women in the public service, are not much different than the statistics for women in the private sector. They get about 60 per cent of what the average male makes, and that's true . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member from Swift Current fine tunes the figure for me. Thank you very much. But the point remains, Mr. Minister, that women are paid a good deal less than men. there's nothing fair about it.

An Hon. Member: — They're worth more.

Mr. Shillington: — Some hon. members say they're worth more. That may not be universally shared . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . We're getting into, I fear, a little debate here, Mr. Chairman, and I suppose that's good. The member from Swift Current may well endorse pay equity. I suspect she does, although she may be too politic to say so. I just wish it was shared by some of your colleagues. I just wish you people had some concept of fairness when it comes to pay equity.

Before I go on, Mr. Chairman, and before the opportunity is lost is lost by the departure of Mr. Feschuk, I want to join in welcoming him. Mike Feschuk was my desk mate for four years in the legislature, and I came to appreciate Mike's shrewd political sense. And I say to members opposite if

. . . Mike lost in 1982 by a mere handful of votes, an immeasurably small number of votes. He almost made it. I say to you people and the public that I think this government would have been not quite as bad if Mike had made it into the legislature and if you'd had the benefit of his advice over the years. So welcome back, Mike. Nice to see you again.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you'd give us some time frame within which you think you might fine tune your thinking on this question of pay equity.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm not going to throw out a specific day, week, or month except to say again that some of what is happening in other jurisdictions we're keenly interested in. We recognize that it's an issue that must be implemented carefully and properly and I guess what I would say quite simply . . . Maybe the best way that I could give you is we'd be in a hurry to do it right.

I want to pick up on one other comment that you made and that was relative to women and women in management and somehow that we have an appalling track record there. And what I want to do tonight is destroy that myth that the NDP somehow think that the Tories have no sense in this issue . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I think you ought to listen to this because I think you're going to be somewhat startled by the statistics and in fact how they point to the dismal record of the NDP, which continually flies in the face of rhetoric.

Let's talk about statistics, the hon. member from Regina Lakeview says. Let's talk about them. In 1981 when the NDP were in government in this province, we had 7.7 per cent women in management, 7.7 per cent. Do you know what that same number is today, hon. members? It's 21.3 per cent. Now that's performance — 7.7 to 21.3 . Overall in the civil service, 52 per cent of our employees are women. That's a record to be proud of, I would argue. Not one that we stop with, not that we don't continue to go forward because we will, but I would say significant strides forward from the NDP's number of 7.7 to 21.3 per cent. Triple.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — I don't accept . . . I question whether or not the figure was accurate, but if it were accurate, Mr. Minister, it's not nearly good enough.

Mr. Minister, I accept the fact that 52 per cent are women, but I say again that they make about 60 per cent as much, and that, Mr. Minister, is why you people ought to be endorsing the concept of pay equity. It's a stated attempt to come to terms with an equity which simply can't be justified in this day and age.

Mr. Minister, we've heard you pat yourself on the back with respect to the promotion of women. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you could give us similar figures with respect to native employment in public service.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, I could, Mr. Chairman.

Although we haven't tripled there from the NDP years, we have more than doubled.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you would give me the percentage figures.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, 2.4 per cent in March of '81; June '87, 5.2 per cent. Once again, not that that one stops there or rests on one's laurels, but I think it puts a fly to the notion that the NDP somehow are the only ones with a track record here. I would say to you that our performance record is clear.

(2000)

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I say without in any sense defending a record which is now some seven years old, that the concept of affirmative action was just taking shape in . . . I think it was introduced in about 1980 and was just taking shape when we left office.

Mr. Minister, I say that I don't regard either 2 per cent or 5 per cent . . . I regard them both as abject failures. Mr. Minister, neither one should be touted as anything but a complete and total failure. Mr. Minister, if there is anywhere in this province in which natives ought to get a fair shake, it's in the public service. Mr. Minister, there ought to be here an understanding of our social responsibility and, indeed, our social self-interest, just our self-interest, in trying to deal with a problem which cries out for redress.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you would just admit . . . It would be a huge step forward if you'd just admit that 5 per cent is no better than 2 per cent. They both represent a complete failure to integrate natives into the work-force of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well as I already said before you got up and replied, we do not intend to rest on our laurels. And I want to tell you about another landmark event in this province as it relates to native people and our view in so far as their importance, and how we in fact have them not only in the ownership roles relative to institution across this province, but as well in management positions.

And I want to tell you, because I haven't had a chance to tell the members of the legislature, about an agreement that we signed — my Department of Education signed — with the Gabriel Dumont Institute. Because we recognize, one, that about 40 per cent of native children today are under the age of 15. And what that means is that by the year 1990 something like about 20 or 25 per cent of your job market entrance will be native, and that it's important for them, if they are going to have jobs in the world, to have training — to have post-secondary education, skill training.

We have, with this agreement, put in place a mechanism to not only have a new vice-president, a native vice-president who has a dual position between the executive director at Gabriel Dumont Institute and as a vice-presidential appointment of a native services division at the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology — a management level position, a

vice-presidential position held by a native person who will give that sense in the curriculum, if you like, and as well to other employees and other educators there. But even more importantly, there will be one sitting on the board of governors. That's our kind of commitment and that's just one example. And I would point out to you that as far as we know, that's a first in North America. And so it should be, given the statistics I quoted to you about the age of these young people, and as well, the numbers that we'd be looking at in the year 1990. That's what we talked about. We talked about planning for the year 2000.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, unless . . .

An Hon. Member: — Come on, Ned.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I am coming; I'm coming with my question. If the minister will be patient, he will get the full brunt of my question. I know that's what the member from Souris-Cannington wanted, was my question in all its detail. So if he could show a little patience, I will give you the question.

Mr. Minister, without trying the patience of all concerned at this stage, at this juncture, let me say that I do not believe an affirmative action program is going to work unless there are solid support services there to ensure that the native is hired, and that once they're hired, that they successfully integrate into the public service. It just simply won't work to write a letter to all the deputy ministers saying, I wouldn't mind if you'd hire a few natives. It just won't work.

You need stern incentives to hire them, and you need strong support services when they get there. There is a cultural shock of sorts when they arrive. They don't feel entirely at home. There's some difficult problems for a native who comes to work in any work environment, and that's particularly true of the public service — perhaps even more so than it might be in a private environment.

Mr. Minister, on a non-partisan note, I've had some experience with this. When we introduced the affirmative action program, I was for a short period of time in government. I sent a note to the department of culture and youth, and I said I think this is a department which ought to hire some natives, and I would like it to happen. Six months later, there were two natives hired in the department; they both worked in my office. I left eight months later and that was it — it just did not happen. I don't think it had anything to do with my relationship with the department — they just didn't happen anywhere.

Mr. Minister, if all you do is include a little section in your annual report saying, I think there ought to be . . . saying, we have an affirmative action program and we're giving it some encouragement — and that's the sole extent of your efforts — you're going to remain at a figure, at a percentage figure for employment of natives which, as I said in the beginning of this discussion, represents total abject failure.

Mr. Minister, you don't have those structures in place nor do you have the inducement to the departments to hire natives. You simply, once again — and I guess perhaps this is a microcosm of your whole department, whole

problems with the public service — you simply don't have the structures in place or the people in place to make this happen. I have one question. The member for Souris-Cannington may stop his frowning. I am winding down.

Mr. Minister, it has to do with the early retirements. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if any actuarial studies were done with respect to the increased cost of those early retirements — with respect to the increased cost of those early retirements. To a casual observer who was not entirely, I must admit, not entirely familiar with the intimate detail of those early retirements, it appears to me that those retirees were getting an enriched pension without anyone making an additional contribution to the pension fund. You were, therefore, increasing the unfunded liability. In effect you're borrowing from future generations.

Now if I'm wrong, Mr. Minister, I'm happy to be wrong, but I think that's an accurate statement that they got an enriched pension without any additional contributions being made to the superannuation fund.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: I'm getting into some of this technical stuff. I'm not real conversant on it, but PEBA (Public Employees Benefits Agency) looked at it relative to the actuarial soundness. It was obviously something that had a great . . . was given a great deal of attention. The projected annualized savings over five years is \$226,380,000. And I mean, the essential element in this early retirement scheme, I think for myself and many others, if you look at it very conceptually, is early retirement only works if you don't back-fill one for every one that takes early retirement.

At the same time we recognized that we had to make sure we had the critical functions covered. And we set for ourselves a goal of only back-filling, one-third across government. That means that some departments might fill three out of three, others might zero out of three, and that's the basis for how it works, if you like.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I'm just simply not interested in those figures as to what you think you've saved. That was not the question I asked. The question I asked, Mr. Minister, is what is the additional cost to the superannuation fund of the enriched pensions.

It will suffice, Mr. Minister, if there was an actuarial study done, if you simply undertake to supply it to me. If there wasn't an actuarial study done, then there's a couple of more questions which follow. But if you have an actuarial study and will give me a copy of it, that will suffice for this evening, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I mentioned it comes under PEBA, the Minister of Finance, as I understand it. And I can undertake to see if in fact that they can make it available to us. I don't have any difficulty with it, except that I don't have it.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, are you saying — whether or not a copy was done — nobody bothered to give your Public Service Commission a look at it? I just can't believe that, Mr. Minister. I can't believe you'd do

this without an actuarial study, and I can't believe that your commission doesn't have it.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — As I understand it, they made the recommendation to it. We didn't enter into this exercise in isolation, but they're the pension experts and it made good sense to use them, and if they were satisfied, we were satisfied.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 33 agreed to.

Supplementary Estimates 1988 Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Public Service Commission Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 33

Mr. Chairman: — Are there any questions?

That, it is my pleasure to inform the Assembly, is the end of the 1977-78 estimates.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, just before we close off Public Service Commission, I'd just like to thank my officials for not only their help tonight but their help over a particularly strenuous year since I've been minister in charge of the Public Service Commission. It's been a year of challenges, and I think it's fair to say that some of that uncertainty and insecurity is well behind us now. They've performed above and beyond the call of duty, if you like, and I just would want you and other members — indeed the people in Saskatchewan — to know how much we appreciate their efforts over the last year and indeed over the last several years, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I also want to thank their officials for their courtesy in attending this evening and assisting us.

Mr. Chairman, I'm interested in your comment that there are no more estimates to be done. legislation? Did we do that this afternoon . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, I may have missed that. All right.

Motions for Supply

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman:

Resolved that towards 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 \$380,295,180 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1988, the sum of \$1,042,379,600 be granted out of the

Consolidated Fund.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman:

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 \$20 million be granted out of the Saskatchewan Heritage Fund.

Motion agreed to.

(2015)

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman:

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, 1988, the sum of \$269,036,300 be granted out of the Saskatchewan Heritage Fund.

Motion agreed to.

The Committee reported progress.

FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move that the resolutions be now read a first and second time.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the resolutions read a first and second time.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move:

Bill No. 98, An Act for the Granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Years Ending Respectively on March 31, 1987 and March 31, 1988, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: — The Minister has indicated that the Bill be read with leave later this day.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I was under the impression, and I apologize to the Chamber, that we had not gone into the committee on this Bill and I thought we had, and I understand that it's been already . . . that's already been done. And the resolution . . . and so we're down to simply the final speeches with regard to the budget and I apologize for that. And I would be prepared, with the permission of the House, to proceed with that at this point in time.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This particular session clearly has been a very long, and in many ways, a difficult session, I think, for members on all sides of the House. What we . . . We began this session later than usual, and that was as a result of an election coming and, of course, the process that follows after an election in reorganizing the government and preparing a budget.

I think what this budget did, as presented by the Minister of Finance, who is unable to be here tonight, Mr. Speaker, because he is in Toronto attending a meeting of Finance ministers from across the country, raising the concern, Mr. Speaker, at that meeting about the new tax reform proposal that the federal government would impact upon Saskatchewan farmers with regard to a new system of accounting that would have serious and significant ramifications on Saskatchewan farmers at a time when Saskatchewan farmers can ill afford to have a system that brings in their inventory into income and therefore have to pay significantly more taxation. So from that point of view, I will stand in his place tonight.

I will be very brief at this point in time, Mr. Speaker. let me say this: as we set about this year to deal with this particular budget, the problems we faced were no different than the problems that are faced by many farmers in the province of Saskatchewan — a situation where their revenues, being the price of wheat, had fallen and fallen dramatically. It had fallen dramatically because of events, not of their making, but of events that were of the making of the greater part of the world. And that, to a degree, was the trade wars between United States and Europe. They had the significant effect of driving down the price of wheat, and we all understand that, those who are in any way associated with rural constituencies or those of us who have members of our family in the farming industry.

They are faced with the same type of problem that the government is faced with, and that's because government reflects that particular situation on the farm, which is such a large part of our economy. The farmer has been faced with the problem of revenues dropping, expenditures still continuing, the interest rates still ticking, the cost of fertilizer going up, the cost of chemicals going up, and the same type of thing exists with government. Revenues drop when you have that problem in the farm economy and other economies. And that's what is, in fact, seen and that's what has, in fact, happened.

And we as a government, not unlike the farmer, had to face up to that reality — and as hard many farmers have had to do of tightening their belt, pulling in and making cuts. None of those are easy. Just as you cut back on maybe as much fertilizer as you'd like to use or cut back on the chemicals or the ability to buy a new tractor or a new combine, government also had to pare down and cut back.

And like the farmer you can say, well we could solve that problem if we just didn't take a holiday this year. All farmers know that that doesn't work. The reality is you've got to get to the issues and to the items that cost, and cost significantly. And you have to try pulling those down just as government has to try to pull the expenditures of

government down in a way that one preserves the basic farm, just as we have to do it, that we preserve the basic and fundamentals of what government provides. And that's what we've attempted and tried to do today. That's exactly what this budget has been about.

And cuts there were, and nobody ever likes making cuts that is a politician. But whether you like it or not, you have to do it. You have to do it in the interests of today, but most importantly you have to do it in the interests of tomorrow, just like the farmer has to make those cut-backs if the farmer wants to preserve that farm and preserve that way of life. And that's exactly what we've done. We've had to say in the field of health care and education, which are two very fundamental questions a government must provide, that you must try to get by with what you had last year. We're not going cut it back, but can you live with the same amount of money that you had last year.

And we thought that wasn't that much to ask. We knew it was going to be some stress involved in that, and we knew that there was going to have to be some uproar, and there was, but we had to do it, just as a farmer had to do it.

We made sure that we preserved health care spending, and we made sure that we preserved spending in education, and we made sure that we did what we could for the farm community of this province, and we've done . . . I think anybody, if they wanted to be fair in the analysis of this government, would be wrong if they said that his government has not stood and helped and assisted the farmers of this province through some very difficult times. I think that would be a fair statement by anybody to make.

Some, obviously, say we've give them too much, and then there's others on the farm that are pressed, say we haven't given them enough and need more and more. And you must find a balance, and that's what it is to be a responsible government in this particular time and this particular cycle.

And we had to, as well, look at trying to contain that debt, and I think that the moves made in this budget certainly cut down the debt that was growing in a very, very difficult and troublesome way in this province.

And if you're going to cut down that debt, Mr. Speaker, as you must do, as the farmer must do, there's no easy way of doing that. We can sit and say, you shouldn't have done this and you shouldn't have done that and you shouldn't have taxed and you shouldn't have cut. But is that really responsible and is that really realistic to the problem that you have to do?

In simple mathematics, Mr. Speaker, the reality is if you're going to pull down the debt of government, there's only two ways of doing it. You can raise additional revenues, or you can cut expenditures that you have there. In this budget, we sought to try to seek a balance. Neither one of those are very popular politically, and neither one of those are likely to draw many votes for you or many praises for you. The average person will say, well why tax me? Tax the other guy. And he will say, don't cut my program; cut somebody else's program. And that's the reality that we must face up to.

(2030)

This debate on the budget, I think to a degree did not focus on, and I think should have focused on, the reality and the economic realities that we face in this province and in this country. We can spend hours and days and days on estimates as it related, let's say, to the Department of Environment. I don't know what it was, 30, almost 30 days. It seemed like for ever, and we didn't address those fundamental questions, Mr. Speaker. We spent, in this Assembly dealing with this budget, Mr. Speaker, 15 to 20 times, more times, more hours of this legislature's time on the Department of the Environment than we did on the Department of Agriculture. Now coming from a rural constituency and representing farmers, I wonder if we should pat ourselves on the back. And I say to the members of the opposition, should they pat themselves on the back that they have given small attention to that field of agriculture?

The issues, Mr. Speaker, in modern society are complex. The issues of modern society, Mr. Speaker, are not going to be dealt with by rhetoric; they are going to be dealt with by proper assessment of the problem and action. I think that's what people want. People don't like, and have not become accustomed in this province for a long period of time, to have to face up to that. What we're facing up to is the same thing that the rest of the country is going to have to face up to. How do we deal with our farmers? How do we deal with education that is so fundamental to deal with, and change it because it needs changing and deal with the whole area of health care, and at the same time, Mr. Speaker, find ways by which we can diversify the economy of our province? We can no longer simply rely on the fact that we can grow wheat on summer fallow, and that we can pull oil out of the ground, or pull potash out of the ground, and all will be well. We must seek ways to diversify and that is an effort that this government has made. And I think the success of this government has been the capacity to develop those additional projects, whether it's an upgrader in the city of Regina; a new paper plant in the city of Prince Albert; a new recreation vehicle manufacturing plant in the city of North Battleford; Marubeni-Hitachi in the city of Saskatoon. And the list goes on and on and I won't dwell on it tonight in this late hour.

Mr. Speaker, what this budget was about is the following things: protect our health care system; reform our education system; protect our farmers; and build and diversify our economy. That is not an easy challenge, Mr. Speaker. That is what this budget was about, that is what this legislature was about. I believe it is a good start, Mr. Speaker. I believe that the people will see the way it has to be done and the direction that we're going to do.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this budget put a change in the direction of the fundamental politics of this province and, Mr. Speaker, I believe in the long run that the people of this province and the system of government in this province and the system of providing services in this province will be better for it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to

address this Bill with a few remarks this evening, because, Mr. Speaker, I think that what we have witnessed, during this session and during this budget debate and during the consideration of these estimates, deserves the attention of the members of this House in the same way that it has received attention by the public throughout all of Saskatchewan.

They have not received it well, Mr. Speaker. They have received it with disappointment and with a sense of betrayal.

Now the member began, opposite, by saying that this has been a difficult session. yes, it has been a difficult session. For whom has it been a difficult session? it's been a difficult session for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — It's been a difficult session for the people of Saskatchewan because they have been faced with the harshest and the cruellest cut in essential services that this province has ever seen in its existence, while the government at the same time has been imposing on them the highest tax increases that this province has ever seen in its history.

Oh it may have been difficult for the government members. The opposition does not complain, because in the opposition we believe we have a responsibility to raise the issues that the people are concerned about. It may have been difficult for the government members, but the polls and where they stand on those polls are their concerns, and they created the kind of situation that they find themselves in.

Now I found it really ironical — I would have said laughable, but this is not a laughable matter — when I sat here and listened to that minister get up and he said, the farmer . . . The problems faced by government are no different than the problems faced by the farmer. Well they are different, Mr. Speaker.

And I want the member from Cut Knife to know that they are different in this way. That the farmers of this province have serious problems is true. That's why in the opposition we have asked time after time after time for that government to tell them when they're going to get their deficiency payment, and they've refused. They have refused. The Premier put on the order paper in the early part of July a resolution which said very clearly:

That this Assembly call on the Government of Canada to continue support of agriculture (by) announcing immediately its intention (for) . . . a deficiency payment of \$1.6 billion . . .

They put that on the order paper in July and to this day this government has never brought that item up for debate in this legislature. That's how much priority they put in the problems that the farmer faces.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Farmers of this province have problems, but it is not because they're bad managers.

They are the most efficient farmers in the world. The difference the members opposite should understand is that the government has problems because they have mismanaged the affairs of this province to the extent where they have created those problems for themselves.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — That's the difference, Mr. Speaker, because of mismanagement, because of dishonesty. The farmer's revenues dropped drastically while his costs went up. But the revenues of this government did not drop. The revenues of this government went up. The people have paid more income tax and continue to pay more income tax than they did in 1982. People have paid more property tax when they took away the property improvement grant. The people are paying many millions of dollars more in sales tax.

The oil revenues that this government had available to it did not drop for the longest period of time. In 1981, oil revenues to Saskatchewan were \$533 million, and the government of that day balanced the budget and ran a surplus of \$140 million, but in 1984 this government had oil revenues of \$740 million and they ran a massive deficit. That's mismanagement. That's the difference, Mr. Speaker. It's a fallacious argument to say that the problems of this government and the problems of the farmer are the same, because they're not. The farmer has managed; this government has not managed; and it has wasted money and has handed out in patronage to the extent that now they have created a debt for the people of Saskatchewan of \$3.4 billion. And they are to blame for that deficit and that debt, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Now the minister opposite says that there was not an addressing of the fundamental issues. Well I want to say to this House and through you, Mr. Speaker, what were the issues? The issues were: is this government fair? That was the debate in this House and the resounding conclusion was, no, this government has not been fair with the people. The issue is: has this government been sensitive? No, it has not been sensitive. Has this government been honest? No, it has not been honest. Has this government been competent? It has been extremely incompetent. Has this government been secretive? It has been so secretive, Mr. Speaker, that it has not provided public accounts when they should have been provided. It did not provide the budget until June 17, months after the fiscal year began. It has instructed officials in the Crown corporations not to provide information to the Provincial Auditor which by law he is required to have. This is a secretive government. The issue is: has this government been, and is it credible? And the answer is no.

On all of those measures, Mr. Speaker, the report card records failure. They have failed the people of Saskatchewan. The people of this province were shown something during this debate. The people were shown what this government's real agenda is. A significant thing that has come out of this session is, the public of Saskatchewan know what the PC agenda for the province of Saskatchewan is. The people have been deceived and

they have been betrayed and they have been disappointed. They were promised tax cuts. Instead they have received massive tax increases in an unfair way, while friends of the government have tax decreases at \$300 million a year in the oil industry.

The people were promised improved health care, and instead our health care programs have been ravaged by this Conservative government. The people were told that jobs and education would be improved. Instead, Mr. Speaker, we have record unemployment and students are being turned away today from our universities and our technical schools. That is the agenda of this government that has come forward and the people have known to understand. It has been revealed.

But what makes it even worse is that the agenda of this government is tied to the agenda of the Mulroney government in Ottawa. The Premier showed, in this session and in this debate on this budget, that he is completely tied to the Mulroney agenda on any and every issue. He's prepared to sell out this province as he has on some occasions. He's prepared to sell out this province to carry out the wishes of the Prime Minister because he thinks he owes him something. And as a result, Mr. Speaker, one has to ask: who speaks for Saskatchewan? The Premier doesn't speak for Saskatchewan. He's prepared to give in on every issue that's important to Saskatchewan and western Canada and betray the people who elected him to be the Premier.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the public of Saskatchewan is demanding honesty. It's demanding competence and it's demanding fairness. And instead, what this government has shown in this debate is that it's arrogant, that it's secretive, that it's incompetent, and that it's dishonest. Those are some of the fundamental issues that have been debated and discussed in this budget.

Let's go to the beginning. Why, Mr. Speaker, was the budget so late? Oh I know the Minister of Finance said, well the budget had to be late because they were doing so thorough an analysis. And yet when he came to this House with his legislation in committee on the gasoline tax, he couldn't answer one single question that was asked by the critic from Regina North West. He took all this time to prepare so carefully and yet he didn't have the answers.

That's not the reason for the delay in the budget. The reason was because they wanted to hide as much of that Tory agenda from the people of Saskatchewan as possible, and they knew that the moment they called this House into session, that agenda would be exposed, as it was.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Now, Mr. Speaker, this government did not finally come forward with a session and a budget until the New Democratic Party had a legal opinion and forced the government to call a session and introduce the budget under threat of having to be taken to the courts to justify what they were doing. Only then did they act, Mr. Speaker.

(2045)

There's been a cruel betrayal. There's been a betrayal of the trust that the people have given to this government and other governments with regard to health care. In this year of the 25th anniversary of the introduction of medicare, one would have thought that we would have been able to celebrate this great achievement on the North American continent, and instead there was no reason to celebrate because the government had served notice that it intends to undermine medicare and our health programs until, in their view, they are privatized and are much like those in the United States.

And we saw an example today in question period, when the example was brought by the Leader of the Opposition, that chronically ill patients are now being charged when they get their medication dispensed. Now how can anyone defend that as being the kind of medicare and hospitalization programs that the people of Saskatchewan built and cared for and developed?

Is building medicare and improving it, cutting back on the prescription drug plan so that people have to pay hundreds of dollars a month? People who have to pay up to a half of their monthly income for prescription drugs and then hope that the government might return some of it in five, six, seven weeks?

It isn't building medicare when you take thousands of children and you say to them, you will no longer have a dental plan like you used to have under the children's dental program because they're going to privatize it and they're going to fire 400 dental therapists, and now people have to drive 60 or 70 miles to see a dentist and they used to be able to send their children to the school and get the care? That budget destroys that program.

Is it building medicare, Mr. Speaker, and the hospitalization and the health programs, when we see, in the city of Saskatoon alone, the waiting lists growing to 11,000 people who are waiting for surgery? That's not building our health care program, Mr. Speaker; that's destroying it. That's a betrayal of promises made by each and every one of those Conservative members since 1982.

It's a betrayal, Mr. Speaker, and what has been the response of the government? Seven thousand people in June came to this legislature to say to the Premier they did not agree with the approach that he was taking. Did he listen? No. He stood up and he said, they're a bunch of radicals.

One hundred thousand people signed petitions expressing their concern about this devastating attack on our health programs, and what did the Premier say? He said, they're all childish. They're all childish, he said.

Today the Premier threatened to slap people around who didn't agree with what he had to say — in this House, this distinguished Premier. Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say this to him. This government and this Premier has slapped our senior citizens around; he has slapped our sick people around; he has slapped the poor around; he has slapped our students around; he has slapped workers

around; he has slapped our farmers around — and people of this province are sick and tired of being slapped around. And come the next election, they're going to slap him right out of office.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Is it any wonder that it's now over four months since the Conservative member in Saskatoon Eastview has resigned, leaving those people without representation, and the Premier has still not called a by-election?

It shouldn't matter so much whether the government will lose a member or the opposition will gain one. I think the results on this one are pretty evident. What should matter is: are the people in the democratic state being represented by their member? And in this case, they're not. And when the Premier is asked, when will you call a by-election; he laughs it off and says, whenever he wants to. It shouldn't be solely his decision. It should be a decision based on what the needs of the people are, it should be based on fairness, and it should be based on honesty.

Now what we have seen also in this budget debate, Mr. Speaker, is a huge deception — a huge deception. A year ago last March the Minister of Finance stood in this House and he said to the people of Saskatchewan that he had the budget under control. He had the budget under control and it was going to be \$389 million. In August . . . That's what the deficit would be.

In August of 1986, I said, and other members said, the deficit was going to be much more than that, and the Minister of Finance said, absolutely not. And the Premier went around the province during the election and he said, absolutely not more than \$500 million. And guess what it was? It turned out to be \$1.2 billion, and they knew it all the time and they didn't tell the public what it was going to be. They deceived the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. And that's one of the fundamental issues that was debated in this budget debate.

Another broken promise, Mr. Speaker, was that of the promise of jobs. What does this budget provide in job creation? It provides nothing. As a matter of fact, it cut back by 70 per cent the summer job creation program for students so that students this summer, in many cases, went all summer without a job. Not only did they cut back on the assistance that students could go to university, but they cut back on the job programs which students used to rely on so they could fund their way back into university. Another broken promise.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is a betrayal of the people of Saskatchewan. It betrays the election promises made in 1982 and in 1986. It betrays Saskatchewan young people from whom hope has been taken away. It betrays medicare and our health programs. It betrays rural Saskatchewan and our family farmers. It betrays all of those things that they, opposite, promised the people of Saskatchewan that they would do.

And what's the legacy? The legacy is this: this government took in 1982 a surplus of \$140 million,

which they had in the kitty that they could have put to good use, and they have run that \$140 million surplus into an accumulated deficit of \$3.4 billion since 1982 — five short years. And the result of that is that this year and every year forward, under that deficit, the people of Saskatchewan have to pay \$300 million of interest to the loaning companies and the banks in Eastern Canada and the United States before they can spend a penny to repair their roads or pay nurses' salaries or pay for people who are waiting for surgery in our hospitals.

What is the other legacy? Well, Mr. Speaker, in March of 1982, this province had an equity of \$1.09 billion — \$1 billion. That was net equity. Putting it into simple terms, if the Minister of Finance decided to sell off everything that the province had, there would have been an equity left . . . a surplus left of \$1 billion. Do you know today, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Finance did that in 1987, disposed of all the assets of the province, we would be still left with a debt of \$1.9 billion. That's the kind of debacle that this government has brought about because of their mismanagement.

The issue in this budget hasn't been the things that the minister announced in this budget speech. The issue has been the things which I mentioned a little earlier. It's been the Tory, conservative agenda. It's an agenda which says, tear everything down, tear everything down the generations of Saskatchewan people working together have built so that they could better their life and so that their children could have a better life. Tear it down and ask somebody from outside to come here and build it in their own way.

The Mulroney-Reagan trade agreement is a good example. Tear down the security that farmers used to have and invite American investors to come in and buy up the farm land. Let them buy it up and let the farmers be the serfs of the landowners who won't even live in this country. That's the Conservative agenda. That's the Conservative agenda.

They never believed in a universal health care program. People have been told, people have known that for some time, but they now are reconfirmed in that belief because of what this government has done to health care. It is clear that this government is destroying health care because they don't think that it's an appropriate thing for people to do — to share so that everybody is protected as best they can.

Mr. Speaker, this is a budget of betrayal. It is a budget that tells us which direction this government is heading. It is not a budget that I or any other member on my . . . of my colleagues on this side of the House can defend. And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, we're going to oppose it here in the House, we're going to oppose it throughout all of Saskatchewan, and we're going to continue to oppose it until the day when this Premier finally calls a by-election in Eastview and then one in . . . general election in Saskatchewan so that the people can be rid of this government before they completely destroy the things which they have built and developed throughout the generations which we now have, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(2103)

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 32

Muller	Martin
Duncan	Toth
Andrew	Sauder
Berntson	Johnson
Taylor	McLaren
Smith	Hopfner
Swan	Petersen
Muirhead	Swenson
Maxwell	Martens
Hodgins	Baker
Gerich	Gleim
Hepworth	Neudorf
Hardy	Gardner
Klein	Kopelchuk
Meiklejohn	Saxinger
Pickering	Britton

Nays — 23

Blakeney	Atkinson
Prebble	Anguish
Brockelbank	Hagel
Shillington	Lyons
Koskie	Calvert
Tchorzewski	Lautermilch
Thompson	Trew
Rolfes	Smart
Mitchell	Van Mulligen
Simard	Koenker
Solomon	Goodale
Kowalsky	

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Bill read a second and third time and passed under its title.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Bill No. 55 — An Act to provide for the Division of Saskatchewan into Constituencies for the Election of Members of the Legislative Assembly

Clause 1

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

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, my official is Doug Moen, co-ordinator of legislative services, Department of Justice.

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Mr. Chairperson, ordinarily when we put a new Bill in to substitute an old Bill, it's done for the purpose of improving upon the old Bill, and it usually isn't done unless there are very major and substantial changes that

are necessary to improve the old Bill.

Now the problem we have with this is the government has come forward with a new Bill that does absolutely nothing to improve on the old Bill. In fact we submit, Mr. Chairperson, that it goes a long way to destroying the principle of representation by population, and to destroy the good that was in the old Bill.

The old Act, for example, provided for the establishment of an independent commission and now the government is proposing to politicize the commission that describes the boundaries of constituencies in the province of Saskatchewan. The old Act provided for the two northern ridings and 63 southern ridings to be divided up with a variation of 15 per cent only in terms of number of population. The new Act now comes along and it subscribes and it limits urban constituencies to 29 in the Act, and it subscribes exactly how many rural, 35; exactly how many urban, 29. It enshrines this in legislation and does not give the commission the power to determine how many urban or rural constituencies there should be in order to meet, as closely as reasonably possible, the principle of representation by population. The government has chosen to sway from that principle and move substantially far afield in their new Bill.

The old Bill provided for public hearings on the matter and for public involvement. The old Bill provided for that, Mr. Chairperson. And when one takes a look at the old Bill, one would readily come to the conclusion that the piece of legislation that we now have, that's now before us on the books, is a fair and just piece of legislation. But instead the government has to come through with a piece of legislation that totally repeals the old Act, puts in its own Act for prescribing the constituency boundaries, politicizes the commission, moves away from the principle of representation by population so that the variation is 25 per cent now — which comes to a total of 50 per cent when you consider the fact it can vary on either side of the provincial quotient by 25 per cent. You could have a constituency in Regina, for example, with 7,500 voters and the one next door with 12,500 voters, some 50 per cent variation. So there's absolutely no question that this new Bill does nothing, absolutely nothing to improve the law, Mr. Chairperson — nothing. It is simply designed to be a blueprint for a gerrymander by the PC government. And so my question to the minister is: could he please tell us what was wrong with the old commission that was provided for in the old piece of legislation?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, the opposition has argued very eloquently on the principle of equality of vote, but they have not once touched on the principle of quality of vote. And, Mr. Chairman, the constituency boundaries commission of 1979 even recognized that there must be a balance between quality of vote and equality of vote. And I simply quote, Mr. Chairman, from that report of April 1980. And the first quote I will present to you concerns equality of representation, and it reads as follows:

The right to vote is a cherished right, hard won in the past through resolute conviction. Stemming from this right to vote is the justifiable expectation

that one elector's vote should, within reason, weigh equally with another elector's vote elsewhere in the province.

The second quote, Mr. Speaker, deals with quality of representation as opposed to equality of representation. And it's as follows on page 4 of the report of April 1980:

Government today is complex and sophisticated and constituents need ready access to the elected representative. Agricultural Saskatchewan has a relatively large populated area with a relatively sparse population. This makes the process of contesting elections and representing of the constituency by the successful candidate after the election a markedly different problem from that experienced by prospective candidates and the successful candidate in an urban constituency.

Those two principles, Mr. Speaker, were recognized by the commission of 1979-80. They were recognized as well, Mr. Speaker, and have long been recognized, as it relates to the sparsely populated area of northern Saskatchewan. They have been recognized in other jurisdictions, and particularly in Canada as a whole, where, for instance, the province of New Brunswick or the province of Prince Edward Island constitutionally has no less than four members in the federal House of Commons, and by a simple arithmetic calculation based on a Canadian quotient, they would deserve fewer than that.

(2115)

As well, Mr. Chairman, Saskatchewan is guaranteed 14 . . . constitutionally no less than 14 seats in the House of commons. And recognizing the principle of quality of representation as well as equality of representation, Saskatchewan has been guaranteed 14 members in the House of Commons. And by a strictly arithmetic calculation based on the Canadian quotient, my guess is that Saskatchewan would, in fact, have much less representation in the House of Commons.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, the member argues that the 25 per cent variance to the quotient is somehow out of line and that it ought not to be.

Well, Mr. Speaker, British Columbia has a 25 per cent variance; Manitoba, north of the 53rd parallel, of course. Ontario has a 25 per cent variance; Quebec has a 25 per cent variance; Canada has a 25 per cent variance; and, Mr. Chairman, Newfoundland has a 25 per cent variance. So what we're talking about here, Mr. speaker, are two principles recognized by the electoral boundaries commission back in 1979-80, and by others in other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, where quality and equality of vote must be considered. And with the growing urban populations, Mr. Speaker, it's right and proper that that be taken into consideration. So with the growing urban populations in the two major centres there has been recognition of that, and it is therefore recommended in this legislation that each of Saskatoon and Regina have one more seat added to those particular centres.

It's also recognized, Mr. Speaker, that the urban

population — as was recognized for the northern population for a long time in this province — that the urban population is flat at best and, in some areas, may be declining. It's recognized that while the principle of equality of vote is very important, the principle of quality of vote must also be taken into consideration. And therefore, Mr. Chairman, we have done just that and taken the principle of quality and equality into consideration in drafting this legislation.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, that is just a red herring and you know it. For you to go into this long explanation about equality and quality, the 15 per cent variation that existed in the old piece of legislation met those principles fully. and the only reason for the increase to 25 per cent is to meet your party's personal political agenda.

So let's be up front about this. It wasn't necessary, Mr. Minister, for the purpose of meeting both principles.

What I want to know, which was my question, Mr. Minister, and you didn't answer it, is: what was wrong with the old commission? What was wrong with the old commission the way it was established?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, in the view of many, particularly those that were the drafters of the throne speech that talked about this kind of legislation coming forward in this session almost a year ago, I would guess — I don't recall just exactly what day the throne speech was tabled — but it was important, it was important to those people, Mr. Speaker, that particularly in rural Saskatchewan and in northern Saskatchewan that the principle, the two principles, of equality and quality of vote be recognized and dealt with.

And with urban growth and with either flat or declining rural populations, it was the belief of those people that there was some adjustment necessary to accommodate the urban . . . or pardon me, the rural populations in this province.

Now let me give you an example, and this is as simple as I can make it. In the city of Regina under this new legislation you will have 11 MLAs, 11 MLAs to deal with one city council, two school boards, you know, and the several interest groups that exist in the city of Regina and so on, and you do all that within a 20-mile or a 10-mile radius.

In Souris-Cannington, this constituency that I represent, I have probably four school boards, 20-odd urban municipal bodies, four hospital boards, eight, I think, rural municipalities, plus all of the interest groups. East and west, I have about 110 miles to cover; north and south, I have about 80 miles to cover.

What we're talking about there, Mr. Chairman, is quality of representation — quality as opposed to equality. And, I mean, you don't have to be, you don't have to be too smart — even some members opposite should be able to figure this out — that the quality of vote in our sparsely populated areas deserves consideration. It has been recognized in other jurisdictions. It has been recognized by Canada as it relates to our northern populations, and Prince Edward island, and even Saskatchewan — and it

should be recognized by Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Chairperson, what the minister refuses to realize is that we are not arguing about quality of representation as he claims he has in his constituency of Souris-Cannington. What is happening in the cities is that they aren't being properly represented. We're not suggesting that you should have a larger area to cover, necessarily, but what you could do is increase the number of seats in urban centres. You don't necessarily meet quality of representation in rural Saskatchewan by keeping the city seats, the number of city seats down. That doesn't meet the principle of quality of representation in rural Saskatchewan. That argument's totally illogical.

So you keep it down to 29 urban seats because that's going to give you better representation in Souris-Cannington? That's your logic, Mr. Minister, and that just doesn't work. You still haven't answered my question. What was wrong with the old commission?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I went through it once. But let me tell you, Mr. Chairman, what other people are saying, what other people are saying about this legislation. And I have . . .

An Hon. Member: — Let's talk about Dr. Norman Ward. What did Dr. Ward say?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I'd like to talk about that a little later.

But, Mr. Chairman, this is the *Leader-Post* of Friday, October 30. This says, in part, "This has the opposition crying foul." We're talking about the 25 per cent variance and the 29 urban seats versus the 35 rural seats.

This has the Opposition crying foul and the government defending the changes on (the) grounds of greater distances . . . (sparse population, etc., etc.)

In fact, (they say) the 25-per-cent variance is in keeping with the provision of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, which allows deviations of that magnitude from the average constituency population when setting (federal) boundaries . . .

It goes on to say, Mr. Chairman:

While the concept of each vote having an equal weight squares with the ideal of one-man-one-vote, it has long been recognized that absolute adherence to the principle of representation by population is impractical under our electoral system. Within that voting regime, there is implicit the notion that in addition to representing individual voters, an MP or MLA represents a community of interest reflecting the distinct human and geographic characteristics of a constituency — be it urban, rural or suburban.

An unwillingness to recognize this on the provincial level — say, in terms of the role

agriculture and rural life play in this province — could make it all the harder to press home that point federally.

Measures built into the federal electoral laws prevent a reduction below 14 (in this province, the House of Commons representation in 1976) in the number of Saskatchewan MPs, even though by strict mathematical reckoning, we (should) have less.

In pressing its case for what it contends is a (fair) distribution of seats provincially, the Opposition (and this is that chronicle of truth and honesty, the *Leader-Post*, the opposition) inadvertently may be playing right into the hands of those who would like nothing better than to pare down this province's political representation in Ottawa.

Mr. Chairman, the only point I make here — and the major point to be made relative to this Bill — is that there are two principles to be recognized and a balance to be found between the two principles; and that is the principle of equality of representation and the quality of representation.

It's not new; it's not new. It exists in Canada; it exists in Newfoundland and in Alberta and in Ontario and in Quebec, and we don't claim any originality to the concept. We think it's right, we think it's fair; we think that rural Canada makes a disproportionate contribution to the economy and the life of our province and should therefore be recognized through quality of vote for that contribution.

Ms. Simard: — Well that's a very nice lecture, Mr. Minister, but you still haven't answered my question which was: what was wrong with the old commission? And I'm rapidly coming to the conclusion, Mr. Minister, that you don't want to answer the question. But I'm going to give you one more chance. What was wrong with the old commission, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, far be it from me to suggest that there is anything fundamentally wrong with the old commission. I just happen to believe that the new commission is better. And that's not my opinion alone.

And I want to quote, I want to quote again from another chronicle of honesty and truth, the *Star-Phoenix*, when it talks about the new Act would change membership on the commission.

The next Act would change membership on the commission from one judge, the Clerk at the legislature, an appointee of the Speaker, selected in consultation with government and opposition leaders, to the two judges, (pardon me, two judges), and the chief Electoral Officer. The latter (and they acknowledge — the latter), although a government appointee, should have the technical expertise which would recommend him to the job while the impartiality of the commission as a whole with the two judges (Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman) remains unchallenged.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, what the old commission consisted of — which was a very independent commission — a judge appointed by the chief judge for Saskatchewan, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, which is a non-political person, an officer of this Assembly, and one member appointed by the Speaker after consultation with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. So there was even consultation with the Leader of the Opposition under the old commission.

(2130)

This new commission however removes the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly — he is no longer there — and substitutes it with a person who is appointed by cabinet and who is a political appointment, and that's the Chief Electoral Officer. And there is absolutely no question in the minds of the public or any right-minded person in this province who . . . There's absolutely no question that that politicizes the commission. There's no question about that.

And for you to deny that, Mr. Minister, is not being up front with this House, because that is now a political commission. There was — and the answer to my question is — there was nothing wrong with the old commission. The old commission was good and workable, and you wanted to change it in order to politicize the commission. That's why you changed the commission.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — And you've been quoting at length at some editorial in the *Leader-Post* that you've read. And I just want to say, Mr. Minister, that Dr. Norman Ward, a political scientist from the University of Saskatchewan, does not agree with you. He is so appalled by the way this Bill has been set up that he has said he wouldn't sit on this commission even if he was asked to. And I might suggest that I think he's been involved in former . . . has he not? . . . He's been involved in former constituency boundary reviews. He said he wouldn't even sit on this commission if he was asked. That's how fair he thinks your commission is and your Bill is.

Now with respect to another point that you've been making about representation by population and taking it too far. We have said we agree with a variation, and that's the 15 per cent, but we also say that your 25 per cent variation wasn't necessary in order to meet the two principles of equality and quality. It wasn't necessary. But even more so, if you want to meet the principle of quality of representation in rural Saskatchewan, fine, we have no problem with that. We want quality of representation in rural Saskatchewan, but that doesn't mean that urban centres should suffer in as much as their vote counts less in order for you to meet these standards. The two don't follow, Mr. Minister. They don't follow, and it's not necessary that one suffers in order for the others to meet their standards.

So I would like to know also — with respect to determining the provincial quotient, what the old legislation did was to take northern Saskatchewan population for calculating the quotient for northern Saskatchewan, and the southern quotient was calculated

by looking at the southern population. Now, Mr. Minister, why have you changed that formula? Could you please tell us what was wrong with determining the provincial quotient in the old manner?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — We've come quite a distance since we started here several minutes ago. We have the member now acknowledging that there are two fundamental and important principles to be considered in designing, if you like, constituencies or constituency boundaries. When we began it was the equality principle that she acknowledged, and that was it. Now she's acknowledging that yes, quality, quality of vote is also important, and she acknowledges that now.

And the question as it relates to the 25 per cent variance in the quotient difference between the North and the South as it previously existed, we are saying that the quotient, the provincial quotient should be the provincial quotient. And because of the unique situation in the North where distances and scarcity are considerably different than they are in the South, and where in the South rural they are considerably different than they are in the South urban, we have said that we will have the provincial quotient, but in the North there will be a 50 per cent variance, in the South rural there will be a 25 per cent variance, and in the south urban there will be an 25 per cent variance.

A couple of examples of how wonky things got between the filing of the last report and the legislation of the old commission was tabled, and the last election. In the city of Saskatoon, it was . . . Mayfair . . . Mayfair was well beyond, like well beyond the . . . And in the old scheme of things, Mr. Chairman, in the old scheme of things, there was a review every eight years, and that was it; then it was fixed, and it was rigid. Now, when any constituency gets beyond the 25 per cent variance, it triggers a review, and so it can be adjusted from time to time to maintain, Mr. Chairman, not only equality of vote, but quality of vote.

So I hope the member understands those two very important principles: the provincial quotient, the reason for the higher quotient in the North, and the reason for the urban and rural distinction in the South.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, we have always acknowledged the need for a variation, for some allowance with respect to distances in rural Saskatchewan, but you're eroding the principle of equality of vote, and that's why we've been concentrating on that because you're eroding that principle by enshrining in your legislation only 29 urban seats. You're eroding that principle, Mr. Minister.

And with respect to the northern constituencies, here is what you have done. You've established a provincial quotient now that goes right across the province, and in order to allow for the differing populations in the North, you have put in a 50 per cent variation which, Mr. Minister, amounts to 100 per cent variation. It could be 100 per cent variation when you look at the fact that one of those northern constituencies could be 50 per cent below the provincial and the other could be 50 per cent above.

So in the two northern constituencies, one could be 100

— there could be 100 per cent more voters in one than the other one. That's what this Bill does. It allows you to draw up constituencies in the North that make the population in one 100 per cent larger than the population in the other, whereas under the old method, you used the provincial quotient for the North and then determined the variation off that quotient, which made a great deal more sense, Mr. Minister. It made a great deal more sense. But now you can carve up the North the way you want and the variation, the 100 per cent variation is legal under your Bill.

Now, Mr. Minister, I would like to know why you have set the number of urban and rural constituencies in the Act, and why you haven't left it up to the commission to determine how many urban or rural constituencies there should be. And I'm asking you why you've done that?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — It's in recognition, Mr. Speaker, of the report of the . . . or the principles in the report of April 1980 when they talked about equality and quality of representation and community of interest, Mr. Speaker.

And to the extent that it's possible. I think it's right and proper that rural seats, to the extent that they can be rural, ought to be. And likewise, urban seats have a community of interest, and to have 2 or 3 or 4,000 voters out of the south-east corner of Regina bump out into rural, surrounding Regina, probably isn't a compatible community of interest.

So it was determined that there would be 29 urban that we traditionally view as urban with Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Yorkton and North Battleford and Swift Current, I believe, and they are wholly urban, all of those seats. And each constituency, I expect, that would be designed by the commission within those boundaries would have a common community of interest. Likewise in those seats that are defined as rural, would have a common community of interest within the boundaries designed by the commission, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to enter into the questioning on third reading of this Bill. And as I stand in this legislature for the first term, Mr. Chairman, I begin to notice that there is a pattern that develops, and I think the pattern that is kind of clear is that there is reason to be cautious when you've got a Bill that's got a five in it.

I notice the distinct similarity between Bill 5, that was passed in the wee hours of the morning on Christmas Eve in December, and Bill 55 that we have before us here. Both of these Bills have in common the fact that they represent a hunger for power and a lust for control and a disrespect of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. And I find it kind of interesting, Mr. Chairman, that when we debated Bill 5, and as we debate Bill 55 in this Assembly, that not a single individual other than the minister who introduced the Bill had the courage to stand on the other side of the House and to defend the principles behind Bill 5 and Bill 55.

Not a single individual had the courage to stand. And I wonder, I just wonder what kind of courage and commitment to principles in defence of the democratic

principles of this province, what kind of courage does it take to put forth principles to move into secrecy and manipulation of the democratic function and to sit on your tongues and not even have the courage to put forth your arguments. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that there is not a great deal of courage demonstrated by that.

We saw in Bill 5 the passing of a Bill which moved out of the Legislative Assembly and in behind closed cabinet doors, the shaping of the structures of government, the shaping of departments of government. And on Bill 55, the one before us today, we have a Bill which can be concluded to be nothing other than a gerrymander Bill. I don't know how you can look at the implications of this Bill and draw any conclusion other than that.

The Bill is attempting to put in place a commission replacing an individual who is perceived by absolutely no one as partisan, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, and to replace that individual with someone who is perceived by everyone as being partisan, the Chief Electoral Officer, and I don't know how anybody can conclude that that is not an attempt to gerrymander, to bring about a gerrymander in the interest of the government of the day.

(2145)

Mr. Chairman, we also see a change in the rules, a change in the rules to move away from a deviation of 15 per cent from the norm for the size of ridings and to shift to a 25 per cent deviation. And I don't know how anybody can conclude that that is anything other than an attempt to gerrymander.

Everyone of us in this Assembly, and I would suggest every adult in the province of Saskatchewan, in our social studies, be that in grade 7 or wherever, learned about the principles of democracy and the importance of representation by population, an extremely important principle that has been defended over centuries — not just decades, but over centuries. And what we see in this Bill, Mr. Chairman, is the distinct denial of the principle of representation by population and a devious devastation and destruction of that democratic principle. And I say that that is a shame.

Mr. Minister, as you present this Bill, we get your flowery explanations about quality of representation and equality of representation. Under the guise of both, we are destroying in this Bill the respect for the quality of representation that you put forth as a noble objective. And I wonder, Mr. Minister, why it is that you haven't considered another alternative. Because as you present this Bill, what in effect you are saying is that the only way that you can have quality of representation . . . and let me put that into, I think, more colloquial terms, Mr. Minister, equal representation within this legislature.

I don't think there is anyone in Saskatchewan who believes that their legislative opinion, that their legislative opinion should be worth more than anybody else's. I believe that the people of Saskatchewan strongly defend the principle of one person, one vote. And we all know, those of us in this House, that there is no one who will influence us more in our thinking, in our deliberations

that we bring to the Legislative Assembly than the constituents in our own riding. And it is simply unacceptable that any one of us — any one of us, no matter which side of the House — that any one of us will be sitting in this Assembly representing 50 per cent more opinions than another member of the Legislative Assembly. And clearly the principle of representation by population demands that we all come to this House representing approximately the same number of persons, the same number of opinions that we bring to our legislative deliberations.

Now the other issue you bring forward, Mr. Minister, and this is where you tried to cloud it, is in what you call the quality of representation. The first is the equality of representation, the second you call the quality of representation. That seems to me, Mr. Minister, to refer to nothing more, nothing more than the access of each of our constituents, no matter what constituency we represent, the access of each of our constituents to their government through their member of the Legislative Assembly.

Now you and I know, Mr. Minister, that the representation that we give to our constituents does not depend 100 per cent on our effort. Now as I look across the benches, I recognize that we have sitting there some of the masters of incompetence, but I don't believe that there is anyone on the other side who is so incompetent in your representation of people that you make it your business to take care of 100 per cent of the constituent concerns that come to you.

An Hon. Member: — At least we get our stories straight.

Mr. Hagel: — Oh, the member here from Wascana, he thinks that that is not a noble objective, and I just wonder what kind of quality of representation as well as equality of representation that he brings to this Assembly. But, Mr. Minister, you and I both know that if we got our acts together that a great deal and large percentage — in fact a large majority — of the constituency work that we do is done by our constituency staff out of our constituency offices. And it seems to me to be a very practical consideration when you're saying that some members have more difficulty to be accessible to their constituents in dealing with their problems than to deal with in a practical kind of way.

Now do you do that by saying, well we just give those, some members, fewer people to represent so that they can have more access. Or is it possible to say, Mr. Minister, that a way of improving that access perhaps is to consider that those members who have more difficult ridings to serve because of geography or some of the other things that you've referred to should perhaps be entitled to a larger allowance, by way of office allowance or communications or travel allowance?

We all know that in this Assembly each of us is entitled to allowances paid for by the taxpayers to assist in serving our constituents. And it would seem to me that an argument could be made to say that those members who represent an equal number of constituents, as compared to other ridings, have the right to expect perhaps a larger allowance, because if you've got a constituency office, as

I have, one constituency office in Moose Jaw, I can serve all of my constituents.

But I recognize what you said, that in your constituency you can't have just one office if you're going to be accessible to all of your constituents in the same kind of way. And we both know it costs the same to rent space whether you're open every day or whether you're open just one or two days a week; it costs the same to rent the space. And it would seem to me then, Mr. Minister, that if it is truly our objective to provide equality of representation, the riding should have approximately the same number of constituents. And if we want to provide quality of representation, then we can look at the allowances, in terms of office functioning and constituency staff, to assist in the solving of problems. And that's the real world. That's the real world by which we serve our constituents.

Mr. Minister, then my question to you is this: in light of your concern for equality of representation which would be addressed by having a smaller variance than 25 per cent each way off the norm, and in light of your concern for equality of representation or accessibility to members of the Legislative Assembly by constituents, why did you not, or did you consider — answer either of these questions — did you consider addressing the quality of representation by looking at a formula that would impact on the allowances of members by way of office staff and offices through our ridings. Did you consider that? If not, why not?

And I would ask you if you would consider that; do you not see that as being a better way, a more practical way, of defending the principle of representation by population and at the same time equal access to service by MLAs for constituents?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I think, Mr. Chairman, the member makes a fair point, and I think that there should be some consideration for those kinds of allowances for those . . . as there already is, I might add, for the northern seats as it relates to travel. And there's some consideration . . .

An Hon. Member: — And the larger urbans.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Exactly. Now what this legislation does is, essentially it protects the principle of equality of vote, but not at the expense of quality of vote. And it's no different . . . Well, it is a little different because we think it's an improvement. The old legislation provided for a review once every eight years. This legislation calls for a review — a committee of the legislature will be able to review the boundaries and the numbers of urban, rural, and north, etc. after every second election. So it's not that this is carved in stone for all time. After every second election, a legislative committee will have the opportunity to review that.

You know, I'm not just standing here spouting what I believe as that arrogant person that designed all of this; there are lots of other people that believe the same thing. Again, going back to the *Leader-Post*, they say that the redistribution plan is imperfect, and I acknowledge that. It is imperfect but fair. You know, and I agree with that as

well.

Now when you talk about defining the urban community, if you like, and defining the northern community and defining the rural community — in which the commission can define the boundaries within all of those larger communities — that's not a new idea either. That's happened in other jurisdictions. And one example that I bring to you is the current legislation in Alberta where it proposed that there be 42 urban electoral divisions and 41 rural electoral division. And then it goes on to define the city of Medicine Hat as one urban electoral division; the city of St. Albert, likewise; the hamlet of Sherwood Park, likewise; the city of Lethbridge, two urban electoral divisions; the city of Red Deer, two; the city of Edmonton, 17; the city of Calgary, 18. And so this idea isn't new, and it works well in other jurisdictions; and I agree with what is said by other people, that the redistribution plan is imperfect. I agree with that, but I also agree with them when they say that it is fair.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Minister, could you lay on the Table any representations you've received from recognized community groups or recognized independent individuals with regard to the change in the commission that had brought about your thinking on this. Do you have any representations to lay on the Table?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Are you talking about the make-up of the commission? If you're talking about the make-up of the commission as it relates to the membership of the commission . . . Is that what you're asking?

Mr. Brockelbank: — No. Primarily I'm wanting to find out, Mr. Minister, where the need came from to change this legislation, and I want to find out if there are any people, who would be recognized as independent public individuals, approached the government and said, we've got to change this. Did the commission, for example, make representation and say, this formula is not working? Did SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) approach you and say, look, Mr. Minister, you've got to do something about this independent boundaries commission? Any of those groups?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I don't know, Mr. Chairman, if there were written reports. There was certainly a recognized concern as early as a year ago when the throne speech was read in this Assembly, when the Lieutenant Governor talked about bringing in new legislation relative to electoral boundaries.

And I think it was in recognition of the fact that the old Bill simply took a snapshot of the demographics of the day and said, this will be the boundary, without recognition for the kinds of things that happened between the time the boundaries were drawn, at that time, and the growth that took place and the decline that took place in other areas — and growth in some areas — during the intervening eight-year period, or two elections or whatever, to the extent that we now have some small, in terms of population, small core seats in the urban centres, and very, very large suburban seats in terms of numbers of votes.

And in the past there was, you know, no way to make

those adjustments, short of waiting for every two elections and starting the whole process all over again. That's been recognized in this legislation, and with the variance that now exists . . . or with the possibility to have the larger variance, there can be a greater, I expect, a greater recognition for the growth areas in the urban centres.

Mr. Brockelbank: — I think it's fair to say, Mr. Chairman, that the minister has said to me that no recognized, independent public individual and no recognized, independent public organization thought this was a serious enough problem to make a formal, or even a written, letter of concern to the minister. So that's what the minister has told me, quite clearly.

(2200)

Now, Mr. Minister, I want to deal with your equality of vote. You believe in the equality of vote, because I've heard you talk about it. And it's the new principle which you're advancing here, or at least you're advancing it . . . you're advancing the quality of vote ahead of the equality of vote. Now if the minister believes in the equality of vote, can he tell me why he doesn't apply the equality of vote as between Regina and Saskatoon?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I suppose we can split hairs. I think it's reasonable to assume that our two major centres who have historically kind of grown in lock step . . . and I heard your argument the other day, as it was so eloquently presented, that the growth in Saskatoon has been significantly greater than the growth in Regina. I would hope that Regina gets its act together and starts growing to the same extent that Saskatoon is.

But I think it's fair and reasonable because there has been growth in both cities — there has been growth in both cities, and I think it's fair and reasonable to recognize that growth. And you find the balance, Mr. Chairman, you find the balance that must exist in a province like Saskatchewan between the equality of vote and the quality of vote. And so there will be some variance, at least today, between the city of Saskatoon and the city of Regina, and probably between the city of Moose Jaw and the city of Prince Albert, and I haven't made that calculation, but I expect that variance will exist.

The key to it all though, Mr. Chairman, is that after every second election — and the variance is not that great today — but after every second election there can be a legislative committee set up to take a look at those very things. And not only the number, urban versus rural, but the number between our urban centres or, in the event that there's decline or growth in the North, that can be looked at as well.

Well the argument was advanced very eloquently the other day. I think that in the scheme of things, this is not unreasonable.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Well, Mr. Minister, I thank you for recognizing my eloquent argument the other day. And if I may restate it, Saskatoon is one of the fastest growing cities in Canada. It has passed Regina and Saskatoon should in fact have two more seats based on population,

and Regina should have one and one-half seats based on population.

The minister says he believes in equality of vote, yet he won't even apply equality of vote between urban centres. And I think if you take other urban centres, Swift Current and Battleford, and compare them, you'll find the same situation, that equality of vote does not apply. So the minister uses the principle as long as it's convenient, then he abandons the principle.

Now I wanted to just read one more thing about the Chief Electoral Officer versus the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. And I'm going to quote from the same editorial you quoted from, Mr. Minister, that's the one in the *Leader-Post*. I believe it's the same one, it's October 30, *Leader-Post*. And it talks about the Chief Electoral Officer being a partisan person . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right, we'd like to wind you up, but apparently we're not going to be able to.

It says the Chief Electoral Officers are partisan persons and it's recognized as such, and nobody denies that — no one denies that. And it goes on to say:

The political taint of this office could rub off on the electoral commissions, which by rights should be considered beyond partisan influence.

So what you've done is you've put the impartiality of the commission into question. And the *Leader-Post*, in the very article you quoted from, recognizes that. So, Mr. Chairman, I cannot support this Bill. I've said it before, and I'm more concerned now, and I agree that I can't support it.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, just a brief response. I've, I think, advanced the argument for Regina versus Saskatoon and the representation each . . . or the seats each being increased by one. And the member argues that that's unfair. I suppose in the very strictest of calculations, Saskatoon might not be precisely as well represented as Regina, and I won't say that it has anything to do with the quality of the people that are representing the people in Saskatoon.

But I wonder if the member would have been arguing the same for those many, many years that there were more people living in Regina than in Saskatoon and they had an equal number of seats, ten seats in each. I wonder if the member would have been arguing the same then? Obviously he didn't when the last . . . eight years ago, whenever the last, or seven years ago when the last Bill was tabled in this House.

And the point you make about the Chief Electoral Officer perhaps tainting the commission, and it's an argument and it's one that many will accept as being valid. The *Star-Phoenix*, that other chronicle of truth and honesty, that one — who many people agree with — have said that, well that may be true, well that may be true. His technical competence qualifies him for that position, and the impartiality of the commission is guaranteed by virtue of it being made up in addition with two judges.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, my final comment

on this issue is this: from the time we brought in the first independent boundaries commission in Saskatchewan, I kept my cotton-picking political fingers out of it, and I left it up to the independent boundaries commission to do the job. And that's not what you're doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Chairman, I have a question to the minister relating to the obvious population changes that are taking place in the province.

Earlier today, my colleague, the member from Quill Lakes, pointed out to you, Mr. Minister, that assuming a 3 per cent a year population change between rural and urban centres, which has been the rate at which changes have been taking place over the last decade, the average size of an urban seat would be 12,130 voters approximately, and the average size of a rural seat only 8,090 — a very major difference in terms of the right of each person in this province to be represented approximately equally in this legislature. That will obviously not result in equal representation.

But the question, sir, that I want to direct to you follows from that, because under your proposed legislation in the urban centres, not only is there no justification for you not increasing the number of urban seats in this province beyond 29 — which you obviously choose not to do for purely partisan reasons — there's absolutely no basis for instance, Mr. Minister, for not saying that urban centres aren't entitled to 31 or 32 or 33 seats — absolutely no basis for that at all, given the inequities that this Bill will result in.

But beyond that, Mr. Minister, you give yourself the right to set a differential over and above that average of 12,130 in the urban centres — a differential of 25 per cent either way. So what that means in terms of urban centres, Mr. Minister, is that in 1991, in the election of 1991, an urban centre will be able to have a population base as large as 15,160 or as small as 9,098.

Now what that will allow you to do, Mr. Minister, is to take a centre like Moose Jaw, for instance — and you will no doubt look at Moose Jaw and say, well . . . Your appointed members will look at Moose Jaw. Your Chief Electoral Officer, who's appointed by you, will no doubt look at Moose Jaw and will say, oh well, the New Democratic Party base of support in Moose Jaw is concentrated in the southern part of the city, and the strength of Progressive Conservative support in Moose Jaw, to the extent that it exists in that city at all, is concentrated in the northern part of Moose Jaw. Therefore we'll make the northern part of Moose Jaw 9,100 voters, and we'll make the southern part of Moose Jaw 15,100, which is not unlike what Ross Thatcher chose to do in 1970, Mr. Chairman. And you'll no doubt do the same in Saskatoon and Regina.

You'll no doubt take a favourable spot for the PC party like Saskatoon Lakeview, and you'll make that a small seat, and you'll no doubt take a favourable part of Saskatoon for the New Democratic Party like Saskatoon Riversdale and make that a big seat. And what this plus or minus 25 per cent variance does, Mr. Chairman, is it

gives the minister a free hand to do that.

So my question to you, sir, is: in urban centres how can you justify passing legislation that will create a differential of plus or minus 25 per cent so that some seats in Saskatoon will be as large as 15,160 in 1991, and other seats will be as small as 9,100? How can you give your appointed members of this new commission, which is clearly going to be partisan as a result of the presence of the Chief Electoral Officer on the commission replacing the Clerk, how can you give that commission this kind of flexibility to create obvious inequities within the city of Saskatoon, within the city of Regina, within the city of Moose Jaw, within the city of Prince Albert? That's obviously what you intend to do. That's obviously what your Chief Electoral Officer is there for, to ensure that that goes through. And I ask you: how do you account for creating these sorts of inequities which your legislation is obviously designed to put into place?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, a couple of points ought to be made here. If we were to accept the arguments of the member opposite, we would have to accept that they were dead wrong in all the years that they gave special recognition to northern Saskatchewan. We would have to accept that Canada is dead wrong in giving special recognition to the North and to the Yukon and to Prince Edward Island, and even to Saskatchewan. We would have to accept that other jurisdictions are dead wrong. For instance, Newfoundland gives special recognition in terms of quality of vote, the principle of quality of vote, to Labrador. B.C. gives special recognition to Vancouver Island in terms of quality of vote.

And so to accept your argument tells me that not only all of those other people were wrong, but that you were wrong in giving special recognition as it relates to equality of vote to northern Saskatchewan. So I think that ... I don't agree with your arguments, and I don't think that you were wrong when that recognition was given to northern Saskatchewan, and I don't think the other jurisdictions were wrong when they recognized that there was a need not only to recognize the principle of equality of vote but quality of vote.

(2215)

As it relates, Mr. Speaker, to the suggestion that this commission — and I would have thought better of that member — but as it relates to the suggestion that this commission would somehow operate in a way that was anything but impartial, Mr. Speaker, calls into question the integrity of two judges that are appointed by other than the government, and I would have thought better of that particular member, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Prebble: — Just a brief response to the minister. Mr. Minister, you are demonstrating in the comment that you've just made that not only are you being intellectually dishonest; not only can you not defend the point I just made in an intellectual sense; obviously, therefore, your only purpose in doing this is purely political.

You explain to me once again, Mr. Minister, what the justification is, in a city like Saskatoon, for having a differential of plus or minus 25 per cent with respect to the allocation of the voters and the seats. You answer this question again, based on the growth of the urban ridings, in 1991 why it is that in the city of Saskatoon, under this legislation, you will be able to create some seats that are larger than 15,000 and other seats that are as small as 9,000. You explain that, Mr. Minister. That's got nothing to do with quality of representation.

It's just as easy to represent the southern part of Saskatoon as it is the northern part of Saskatoon, Mr. Minister. It's just as easy to get around Eastview as it is to get around Silverwood, Mr. Minister. This has got absolutely nothing to do with quality of representation. The only way to ensure fair representation and to ensure good quality representation is to make sure that every urban seat is approximately the same size, and what you're doing in this Bill, Mr. Minister, is ensuring that there could be massive differences of as much as 6,000 persons in the size of an urban seat in the same city. And I ask you, clearly, is that not because you intend to gerrymander the seats in Saskatoon and Regina in a manner that will allow the big seats to be NDP support areas, and in a manner that will allow the smaller seats to be your last strongholds of Progressive Conservative support in those two cities?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, I just want to say that the hon. member is out to lunch — right out to lunch.

I don't draw the boundaries; I don't draw the boundaries; the commission draws the boundaries. And if you're calling into question the integrity of two yet-to-be-named judges, I think that's unbecoming of you, and I expected far more of you than that.

And, Mr. Speaker, had you read the legislation ... and, Mr. Chairman, had the hon. member read the legislation, the things that can be taken into consideration when you're talking about the allowable variation are things like scarcity, density or relative rates of growth of population of any proposed constituency. And, Mr. Chairman, I think that's fair; I think that's reasonable. And I'm not alone in that thought as I've already said. I've already said and you speak of the city of Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, redistribution plan is imperfect, and I acknowledge that. But they also say, Mr. Speaker, but it is fair.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2

Mr. Chairman: — Amendment to clause 2 of the printed Bill, moved by the Deputy Premier:

Amend clause 2(a) of the printed Bill by striking out "a Constituency" and substituting "an Electoral".

Amend clause 2(g) of the printed Bill by striking out "comprised" and substituting "composed".

Clause 2 as amended agreed to.

Clause 3

Mr. Chairman: — Amendment to clause 3 of the printed Bill, moved by the Deputy Premier:

Amend subsection 3(1) of the printed Bill by striking out “A Constituency” and substituting “An Electoral”.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: — Another amendment to section 3 of the printed Bill, moved by the member for Regina Lakeview:

Strike out subsection 3(3) of the printed Bill and substitute the following:

(3) A commission consists of:

(a) a chairman nominated by the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan from among the judges of the Court of Appeal or, after consultation with the Chief Justice of the Queen’s Bench, from among the judges of Her Majesty’s court of Queen’s Bench for Saskatchewan;

(b) the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly; and

(c) a resident of Saskatchewan nominated by the Speaker after consultation with the president of the Executive Council and the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Simard: Mr. Chairperson, what this amendment does is it deletes the commission as set up by the government with the Chief Electoral Officer in there, and it substitutes the commission as it was described and set up under the former legislation. And we feel that if this amendment was made, Mr. Chairperson, that it would go a fair ways to establishing an impartial commission.

Mr. Chairman: — Is the amendment agreed?

Amendment negated on division.

Mr. Chairman: — There’s another amendment ... Order. Amendment to section 3 of the printed Bill, moved by the member from Regina Lakeview:

Strike out clause 3(3)(c) and substitute the following:

(c) The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Chairperson, the clause at 3(2)(c) that now is in this Bill that the government has brought before the House makes the Chief Electoral Officer, appointed pursuant to The Election Act, appointed by cabinet, and who is a political appointment, it makes that person a member of the commission.

We are proposing that that provision be deleted, and in there we substitute, instead of the Chief Electoral Officer,

the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, who is a non-political person who has sat on commissions like this in the past and who should properly be the person on the commission as opposed to the Chief Electoral Officer.

Mr. Chairman: — Is the amendment agreed?

Amendment negated on division.

Clause 3 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 4 to 13 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 14

Mr. Chairman: — Proposed House amendment, moved by the member from Regina Lakeview:

Amend section 14 of the printed Bill by adding the following after clause (c): “or any other numbers that will confirm the principle of representation by population.”

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Chairperson, what this amendment does is confirms that when the commission is prescribing boundaries, that they should look at the erosion under this Act as it now stands of the equality of votes principle. They should be looking at the erosion of that vote, and we’re therefore suggesting this amendment in order to confirm the principle of representation by population. We recognize, however, that we agree with the fact that you may need to take into consideration the large areas out in the country. We don’t feel that that should detract from the equality of votes in urban centres; that the two principles can be upheld.

Amendment negated on division.

Clause 14 agreed to.

Clause 15

Mr. Chairman: — Amendment to clause 15, moved by the Deputy Premier:

Amend subsection 15(2) of the printed Bill by striking out “comprised” and substituting “composed.”

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Chairman, just one quick question of the minister. I want the minister to explain to me why it is that Saskatoon and Regina are only getting one additional seat when it’s more than obvious that the growth and population in those areas, if there was to be any fairness at all in this Bill, would require at least two more seats in each of those cities? Why are you denying those additional seats, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — We’ve already gone through the argument, Mr. Chairman, and it’s in recognition of finding the balance between equality and quality of vote, and we’ve talked about it for some time. And I think that because of the growth in the urban centres, it’s right and proper that that should be recognized, and therefore one additional seat for each of those two centres. Recognizing that the rural population is either flat or declining we

don't want to see any erosion in the quality of that representation, Mr. Chairman, and so Regina and Saskatoon get one additional seat, and rural areas stay the same.

Clause 15 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 16 to 19 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 20

Mr. Chairman: — House amendment to clause 20, moved by the member from Regina Lakeview:

Amend subclause 20(a)(i) by striking out "25 per cent" in the last line and substituting "15 per cent".

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Chairperson, what that does is it would eliminate the 50 per cent discrepancy between constituencies that is now written into this Bill. It would prevent the situation that my friend from Saskatoon University described where right here in Regina or Saskatoon you could have one constituency with 50 per cent more votes than another constituency, right side by side, and it reduces the variation down to 15 per cent, which we think is much more fair.

We, therefore, would urge the government to reconsider the 25 per cent in the Bill and to pass the amendment.

(2230)

Amendment negated on division.

Mr. Chairman: — The second amendment to section 20 of the printed Bill, moved by the member from Regina Lakeview:

Renumber section 20 of the printed Bill as subsection (1) and add the following subsection:

(2) A commission shall determine the area to be included in and fix the boundaries of all proposed constituencies so that:

a) no proposed urban constituency's voter population varies from the voter population of any other proposed urban constituency by more than 10 per cent, or any greater or lesser variation that preserves the principle of "one person; one vote," and

b) no proposed rural constituency's voter population varies from the voter population of any other proposed rural constituency by more than 10 per cent, any greater or lesser variation that preserves the principle of "one person; one vote."

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Chairperson, I know the member from Regina South would be against this particular amendment, but I want to suggest to you . . .

An Hon. Member: — How do you know? How do you know?

Ms. Simard: — Well we'll see shortly, won't we?

I want to suggest to you, Mr. Chairperson, that it should be impossible for the government not to pass this amendment. Why should any rural constituency, side by side, have more than a 10 per cent variation in vote over the provincial quotient? Why should any urban constituency, side by side, be larger than that? I would ask the minister why he feels — if he refuses to pass this amendment — why he feels this indeed is not a fair proposal?

Amendment negated on division.

Clause 20 agreed to.

Clauses 21 and 22 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 77 — An Act to amend The Power Corporation Act

Clause 1

Ms. Simard: — This Saskatchewan power Bill, Mr. chairperson, has a very interesting feature in it inasmuch as it reneges on the minister's commitment not to repeal the grants in lieu of taxes section in The Power Corporation Act, which requires users of electrical energy in a city, for example, to pay a 10 per cent tax, and that goes to the municipality as a grant in lieu of taxes because the government doesn't pay taxes on its buildings in the city.

This Bill reneges on that commitment, Mr. Chairperson. it reneges on that commitment because what it does is it allows some industrial companies in particular, and in general any other industrial customer of electrical energy, that cabinet may, by regulation, prescribe.

So the door's wide open, Mr. Chairperson, the door is wide open to allow cabinet to exempt any industrial customer, and that is going to cost the taxpayers in municipalities a considerable amount of money, Mr. Chairperson.

When this money is no longer available for the municipalities, somebody else is going to have to pay for it. So when Weyerhaeuser gets an exemption in P.A., somebody else will have to pay for it. And the Bill specifically sets out the name of Weyerhaeuser. This means that the taxpayers of P.A. are going to be making up that deficiency, Mr. Chairperson; the taxpayers of P.A. will have to make up that deficiency.

And we object to that particular principle, and in spite of the fact that the minister has advised in Crown Corporations Committee that he had no intention of repealing the grants in lieu of taxes provision, he is now attempting to come through the back door on that matter. And he may say that there's money available for the municipalities, but we've all seen over this period of a short year just how much money is available — very little, Mr. Chairperson.

And it's easy for them to make a promise today and break it tomorrow, because this has been a pattern of pathological behaviour on the part of the government. They make a promise today, they break it tomorrow. We've seen a long string of broken promises in this session. And I can stand here and spend an hour just talking about the broken promises, but we've done it on a number of occasions before, and I won't do it again tonight. Suffice it to say that, notwithstanding their broken promises, we're paying record taxes in this city, and suffice it to say, notwithstanding their broken promises, we're paying record taxes in this city, and suffice it to say, notwithstanding their broken promises, we are paying a gas tax at the pump; we are without a public utilities review commission.

So, Mr. Chairperson, my question to the minister is: how much is this going to mean in the city of P.A. with respect to lost taxes under the provision of The Saskatchewan Power Corporation Act. Could the minister please reply?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, it will mean nothing as it relates to lost taxes for the city of Prince Albert.

Let me explain what this is all about, and the Leader of the Opposition will be aware of this. We had an aborted Bill, maybe as long as two years ago now, that was supposed to accommodate this particular desire of — not us, although in part, but of the industries and of the cities that they are part of.

In the case of Ipsco, Ipsco was planning about an 80 or \$90 million expansion. I think it's a toss-up as to which is the largest input cost for Ipsco, labour or electricity. In the event of annexation, if Ipsco were annexed into the city of Regina and the surcharges applied to their electricity, they simply couldn't continue to operate in the competitive world because electricity is such a large component of their input costs.

So the expansion would not happen unless they were given reasonable assurances that that surcharge would never be effected, as it were. So we said that, well, Regina may want to annex these folks at some time. that's fine. But we will give that industry the protection of legislation to make them — or to the extent that that would — competitive in their particular industry with their competitors, of course. The same is true for Saskatoon Chemicals, and Saskatoon Chemicals likewise is a very large consumer of electricity. And we thought, after some consideration and discussion with the cities of Saskatoon and Regina, that it's right and proper to give them that kind of protection in the event that they would find themselves in a position where the surcharge could be applied. The fact is, as I understand it, that in all cases that are named here there is no surcharge now in place that this will roll back; that's not the case. In all cases, this will prevent a surcharge in the future. And in the case of Saskatoon Chemicals, there is an expansion planned, and a surcharge would simply make them uncompetitive, and the expansion would go elsewhere without this kind of accommodation. And I think that even the hon. member would say that this isn't a bad way to go to get that kind of expansion, job creation and diversification in the province.

Mr. Kowalsky: Well, Mr. Minister, with all due respect,

if you think that Weyerhaeuser or PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company) mill can't make any money without paying taxes on their power, you're badly mistaken. They've got a record of approximately \$25 million per year profit, and I would venture to say that according to information I've received from their workers this year, according to the production, and according to the prices, they'll be making well over 50 million this year. And the problem here is, and my question to you is: I would like to know how much money the city of Prince Albert could get under the agreement if they applied a 10 per cent surcharge on the power that PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company) uses. What is the potential amount that is going to be lost, that the city is collecting in another way, but what is the amount?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — It's 10 per cent of the cost of the energy use of Ipsco, and I don't have Ipsco's . . . not Ipsco, Weyerhaeuser in P.A., and I don't have Weyerhaeuser's bills here with me, so I can't tell you. I suppose I could dig it up and make the calculation, but I don't have that information here. But it's not a loss, it's foregone in the event that they decided to charge.

But we have an obligation and a stated commitment to develop the province economically, to diversify the economy of the province, and if it takes this kind of accommodation to bring expanded Ipscos to town and expanded Saskatoon Chemicals and paper mills, at no loss of revenue to the cities, we're prepared to do it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Was PAPCO paying the surcharge before the mill was sold to Weyerhaeuser?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I'm not entirely sure, Mr. Speaker. But in any event, if they were, this in no way will impact on that. It's designed only to deal with the incremental consumption if they were paying the surcharge before. That's the intent. If PAPCO was paying a surcharge before, that would continue even after the passage of this Bill.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Well, you see, PAPCO was paying . . . Now this year we may have an agreement between the city and Weyerhaeuser as to a certain amount of money instead of a percentage, but what you are doing with this Bill is removing the right of the city of Prince Albert to assess the surcharge on Weyerhaeuser, on one exclusive, and any others that you might decide that you would favour. Now that's completely unfair because what it does is, it removes the tax burden from the corporation that is using the product, and using the product of northern Saskatchewan, and exempting it from paying taxes. Somebody else is going to have to pay those taxes while the profits all go down to Tacoma, Washington.

And that's the problem, and I have a hard time buying an exemption of that type because it just completely goes counter to all the principles of fair taxation in this province. I want to know whether you consulted with the city of Prince Albert before you brought in this legislation.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I, firsthand, did not consult with the city of Prince Albert. I can't tell you whether officials at power consulted with Prince Albert. I personally

consulted with both Saskatoon and Regina in respect to this, and I might just point out that while the member talks about the foregone revenue that Prince Albert might suffer in terms of 10 per cent of the power bill of Weyerhaeuser, the foregone revenue that Prince Albert would suffer if this surcharge were put on and made them uncompetitive and they had to put a lock on the door would be far worse. And if you compare . . . if you compare rates for rates, industrial rates, Saskatchewan to Manitoba to Alberta to British Columbia, industrial rates are — well, they're pretty tough to compete with in those jurisdictions. So if we want this kind of industry in our province, if we want this kind of industry in our province, we better be selling them energy — energy, Mr. Speaker, and not heaping taxes on top of taxes on top of energy.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Minister, we have some problems here. First of all, we haven't had an answer as to whether PAPCO was paying the 10 per cent surcharge to the city of Prince Albert. And I believe they were. And I want to say to you, of course they were. And you haven't said whether they have or whether they haven't. And they survived when the markets were low. You know that they were paying the 10 per cent surcharge and you also know in the sales agreement to Weyerhaeuser that you exempted Weyerhaeuser. And that's why this Bill is before us.

You deregulated the gas, and now you're doing it with power. And I want to know from you, and I want to know from your officials, what amount of dollars were going to the city of Prince Albert in terms of the 10 per cent electrical surcharge from PAPCO. I want to know: was Weyerhaeuser paying since they've been in there, and since they've bought from PAPCO.

And I want to know, still, what amount of dollars were going to the city of Prince Albert, and what they're going to lose, and what the rest of the business community and the taxpayers of that city are going to have to pick up. And we're going to be asking you here for a very long time. It's late in the evening; it'll get a lot longer. We want an answer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, whether or not PAPCO was paying the 10 per cent surcharge in the past, or Weyerhaeuser was paying the surcharge in the past and, you know, I accepted what you say. If they were, they were. But the intent of this legislation, Mr. Speaker, is to exclude or exempt any incremental energy consumption from the surcharge.

(2245)

Now I suppose you can sit there and chirp and squawk and say that this is a bad deal. I suppose the people of Prince Albert would be really happy if the paper plant wasn't there, you know, but that's what you're talking about; that's what you're talking about. Because we have to compete . . . that paper plant has to compete with paper plants in Quebec, paper plants in Ontario, British Columbia, and so on, and if they can't compete . . . and we're committed to diversifying this economy, and so large energy users like Ipsco, Saskatoon Chemicals, and

Weyerhaeuser, who are considered to be very large energy users, were given this kind of accommodation.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Minister, the city of Prince Albert, through that surcharge on electrical use, gains about \$3 million in revenue per year. And you're talking about incremental use. And what you're saying then is, is that the new paper mill is going to be exempt from this tax, and that the city council in Prince Albert — and I'll wait till you're listening if I have to — and what you're saying then is that the business community in Prince Albert, the renters and the home owners and everybody who has a power bill, is going to have to pay extra taxes, because what you call incremental, to me means that you're exempting the new paper mill from this 10 per cent surcharge that you've exempted Weyerhaeuser from, that PAPCO used to pay. They're going to have to pick up . . .

An Hon. Member: — No.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Well you haven't explained it, and you haven't given an answer. And it's pretty clear, either you know or you don't, or they're going to have to pay, or they aren't. And from what I can see if they're going to have to pay. And we're asking you how much they're going to have to pick up from this new incremental — I don't know what you referred to it as, but what I'll call it is an exemption of the tax.

Well maybe I don't understand, and I will tell you that the people that are listening to you tonight don't understand either. So maybe you can explain that to me. Maybe you can tell me how much the people in Prince Albert are going to have to pick up from this new exemption, and perhaps even your officials could figure out what it's going to mean on the business tax and the mill rate. Because I'll tell you, I would suggest to you that out of the \$3 million that's collected — you say they're big power users, and I agree with you — if it's 40 per cent of the 3 million, that could amount to \$1.2 million at 40 per cent or . . . I think that's the figure — 1.6 it would be at 40 — that they're going to have to pick up. And that's what we're asking, and that's all we're asking you; just explain.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — You see the member doesn't understand that the citizens of Prince Albert will have to pick up nothing as a result of this exemption. It is not a source of revenue to the city of Prince Albert now, and by virtue of this legislation it will not be a source of revenue for them in the future, because we decided that in the interests of the economic development and the diversification of the province we were going to give very large energy users an exemption from the surcharge. In the case of Weyerhaeuser it is incremental energy, I assume; in the case of IPSCO and Saskatoon Chemicals, since they pay no surcharge now, they will pay none in the future. They pay none now; they pay none in the future.

Now, if you say . . . and I have a little difficulty with understanding how you can misunderstand this. If you say, what are the people of Prince Albert, what are they going to have to pick up because of this — it's because of this that they have the kind of activity going on in their economy today that you may not like, that you may not like, but I venture to say that the vast majority of the

business community in Prince Albert and northern Saskatchewan are very happy with. Now I don't know what's so difficult about that. I don't know why the hon. member can't understand that.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Minister, I can see there's no sense going on here, because what you're going to say is you're talking economic diversification, and the Weyerhaeuser welfare Bill that you've just put in here today is the reason that Prince Albert . . . You know, the people of Prince Albert will pick up these extra taxes and be happy and because it's part of your economic diversification. The fact is that there are going to be hundreds of thousands of dollars that the taxpayers in Prince Albert are going to have to pick up.

And in the interest of shortening this debate — because I can see it's going to go nowhere — you want to talk economic diversification; I want to talk what it's going to cost the taxpayers of the city of Prince Albert. And it's not only just Weyerhaeuser, it's whatever you might do with any industrial user that you deem.

And so there's no sense carrying on the debate. I think the point's been made. The point is that you've give a big tax concession on the backs of the people of Prince Albert and on the backs of any other area that you deem one of your corporate friends should be exempted. That's what this Bill is about — whether it's in Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Estevan, it doesn't matter. The point is that the taxpayers in the cities and in the towns and the rural municipalities of this city are going to be picking up extra tax dollars because of this Bill.

And so, as I say, I think the point's been made. If you want to respond, you go ahead. But I just don't see what you want to say. You've given the money, the people are going to pick it up, and that's where it's at.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I simply respond by saying that the business community and the people of Prince Albert have a higher degree of comprehension as it relates to this particular issue than the member that represents them, and thank God for that.

Hon Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, I want to ask a couple of very direct questions. Does the minister deny that the pulp mill — I'm not talking about any future paper mill, but the existing pulp mill — has heretofore in the last year paid a surcharge on its power bills? Do you deny that?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — No, Mr. Chairman, I do not deny that, and I haven't to this point.

Hon Mr. Blakeney: — Do you deny that when this Bill is passed they will no longer have to pay? Do you deny that? Do you deny that this Bill exempts any 10 per cent surcharge on the pulp mill — leave aside the paper mill; on the pump mill — and that no other rational interpretation is possible?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I believe that the legislation is broad enough that that could in fact be the case. The intent, however, Mr. Chairman, is that only that incremental energy used at Weyerhaeuser shall be

accommodated in this way, in that it won't attract a surcharge.

Hon Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, we're not here passing intents, we're passing laws, and it just says that when this is passed, the city of Prince Albert cannot legally collect that. Your intent is not relevant. Weyerhaeuser won't pay. Well why would they, unless they want to make an *ex gratia* payment? That's what the Bill says. And you may well think that that doesn't put any extra burden on the city of Prince Albert, but as I would calculate it, it would.

Now I want to say one further thing. You will recall that in 1985 the mayor of Regina wrote to you, saying, in effect, that he wasn't too exercised about the Ipsco matter, but that he was exercised about your right to add anyone else to the list. And I will quote his letter, dated September 23, 1985.

We are extremely concerned about the generality of the proposed amendment. The amendment does not address Ipsco *per se*, (this one does) but has the potential negative impact of exempting any SPC user in Regina by provincial regulation.

Now this one, I admit, restricts it to industrial user. But with that qualification, everything the mayor said in 1985, and said he objected to it strongly, is still true. You can pass orders in council knocking off all sorts of taxpayers off the tax roll of every city and town in Saskatchewan, and that is big money. That is big money.

We are talking about the manner in which taxes are paid to cities and towns. Now, Mr. Minister, whatever you may argue about Ipsco and Saskatoon Chemicals and Weyerhaeuser — and it is my submission, by the way, that if you're going to give incentives to those people by way of industrial development and diversification, it ought to be paid for by the provincial taxpayer and not by the local taxpayer . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon Mr. Blakeney: — I leave that argument aside and ask you: how can you justify giving the cabinet power to strip the tax list, the tax rolls, of every city and town which has an industrial customer? I say to you, Mr. Minister, there are all sorts of them out there.

An Hon. Member: — I assume Manalta Coal is next, in Coronach.

Hon Mr. Blakeney: — Well I would expect that anybody . . . Let me put it very bluntly. All sorts of industrial customers exist and have paid taxes for a number of years, and there seems no earthly reason why you should be permitted by order in council to strip those companies off the list of taxpayers in any city and town in this province. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, leaving aside the three companies that are specifically named, why do you want power to strip taxpayers off the tax rolls of cities and towns without the consent or even possibly the knowledge of those cities and towns?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, of course the hon.

member is absolutely right, and we had this debate, I think, two years ago or 18 months ago.

An Hon. Member: — You withdrew the Bill. And do it again.

(2300)

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — And I don't intend to withdraw the Bill, but the difference this time, Mr. Speaker, is that the legislation that came in before wasn't dealing with The Power Corporation Act. It was dealing specifically with some exemptions that it couldn't properly do outside of The Power Corporation Act. So now we're back here dealing with The Power Corporation Act, where it properly should have been dealt with in the first place.

Unfortunately . . . I was going to say something in humour that might be misinterpreted, so I won't say it. But why don't I, anyway, since I've already warned you that it's humorous? We still have the same drafters today that we had then, and that you had when you were here, and in their eagerness to acquire all control unto themselves, they went a little too far in this section 9. And I am prepared to amend the Bill by deleting, in 9, the amendment to section 9 where it relates to "and any other industrial customer of electrical energy that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may be regulation prescribe," and then in (4) following that, "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations prescribing industrial customers of electrical energy for the purpose of subsection (3)," And I think that will take of the concern that both of us have.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Minister, I think that would improve the Bill very considerably. May I just say in passing that the Bill I was previously referring to was Bill 102, introduced on June 7, 1985, being an Act to amend The Power Corporation Act. But I would invite the minister to put in that amendment, and we would welcome it.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Well, Mr. Minister, while we've got you in a good mood and got you going in the right direction, will you also consent to deleting the part where it exempts Weyerhaeuser.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I'm not prepared to do that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Minister, I'm not here to humour you, but I'd like some questions, and unlike the other Bill we were considering about electoral boundaries, this one I think you can give me some answers on. You didn't on that other Bill, but you maybe can on this one.

It's mentioned Saskatoon Chemicals Limited, and I believe you said, Mr. Minister, earlier, that you had discussions with the city of Saskatoon about this, and the city of Saskatoon said okay, we're with you. Did the city of Saskatoon say, we're with you, on this Bill?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — My discussions were with the mayor, Mayor Cliff Wright in the city of Saskatoon, and what he said was that he agreed with the need for Saskatoon Chemicals to remain competitive and that we

should move legislatively to make that accommodation.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Okay, Mr. Minister. The minister says that the mayor of Saskatoon agreed that Saskatoon Chemicals should have this concession. Now the last time I looked, Mr. Minister, Saskatoon Chemicals was in the Rural Municipality of Corman Park. Could you explain to me why you're getting agreement from the city of Saskatoon when it's in fact in the Rural Municipality of Corman Park?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — You see, Mr. Chairman, as I explained to the member for Lakeview . . . Well you may or may not have been in the House, but if you were, obviously, you weren't paying attention. The R.M. of Corman Park is not in the same situation as, say, the urban centre of Saskatoon or the urban centre of Regina. The R.M. of Corman Park cannot levy a surcharge on energy consumption. The city of Saskatoon can.

Now the city of Saskatoon can also do some other things, like annex that area where Saskatoon Chemicals is now located. So what this does is, in the event of annexation, the surcharge on Saskatoon Chemicals that would ordinarily apply if it were annexed will not apply.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Does the Saskatoon Chemicals Limited obtain their power from Sask Power Corporation or the franchise?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — From Sask Power.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Well then, why should it involve the city of Saskatoon? What you're doing here is, you're dealing the possibility of annexation. There is no immediate concession of any kind, or no immediate benefit.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — That's absolutely right, and that's what I've been trying to explain since I got here. There is no immediate concession; there is no immediate benefit. This is protection, as it is here in Regina with Ipsco.

We convinced these folks to make major investments. In the case of Ipsco, I think it was 90 or \$95 million that they invested in a continuous caster and rolling mills — Steckel, I think it was, the rolling mill — and the latest in technology. They have an excellent plant out here, and they couldn't find it in their best-thought-through interests to make this expansion in the city of Regina, or outside of the city of Regina, if there was any possibility of the city of Regina annexing the area that Ipsco is situated in, thereby attracting a 10 per cent surcharge on one of their highest input components. So we said to them, right, we will give you — and we talked to the city of Regina. And we said, we will give you the protection from that surcharge in the event of annexation.

So Ipsco went ahead and built this expansion, and today I understand they're doing quite well, and they had a ribbon cutting and a media presentation here maybe a month ago or thereabouts. But it's in operation and doing very well. It never would have been built if there was any risk of them attracting an energy surcharge of 10 per cent. The situation is similar in Saskatoon. They do not now pay a surcharge; they are not now in the city limits of

Saskatoon.

But in the event that they were annexed by Saskatoon, or that area was annexed by Saskatoon, they could attract the 10 per cent surcharge. They are simply not able to be competitive because they are very high energy users, very large energy users. If they were to attract at 10 per cent surcharge, they simply couldn't operate, and there would be a lock on the door, and all of those constituents of yours that now work at Saskatoon Chemicals would not longer be working there.

That's what we're trying to do with this legislation, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — Well there is quite a difference between the city of Prince Albert, which encloses within its confines the pulp mill, and the city of Saskatoon, which does not include Saskatoon Chemicals Limited.

But my final question, which the minister may not wish to comment on, but it has to do with the public utilities review commission. Now I would suggest to the minister that the public utilities review commission's view on this would be negative. Now the minister may stand up and take the defence that, what am I talking about? The public utilities review commission doesn't exist, and this is a hypothetical question, but leaving that aside that it doesn't exist, if they existed, Mr. Minister, what would their position be on this?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — The public utilities review commission, when they existed, they had no jurisdiction over surcharge. Their jurisdiction was only over energy costs, electrical or gas or in the case of SGI or SaskTel rates, but surcharge were not part of or a component part of the rates.

I wonder if we shouldn't get this amendment through before we all forget about it.

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. The amendment will come up at clause 9. We're still on clause . . .

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have just one question for the minister, and it relates directly to the question of an exemption for Saskatoon Chemicals. Now, Mr. Minister, you've already given to Weyerhaeuser, who happens to own Saskatoon Chemicals, a free rein on our northern forests, about \$9 million a year from the Highways budget to build roads in their lease area; you've already exempted them from special surcharges with respect to natural gas. You've given them just about every possible incentive that one could imagine, Mr. Minister, which you certainly don't consider giving to the average small-business person in this province.

Now you're telling this Assembly and the people of Saskatoon that in the event that Saskatoon Chemicals is annexed by the city of Saskatoon, while every other business man in the city of Saskatoon has to pay the surcharge on electricity, Weyerhaeuser, who's already been given every possible tax exemption in the book and has just been handed the Prince Albert Pulp Company

and the Saskatoon Chemicals plant without having to pay one penny in the form of a down payment — and I'd be grateful if I could have the minister's attention — Saskatoon Chemicals has already been purchased by Weyerhaeuser without have to pay one penny in the form of a down payment. You're now telling us that in addition, Saskatoon Chemicals, namely Weyerhaeuser needs this special exemption from the surcharge.

My question to you is: how can you justify, in light of the massive give-aways to Weyerhaeuser, exempting them from this surcharge if they're annexed by the city of Saskatoon, while every other single business man in Saskatoon has to pay the surcharge? Isn't that, Mr. Minister, just an example of the kind of political favouritism that you're handing out to Weyerhaeuser while you ignore small business in the city of Saskatoon?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well you know, Saskatoon Chemical is, I think, the second largest employer in Saskatoon. And I don't know how many of them are your constituents, but if one was your constituent, I would be a little more concerned about the viability of Saskatoon Chemicals in the competitive environment that they work in.

What you're asking us to do is to run the risk of annexation. and the member, your seat-mate, tells us that the growth rate is so phenomenal in Saskatoon — and I think it's significant, but not phenomenal — but if we take his argument to its extreme, it's so phenomenal that in no time we will be annexing for miles and miles around Saskatoon, and Saskatoon Chemicals will come into the Saskatoon city limits, then attract a 10 per cent surcharge, then become non-competitive, or it simply won't be able to compete in the market-place with the competitors in British Columbia and Manitoba, and it will have a lock on the door, my friend. It will have a lock on the door. The second largest employer in Saskatoon will be made non-competitive because you insist that it shouldn't enjoy the kind of accommodation that we're talking about here.

An Hon. Member: — That's nonsense.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — And the member says it's nonsense, which is a pretty good indication of his understanding of the market-place, Mr. Chairman. You understand nothing. What you understand is big, bad multinational, and profits are all four-letter words, and you have nothing to do with them. You're hateful and spiteful, and you don't like them and you want to see them fail. But you should think the next . . .

An Hon. Member: — Eric is becoming a four-letter word.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Eric is a four-letter word. you should think the next step, the next logical step. If it fails, your constituents fail, because they won't have the employment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

(2315)

Clause 4

Ms. Simard: — Thank you. With respect to clause 4, I just want to direct the minister's attention to clause 4(1)(d) which adds a new clause (j). And this clause says:

Gives cabinet the power to designate further powers of the corporation by regulation.

In other words, what we have here, Mr. Speaker, is Bill 5 revisited. Cabinet can go behind closed doors and designate further powers and objects for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation without it being open to public debate. Now the reason why we have the powers prescribed in legislation is so that there's some control over the powers of a corporation, so that the public knows what the mandate of this corporation is.

And now what the government is proposing to do by this amendment is to allow cabinet — behind closed doors, in secret, without accounting to the public — to add to the powers of Saskatchewan Power Corporation. It, in effect, by that section, could add whatever power it wanted to add. It could have Saskatchewan Power Corporation selling shoes, or it could have Saskatchewan Power Corporation doing any other thing it chose that's not related at all to electrical energy and the supply of electrical energy.

And I want to know from the minister why he thinks it's necessary to do that, and what powers does he feel he wants to prescribe to the corporation, in secret, behind closed cabinet doors. What powers does he have in mind, and why does he need that section?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I'm told, Mr. Speaker, that this section is no different than exists in other legislation relative to other Crown corporations that were established by that party when they were sitting over here.

An Hon. Member: — Which ones?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Oh, I don't know off the top of my head, but it's a very long time since this legislation has been updated. For instance, it's been so long since it's been updated that we're talking about brand-new, different kinds of energy that weren't in existence when this legislation was first passed, back whenever it was first passed. We're now having to make amendments because previously it was very cumbersome for us to purchase electricity. We had to go through very complex machinations to purchase electricity because we didn't have the power to purchase electricity. We can sell it, but we can't buy it; we have to produce it. So we got into all kinds of swaps and exchanges and other kinds of things to get electricity to provide for peaking, or in some instances base load when our own capacity was kind of hitting its peak, and so I guess the short answer to your question is, this is a normal kind of a clause in other Crown corporations legislation.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clauses 5 and 6 agreed to.

Clause 7

Ms. Simard: — Subsection 13(2) is being repealed by clause 7 and what that section does . . . As I understand 13(2) in The Power Corporation Act, it allowed SPC to incorporate other corporations which were subsidiary corporations with objects similar to the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. What this amendment does is repeals that section 5, right? In effect repeals that subsection, and in effect says that what Saskatchewan Power Corporation can do is incorporate subsidiaries that have objects entirely different from those of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation because the objects and the powers no longer have to be similar.

So I'm going to ask the minister why he feels that power is necessary, in what sort of corporations does he intend to incorporate that don't have the same objects and powers, i.e., the supply of electrical energy, as the Saskatchewan Power Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, an example of a possibility might be to separate the two utilities, the gas utility from the electrical utility, to perhaps accommodate the desire of PURC, back when it existed, to prevent cross-subsidization and that kind of thing, to operate them as separate entities so that they can be run more efficiently as separate entities, etc. I'm not entirely sure why the drafters wanted that section in there, but I'm giving you an example of what my guess is that it would be.

Ms. Simard: — Well, Mr. Minister, what it does is it reduces accountability of Saskatchewan Power Corporation to the legislature. It reduces accountability inasmuch as Sask Power corporation can go out and create any kind of a corporation it wants, any sort of a corporation, without it having any resemblance to the purpose of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation.

Saskatchewan Power Corporation, in effect, could become a shell with a number of subsidiaries that are totally unrelated to what the legislature anticipated Saskatchewan Power to do. And there's no question that it reduces the accountability of the corporation. And so what are you going to do, privatize those subsidiaries some way down the line? Is that what the government's intending to do?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, a similar provision exists in other Crowns as well. I think of one that I'm very familiar with is Agdevco, where they set up companies that will go into joint ventures with other companies to manage a project in some other part of the world. And we've done lots of that. Another one is SaskTel where they have set up a company that is called SaskTel International that was designed to export technology, and I understand they're out in the world doing that.

I don't think that we have done it at Sask Power yet, but we were looking very seriously at exporting technology to India, our single-wire earth return technology some time ago. And in the event that we were to land that project, I

expect that we would have to have a subsidiary organization to give us the kind of risk protection that we would need. Going out into other parts of the world, you don't want to put the whole utility at risk, so to speak.

SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) is the same, and potash is the same. They all have a similar provision in their legislation, so it's nothing startling or new; it's just if we're going to export the technology, this is one of the ways to do it, and of course that's to the advantage of Saskatchewan people.

Clause 7 agreed to.

Clause 8

Ms. Simard: — Thank you. What section 8 does is repeals the section that required SPC to provide funds for natural gas incinerators. could the minister please advise me what the practice has been in that regard? I believe in your second reading speech you said that it didn't have any significance or make any difference. Could you please tell me whether you were funding these things and what the practice was?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — There was never, ever, any up-take.

Ms. Simard: — What? I'm sorry.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — While that provision existed, it was never used. There was never any funds supplied.

Clause 8 agreed to.

Clause 9

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the section 9 of the printed Bill No. 77 be amended.

By deleting the words "and any other industrial customer" of electrical energy that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may by regulation prescribe," and by deleting subparagraph (4).

Are you happy?

Clause 9 as amended agreed to.

Clause 10 agreed to.

Clause 11

Ms. Simard: — What clause 11 does, Mr. Chairperson, is lift the 30-year limitation on . . . the 30-year period for borrowing is lifted, and it says that Saskatchewan Power Corporation can borrow for an indefinite period of time. Now I understand from the minister that they want to do this in order to take advantage of some certain market conditions and to refinance the corporate debt, which has risen to, I think, something like \$2.5 billion for SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation) alone — 1.1. from 1981 to 2.5 to date — and they have to borrow in order to manage the corporation.

My concern about a longer term is that I'm concerned that

we'll end up paying more interest on that amount of money over a longer period. We'll probably be paying a higher rate of interest because it's over a longer period, and we'll be putting off today's debt for tomorrow's generation in even a worse fashion than what has been done in the past.

And I'm concerned that this is a bad trend for the province to be taking, and it just puts off the inevitable. And I ask myself how it's going to affect our credit rating in this province, and therefore the interest rates that we pay. And so I'd like the minister to comment on the need for that section and give us a few more details as to why he feels it's necessary.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — We have some similar concerns. We worry a lot about putting off today's debt to tomorrow's children, and we're having some experience with that right now. We're in a situation right now where power lines that were built in 1949 and '50 and '51 were never paid for — never paid for. That constitutes part of our debt today. We've got transmission and distribution lines going all over the province that the way things were structured back then, we looked after the interest, but never, ever, ever took care of the principal. And so we're refinancing now to take care of some of that.

Having said that, that has nothing to do with this. This particular section is to finance things like hydro projects where the unit life far exceeds the 30-year limit that we're stuck to now. So if you can take 30-year or a 40-year project, or a project that has a life of 40 years and finance it over 40 years as opposed to 30, you can see that that would have a lesser impact on rates when it comes to pay for the project. So what this simply does is to accommodate the longer life of today's projects.

Clause 11 agreed to.

Clause 12 agreed to.

(2330)

Clause 13

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Chairperson, what this clause does is it increases the amount that the corporation may borrow from 3.5 billion to \$5 billion. The corporation now wants, the minister now wants to be able to borrow \$5 billion on behalf of SPC, and I imagine that's to accommodate projects such as the Shand project which we see in the Estevan constituency of the Premier.

I could ask the minister tonight whether he has pursued the offer made by Manitoba Hydro that they would look at a rate that would be suitable to Saskatchewan and less expensive than the Shand project, for example. I won't get into those questions tonight. The fact of the matter is there is an expensive project taking place in the city, in the province, for which the government will inevitably have to borrow money, and therefore it's increasing its borrowing limited from 3.5 billion to 5 billion.

I want to ask the minister: other than Shand, what projects does he have in mind for which he requires this increase in borrowing limit?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, we projected — and projections are just that; they're not absolutes — but we projected a year ago that the growth rate in energy demand would be about 2.5 per cent. In fact, growth in energy demand has, over the last year, been about 5 per cent. And over October, October this year over October last year was 7 per cent. So the growth rate is significant. And Shand, there's no doubt that the demand for the Shand capacity will be on us in a big way of 1992, and that's the target to have that particular project on stream.

If growth continues — and we expect that it will because of the things that we're doing in the province, like Weyerhaeuser and Ipsco and Saskatoon Chemicals and so on — but if growth continues at that same rate, we will be back into the market for another 300 megawatts very quickly. And I don't know whether it will be a Coronach or a hydro project in the North or whatever, but suffice to say that in the next 5 to 10 years our capital project expenditures will be 3 to \$4 billion. So we have to bump the borrowing levels.

Ms. Simard: — And I hope, Mr. Minister, they're not all patronage projects.

Clause 13 agreed to.

Clauses 14 to 16 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill as amended.

Bill No. 94 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act (No. 2)

Clause 1

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'd be pleased to introduce the officials that will be helping me in explaining the Bill to the members. John Heath is seated beside me, is the associate deputy minister of Health. And seated directly behind me is Bryan Middlemiss, who is the acting executive director of the Medical Care Insurance Commission. Behind John Heath is Gerald Tegart, the Crown solicitor for the Department of Health. And to my right is Michael Littlewood, the administrative co-ordinator in the Department of Health.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson. Mr. Minister, as we all know, this is the Act to basically destroy the Medical Care Insurance Commission of Saskatchewan, and the Bill itself raises a number of important questions. Mr. Minister, I would ask you to explain to the legislature why the Department of Health decided to roll the Medical Care Insurance Commission, which was an independent commission, into the Department of Health?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well I take a bit of exception with the members' statement saying that it's an attempt to destroy the Medical Care Insurance Commission. I don't accept that at all.

It's being moved into the Department of Health for

basically, I guess, two reasons. Number one would be that we feel that there are some certain budgetary efficiencies and savings of money by having it within the Department of Health, and I think the hon. member would support those kind of initiatives.

I hear her from day to day rising in the House concerned with health care expenditures, asking in one situation for why are you cutting back, and then on the next breath saying, you should expand services here. So I think any attempt to try and use the dollars designated to health more efficiently would be something that you would support.

And it is my belief, from the best of the knowledge that's provided to me, that certainly there are more efficiencies with the commission within the Department of Health.

But secondly, as a reason for why this would be wrapped into the Department of Health rather than being an independent commission, is that there is the opportunity for better co-ordination between the department and the services of MCIC (Medical Care Insurance Commission).

And I guess one of the things, and I'm sure you would ask me this question, so I will cite one as an example, and that is the rural medical practice study, which, when I was the minister, was undertaken, which came up with some very, I think, strong suggestions as to how medical practice in rural Saskatchewan could be strengthened.

An Hon. Member: — And there's going to get stronger suggestions tonight.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — And the member from Regina City is chirping again tonight, but we'll . . .

An Hon. Member: — Regina Centre.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Centre. I'm sorry. And I would think there's better co-ordination, and I cite the rural medical practice study as one area where the Department of Health, with the MCIC within their mandate, they could carry out some of the recommendations of that more easily, shall I say.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, one of the concerns that has been expressed about this decision to destroy the Medical Care Insurance Commission is the fact that there will no longer be an arm's-length relationship from the Minister of Health and from the Government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, can you explain to us what sort of provisions have been made to insure that the medical records of people across this province will not become public information should this independence that has been historical no longer be there?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The officials indicate to me that section 37(1) of the existing Act, The Medical Care Insurance Act, is one which indicates that:

A person employed in the administration of this Act shall not communicate to any other person information brought to his attention during the

course of his employment specifying:

And we can go on with “the name” and so on . . . the confidentiality that you’re referring to . . . And I concur with you that the confidentiality of medical records is a very important aspect, and I can say that I believe, in Saskatchewan, under our administration and under the administration of the party that you support, that that has been safeguarded. And what my officials indicate to me here is that exactly the same type of requirements for employees, as was under the old Act, will be under the new one.

So there really is no change. And I thank you for asking this question because I concur with you that that is something that is of extreme importance, something that people want to be assured that there would be no legislative change that would in any way, shape or form have that confidentiality of medical records breached. And I feel assured to say to you that under the new Act it will be as well safeguarded as it has been for many years in the past.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, it has been safeguarded for the last 25 years because the Medical Care Insurance Commission has been independent and at arm’s-length from the government. The Medical Care Insurance Commission has been free to hire its own administration and personnel, and with the provisions now, where the Medical Care Insurance Commission is rolled into the Department of Health, I question whether or not we could have a situation where a number of political appointees and supporters of your political party could now be hired by the Department of health in this particular division, which was the Medical Care Insurance Commission, and we could have a situation where the Minister of Health, or anybody else in government, in your cabinet, might want to have access to someone’s medical record. And with the proper people who support the Progressive Conservative Party in the proper place, they could very well have access to people’s health records. And even though we have this provision of secrecy under 37(1) of the legislation, we are concerned that with the independence of the commission now being done away with, that there is nothing really to protect the public from Conservative snoops.

(2345)

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well I believe, in answer to your question, that basically it is —let me put it this way — it’s the legislation that protects that confidentiality, rather than the organization. And had anyone wanted to perhaps probe into this, that opportunity would have been there within the MCIC commission. But I think both you and I agree that that hasn’t taken place.

But I want to illustrate a little further to you how, I believe, under the Department of Health that the track record of the past, when we go back as far as we want — 20 years or 25 years — would illustrate that the fears that perhaps you feel have no grounds. Because if you look at the Department of Health, which has been responsible for the drug plan, which has been responsible for the SHSP, the Saskatchewan hospital services plan — and in both of those there are some information that is confidential.

And the employees of the Department of Health, I believe, have not over the years spilled that confidentiality, at least in the years that I was in there as a minister, and the only ones I can speak for, and I can say as the years I’ve been an elected member, I have never had a constituent or a person of Saskatchewan come to me and criticize an employee in the Department of health for, shall I say, spilling confidential information.

And let’s go to one that’s even, I suppose, even a little more sensitive and that’s the whole Department of . . . we call it the mental health department now; it used to be called psych services, and I changed the name of that. And that’s very sensitive — and that’s very sensitive — there’s some very confidential information there about people, about people who, through no fault of their own, had a mental illness.

And a mental illness, in my mind, is no different than a physical illness except it affects a different part of the body. And people recover from a physical illness, thank goodness, as they do from a mental illness. And you and I both probably know individuals who have had some mental treatment and are today very productive citizens in our society. And that confidentiality should remain there. I can say over the years, and with my experience in the Health department, I never had one — not one letter or one phone call, or brought to my attention that there was any spilling of confidential information from what used to be called psych services branch or the mental health branch of the department.

So I say to the member, although MCIC is coming in under the Department of Health, I believe, and from my association for a number of years, that those people who work in health care are dedicated people; they’re professional people; they know that the information that they are handling is sensitive information; they know that it is information that is important to the lives of the people who have been treated, whether physically or mentally or, with prescriptions, through drugs.

And I can say, and I will say to you and to the members of this Assembly, those people who are in that department — and I think the member from Saskatoon, I forget his seat now, but who was a former minister of Health, would say exactly the same thing, that under his tenure as a minister of Health, he never had a great problem with confidentiality. so with MCIC moving into the Department of Health, I see that same professional conduct that Saskatchewan Health is proud of being conducted there.

So I guess to sum up to the hon. member, I do not feel, and I will stand here and say that I do not think that anyone who is an employee of the Department of health will in any way, shape or form disclose confidential information regarding one’s health records.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I would just reiterate again that under the former minister of Health’s tenure we had an independent Medical Care Insurance Commission.

And while I realize that there is confidential information

contained within the Department of Health through SHSP (Saskatchewan hospital service plan), the prescription drug plan and mental health services, nowhere else in the Department of Health is there such a vast record of medical care that individuals have received in this province because, Mr. Minister, we have 25 years of medical records contained on each person who was born and raised in this province in the Medical Care Insurance Commission.

So I simply flag for you a concern that many people have in this province about your government's decision to roll the Medical Care Insurance Commission in to the Department of Health. And the concern is that the commission was independent in the past; it had the ability to hire its own persons. I've never heard of the Medical Care Insurance Commission of being accused of ever being partisan or political. I don't think that could be said for a number of other departments in your government where we've had example after example of patronage appointments. I think that the Medical Care Insurance Commission quite clearly has not been riddled with Conservative patronage appointments, and that has happened because it has been independent. It's had its own commission, it's had its own director, and now, Mr. Minister, that no longer is the case. The Minister of Health replaces the commission in terms of role and function.

So I guess my question to you, Mr. Minister, is: what assurances can you give the people of this province, even with section 37 of the Act still being there, that the commission will not be riddled with Conservative patronage appointments, and therefore the public of this province can be assured that their medical records are not going to become public information or, at the very minimum, Conservative information.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — No, I think, in answer to your question, that basically it's the same people doing the same job as they did before under the commission, now in the Department of Health. Those people, from my experience with them, were very professional, abided by section 37 of the Act, and I believe they will continue to do exactly the same thing although they're under a different structure.

And again, without elaborating and going on in great detail, and I could tell you from my own personal experience that the people in the Department of Health, when I had the pleasure of being the minister — and I think the member from Saskatoon South would support me in this when he was the minister — were there because they were dedicated people. People who serve in health care are people who really have a feeling and a care for the well-being of their fellow man. That's why they move into that . . .

An Hon. Member: — And women.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — And women. That's right — why they move into that type of work. And I believe that the people of MCIC, the people of SHSP, the people in psych (psychiatric) services, the mental health branch, people in community health — and I won't go through them all — but I work closely with those people, and I can say most sincerely to you that those people delivered service

because they believe in the betterment of health. And they did it, and they were proud of their job, and they acted professional.

And I believe the people at MCIC did that. They did it in the years that I worked closely with them. And I believe, even though they're under a different structure, that you will see that same dedication to professionalism continue. I can understand you questioning me on that part of the Bill, and it is logical that you would do that. But all I can do is give you my assurance from five years of experience in there that I believe that confidentiality will be maintained as it has been in the past.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, you assure me that the confidentiality will be guaranteed, but I'm not so sure about your guarantees. We had a guarantee signed by the Minister of Finance in 1978 that the deterrent fee for prescription drugs would be eliminated. And the dispensing fee has not been eliminated, Mr. Minister. What, in fact, you have done is introduced a deductible system for the citizens in this province, so the guarantee is worth nothing. And that guarantee was made some nine years ago.

We had a guarantee in 1982 that you people would make health care in Saskatchewan number one. And that guarantee has not happened. It's another betrayal. So you can stand up in this legislature and you can assure us all you want, but the people of this province know full well how you stand when it comes to carrying through with your promises and commitments. And they no longer trust you, Mr. Minister.

And I think that's the essence of the problem here, is that you assure us that medical records will not become public knowledge, or won't become the knowledge of the Conservative Party of Saskatchewan. But your assurances mean very little to the people of this province because you have assured the people of this province a great deal in the past, and we've seen where those assurances have led the people of this province.

You assured us we'd have the top health care system in the country, yet we have 11,000 people in Saskatoon waiting to get into hospitals. You assured us that there would be a removal of the deterrent fee or the dispensing fee of prescription drugs, and we now have a situation where we have a deductible. And we've had cut after cut after cut that have been laid on the people of this province when it comes to the delivery of health services. So your assurances mean very little.

Now, Mr. Minister, one of the things that's become quite clear to me in the last couple of days is a practice that the Medical Care Insurance Commission has engaged in for some time, and that is the practice of reimbursing Saskatchewan residents who go out of province to receive certain forms of medical treatment.

And I'm thinking of one particular clinic in Calgary, Alberta, where they are able to perform cataract treatment on citizens. And I am told that the doctor that is performing this treatment has opted out of medicare in Alberta. And I'm wondering why it would be, Mr. Minister, that we are reimbursing Saskatchewan citizens

who get treatment from this particular doctor when he has opted out of medicare; and yet in Saskatchewan, if we have a doctor who has opted out of medicare, the patient who goes to that doctor receives no such reimbursement. Can you explain the discrepancy, Mr. Minister?

(2400)

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — There were a number of questions there, so I'll try and go back over them all.

First of all, about the assurance that I gave you, again I can only go back to my good years with the Health department, and can assure you that from my experience there everyone acted professionally and was very confidential.

However, I want to indicate to you that if you don't accept that assurance, really that the Act in section 37, as it was in the old Act, and what the new Act will indicate, shows that employees are to be confidential, and they will be bound by the legislation. So I don't think there's any real worry about the confidentiality.

We now move on to the question of insured services out of province. That was, I think, the third part of your question. And I'm going from memory here as to what we do is pay for services outside of the province as we would pay here in Saskatchewan for services that are not provided here . . . And we pay for the services outside of Saskatchewan at Saskatchewan rates, and I think you're aware of these things. But if it is a service that is not provided here, then we will pay at the out-of-province rate.

Oh, excuse me, I should say, the correct terminology is, we would; for services that are not insured in Saskatchewan, we do not pay for those.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, I think you're aware of the clinic that I'm referring to. Are you telling this House then that that particular medical procedure is not available in Saskatchewan, and therefore, even though this doctor has opted out of medicare in Alberta and we won't pay opted out doctors in Saskatchewan, why would it be, Mr. Minister, that that doctor in Alberta . . . or, pardon me, that the patients who go to that doctor in Alberta are being reimbursed at Saskatchewan rates?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Really we have no control as to whether a person is opted in or out in Alberta, and I think you will realize that. We pay for insurance services in Saskatchewan or out of Saskatchewan for what would be insured services. So whether the individual in Alberta is opted in or out of the plan, we have no control over that. But the service that he provides is an insured service in Saskatchewan, so therefore we pay at the Saskatchewan rate for that service.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, it doesn't seem very fair to a number of doctors in Saskatchewan that if they were to opt out of the Medical Care Insurance Commission, that their patients would not be reimbursed the Saskatchewan rate.

And at the same time we have a situation that has

developed, particularly in reference to the clinic in Alberta — Calgary, Alberta, where an opted out doctor in Alberta, treating Saskatchewan patients is, in a way, reimbursed by the Saskatchewan taxpayers because those patients come back to Saskatchewan, they apply to the Medical Care Insurance Commission, and then they're reimbursed by the Medical Care Insurance Commission, or the taxpayers of this province, for a procedure that they obtained from an opted out doctor in Alberta. Now is that fair, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Now I guess all I can say there is, we don't make the rules in Alberta. A patient who went to this clinic received satisfactory treatment, and we pay at the insured rates of Saskatchewan. But whether he is in or out in Alberta, I have no control over that, nor does my department. The service is a service that is being performed there, that is an insured service in Saskatchewan, and therefore we pay at that rate.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, the point is this: that if that doctor were practising or was practising in Saskatchewan and had opted out of medicare in Saskatchewan, and if that same patient were to see that doctor in Saskatchewan, that patient would not be reimbursed by the Medical Care Insurance Commission, nor would the doctor receive any payment from the Medical Care Insurance Commission.

So my point is this, that there are doctors in this province who believe that that's an unfair situation. And I believe, Mr. Minister, that if you wish to correct the situation, that you would have the legislative power to do that.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — No, the situation in Saskatchewan here — and I remember back to the negotiation of Saskatoon Agreement II and back to the 1962 medicare agreement — is that the doctors in Saskatchewan argued strongly for an opting-out clause. There are certain doctors who, and I think there were some since 1962 who said, we opt to not serve under the plan. And when we negotiated Saskatoon II, there was a strong lobby to say there should be an opting out clause, and we allowed that to happen. And there are, as you know, certain physicians who have chose to opt out. And opting out in Saskatchewan means exactly that, that if you opt out you are not covered as an insured service.

So I guess in the short answer to you: yes, there are people in Saskatchewan who choose to opt out of the plan and bill their patients directly, and under Saskatoon Agreement II they have the right to do that.

In Alberta there are doctors who are providing the insured service. As minister of Health previously, and the present Minister of Health, we have no say over who is in or out in Alberta. We look at the quality of service, the quality of service of the individual in the clinic that you are referring to, and I think you would agree with me is a good quality service, and we can't say whether he's in or out of the plan; we pay for that service at the Saskatchewan rate.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, we'll just go over this again so that we're clear on this. I believe that the man in Alberta, the doctor in Alberta, is an ophthalmologist. And I believe that there are a couple of ophthalmologists

in Saskatchewan who have opted out of the Medical Care Insurance Commission.

Now, Mr. Minister, as you know, it takes a long time in this province to get in to see a doctor to have cataracts removed. Some individuals in Saskatchewan are going to Alberta because this procedure is done very, very quickly at this man's clinic, and this doctor has opted out of medicare.

Now we won't pay opted-out doctors in this province any kind of reimbursement for the treatment that they provide patients, and that's fair enough. I don't think we should. On the other hand, we have a situation that has developed where we are reimbursing Saskatchewan patients who go to Alberta for treatment by an opted-out doctor. Now somehow, Mr. Minister, that just doesn't seem fair.

And I'm wondering whether or not you can assure the people of this province, plus a good number of physicians, that you are going to do something about this situation that has developed.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well I think we have a fair assessment of the situation. The only thing I'd correct you on is that there's only the one doctor in Saskatchewan, to my knowledge, that has opted out of the ophthalmology. And I go back to the situation that we have no control in Alberta as to whether a person opts in or out; I think you'll accept that.

I think your argument is: why should we be paying an opted-out Albertan ophthalmologist and not a Saskatchewan one? I guess as a little bit of understanding to what you're saying, and my officials tell me that there are ongoing negotiations for reciprocal billing arrangements which they hope to have in place by maybe the spring or next summer between the provinces which might, and I want to underline "might" might be able to alleviate the problem that you are suggesting.

Let me give you an example, and I think this is along your line of questioning, and I can't say with any assurance this will take place. But it's the kind of thing that may be discussed, is that if you have a reciprocal billing arrangement, that then you play by the rules of the area in which the billing takes place. So if that were to come about, then I think some of the concerns that you've expressed here regarding the clinic in Calgary vis-a-vis the doctor in Regina that has opted out would somehow be rectified. I can't say that's going to come about, but my officials indicate that discussion towards reciprocal billing amongst the provinces are taking place.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. Mr. Minister, I think we'll just carry on and get on to another section of the new legislation that you're introducing, and that section or the sections that I'm referring to are 18(1.1), 18(5), 18(6), 18(7). And I'm wondering if you can explain to me why reference to the Swift Current Region is being deleted from the legislation?

(0015)

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I think in the case of the Swift Current

region, and I think some of the reasons for them having, shall we say, a little bit of special treatment, goes away back in the history of Saskatchewan health care where they were health region number one, and for some time they were allowed to process their own claims.

My officials indicate to me that in the last while they have been really kind of acting as a middle man, just collecting the claims and having the department process them. So in looking at ways in which we could be more efficient and use the dollars in health care in better methods, it was felt that there could be some savings by eliminating that middle step.

I want to indicate to you that to the best of my advice, that there had been consultation with them saying that this would take place. And I guess the basis for it was efficiency and saving of money and eliminating that role of a middle man.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Section 20 refers to the anti-tuberculosis league. And, once again, the league is being deleted from the new legislation, and I wish you to advise me of the reason for that.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — There have been discussions with the anti-tuberculosis league over the past while, and some of the functions that they had done previously that would impact on the Medical Care Insurance Commission have been taken over by the Department of Health. And the anti-tuberculosis league, basically, has changed to the lung association. And the lung association, which I had some dealings with, I remember are basically in the educative and the preventative aspects of disease that would affect the lungs, and therefore the dealings that they would have with the Medical Care Insurance Commission have ceased to take place. So that would be the reason for the exclusion in that portion of the Act.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Under the old legislation, section 36 required that the Saskatchewan medical care insurance fund be audited by the Provincial Auditor.

Now I realize that the fund has been deleted and the section 36 has now been changed that:

The minister shall, in each fiscal year, prepare and lay before the Legislative Assembly in accordance with The Tabling of Documents Act a report of the transactions made under this Act during the immediate preceding fiscal year.

Now, Mr. Minister, there is no reference to the Provincial Auditor, and I'm wondering why reference to the Provincial Auditor has been deleted from the legislation?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — With the change, the medical care insurance fund has evaporated, shall I say, and now the funding will be in the Consolidated Fund, and of course the Consolidated Fund is automatically subject to scrutiny by the Provincial Auditor. So it goes without saying that it will be audited by the Provincial Auditor. I'll go through it again if . . .

An Hon. Member: — No, I understand.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — All right, fine.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, just so I'm clear, now the minister will lay before the Legislative Assembly a document. Will the document basically be the type of document that we used to have in relationship to the Medical Care Insurance Commission? As you know, each year MCIC lays before the Assembly a document, or its annual report. Will we still have the same kind of accounting under the Department of Health that we did have when the commission was independent?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — No, there are no changes in the legal requirements, and there's no plan to change the way that it has been done in the past.

Ms. Atkinson: — So just so I'm clear, Mr. Minister, are you saying then that as we have now with the Saskatchewan hospital services plan, we have an annual report, we will have an annual report for what in essence is the Medical Care Insurance Commission, even though it's been rolled into the Department of Health?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — It'll be the same information, and there's no real plan to change it. Now whether it will be in the same form or not, I cannot give you that assurance — whether it will be in exactly the same form, but the information is the same, and my officials indicate to me that there's no intent to change what would be tabled.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Now under section 40 of the old legislation there was a procedure for hearing complaints, and with the amendments to the legislation we now have a situation where the Lieutenant Governor in Council may provide for the establishment of an appeal procedure pursuant to complaints.

Under the old legislation the Lieutenant Governor in Council had to provide for an appeal procedure, and I'm wondering why now we have a situation that is a "may" provide, and not a "shall" provide.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Under the existing provision where it's a "shall" clause, there can be appeals that are basically meaningless appeals. With the "may" provision, the officials indicate to me that that would be permissive, where certainly there would be substantive type of appeals and can't take place. If you wanted some examples, I would be willing to give you some.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm just simply going to flag the possibility that we now have a great deal of discretion with this change to the legislation in this particular clause. And prior to this amendment, the Lieutenant Governor in Council had to provide an appeal procedure, and that no longer is the case. And I think this is another example of the anti-democratic nature of your government.

Now, Mr. Minister, I want to now go to section 49 of the legislation, and probably, Mr. Minister, that this is the most difficult change to the legislation. And I just want to put on the record a concern that I have over your lack of consultation, particularly with the Saskatchewan Medical Association.

Now as I understand it, the Minister of Health advised the medical association that they would have at least two weeks consultation with the Department of Health after the legislation had been drafted. Mr. Minister, that in fact did not happen. The SMA (Saskatchewan Medical Association) did not receive a copy of the draft legislation until Friday, October 30, and they met with officials of the Department of Health on the Sunday following, or November 1, and, as I understand it, they spent from 3 o'clock in the afternoon to well after midnight discussing the details of the legislation.

Now, Mr. Minister, the Saskatchewan Medical Association, and a good number of doctors that they represent, have a great deal of difficulty with your changes to section 49 of the legislation, and as you know, this is the section governing the establishment of a joint professional review committee. Mr. Minister, we now have in this legislation the ability on behalf of that review committee to fine a doctor up to \$50,000 for over-billing.

Now I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, what sort of consultation did your officials have with the Saskatchewan Medical Association, and why the stiff fine and why the section that makes it very, very difficult for doctors to appeal the findings of the joint professional review committee?

(0030)

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — In consultation, the department tell me they spent from 3 till 12:15 on Monday discussing this with the SMA. And the minister spent three hours on Tuesday in consultation with the SMA, and I believe that the minister indicated that there was quite a discrepancy in their views, and they could have been consulting for ever, but they were quite a ways apart on where they thought they should be.

It's true that the fine can be up to — up to — \$50,000. It automatically doesn't mean it's \$50,000. It is set by a review of their peers, and there is an appeal procedure. So I hope those three things have helped answer your question on that section.

So there was some consultation and, secondly, the minister felt that they could consult and consult, but there's quite a difference in opinion, and maybe more consultation wouldn't have brought it any closer together. Thirdly, it's a fine up to \$50,000, set by a peer review. And fourthly, there is an appeal procedure.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, the changes to the legislation are very, very great. I'd like to know this: now that you've introduced legislation where there is now a fine of up to \$50,000, why is it that there isn't a hearing process contained within the legislation?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well there's a complete hearing by the peers. That's the first step if there's a discrepancy. There's a complete hearing by the peers, and then following that, if there isn't a satisfactory resolution, there is an appeal procedure through the courts.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, what we have here is a

peer review committee — not even a peer review committee; I'm going to call it the joint professional review committee — who can level a fine of up to \$50,000, and the doctor does not have the ability to appear before a hearing. In many respects, Mr. Minister, this is like a Star Chamber operating here, and you haven't answered my question.

My question is this: why is there not a hearing? When this committee has the power to levy a \$50,000 fine, why wouldn't the doctor have the right to appear before a hearing?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — For your information, there is a complete hearing with the doctor present, with his peers there, and the doctor can have his lawyers there for that hearing. And if that doesn't take place, the Court of Queen's Bench will make sure that it does take place.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, it's not written into the legislation, so there are no provisions for a hearing. And as far as we're concerned, on this side of the House, that doctors should not have to be subjected to this kind of arbitrary discretion, particularly when there is a \$50,000 fine that can and could be levied.

And, Mr. Minister, as far as we're concerned, this joint professional review committee, and the legislation that you have drafted, and the legislation that you are presenting here tonight, does not live up to the principles of natural justice.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Certainly there have been a number of cases in Saskatchewan over the past few years where this type of thing has taken place, and it is required that you follow the rules of natural justice, and you do not have to specify that in the Act. It's implied that that's what takes place. So there's no necessity to state that within the Act.

I mean it's just understood from precedent that that's what's going to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well it's very difficult when the member . . . if you want to get in the debate, please rise and get in the debate. It's very difficult to explain it to your seat-mate when two of you continue to chatter. So I'm telling you that it is not necessary for it to be in the legislation.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I was not chattering while you were chattering to the legislature.

Now, Mr. Minister, I'd like to know this: why is it that there's no reference in this legislation to doctors having access to information that this joint professional review committee used against them in assessing whether or not this doctor had over-billed, or whether or not this doctor should be fined up to \$50,000. Why can't that doctor have access to the information used against him or her?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Simply put, there's no need to spell all that out. If we don't treat the doctor fairly, the Court of Queen's Bench will intervene and make sure that fair treatment takes place. So there's no need, as I said before, it's implied, it's well established practice, and there's no need to write it into the Act.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, we have a great deal of difficulty with the procedure that radically alters past practice. And, Mr. Minister, the legislation has been altered to such an extent that a doctor can face up to a \$50,000 fine without ever having had the opportunity to go before a hearing and without ever having had the opportunity to know what the information the joint professional review committee used in assessing the penalty, and we do not think that is a good procedure.

We think there needs to be some reference in this legislation to a hearing process, and we also think there needs to be some reference in the legislation to doctors having access to information that is used against them in assessing these kinds of heavy penalties.

Mr. Goodale: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have a number of questions that I would like to direct to the minister tonight. And I will start, generally speaking, on the subject matter that he was just dealing with.

It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that the minister and the government have created for themselves a rather large and serious credibility problem in relation to this Bill, particularly as it relates to the Saskatchewan Medical Association.

Mr. Minister, you'll recall that it was six or seven months ago, in the spring, when the Minister of Health announced his intention to abolish the MCIC, to roll its function into the mainstream, administratively, of the Department of Health. And at that time the Saskatchewan Medical Association protested that they had not been consulted about that change when it was announced six or seven months ago, and a change obviously that could very profoundly affect them.

If I recall correctly, the minister replied in the spring that the SMA should not get so excited. It was still very early, he said. There would be lots of time for serious consultations about what the legislation would do and how it would do it. And in any event, the minister suggested at that time that whatever was finally included in the legislation would be merely of a technical, administrative, and largely housekeeping nature, and that it would really have very little substantial impact beyond that mere administrative change of converting what used to be the function of the MCIC into the mainstream of the administration of the Department of Health.

Mr. Minister, the Minister of Health was taken at his word by the SMA, but late last week it would appear that the Saskatchewan Medical Association found that that word was not reliable, because there were in fact no meaningful consultations. And I think in some answers that you've given earlier here, you indicated the very brief, almost cursory nature of those consultations.

Any talks on the subject of Bill 94 between the government and the SMA only began over this part weekend at the earliest, and now the government wants to pass the Bill through all stages four or five days later. And so obviously whatever consultation there was, was virtually of no possible use.

And secondly, on the substance of the legislation, it's not

just the technical, administrative, housekeeping abolition of the MCIC. The provisions in this Bill, I think as the minister has indicated in his answers already this evening, go far beyond that mere administrative matter, to touch on several rather serious professional matters and, in fact, to give the government more and more power.

And so on both of the things promised by the minister, on the consultation and on the substance, he has effectively reneged on the word that he gave to the Saskatchewan Medical Association as much as six months ago. And I suggest, Mr. Minister, that is not merely just an ordinary problem with the breaking of a political promise, because in the circumstances of this situation, I think the minister's stature with the medical association has been damaged as a consequence of what's transpired in relation to this Bill, and perhaps some other matters, in the last six months.

(0045)

The association's confidence in the minister's credibility has obviously been shaken. And whether the minister would admit it or not if he were here this evening, I think the minister has a growing and a serious problem with Saskatchewan doctors. And I suggest to you that that is a not a healthy state of affairs. If the doctors have the impression that they can't rely upon what the minister says to them; that promised consultations will not be forthcoming; that what is suggested to be merely administrative turns out to be far more substantive; if the association constantly has the impression that they can't rely upon what the minister says to them, then I think that minister has a very serious problem with one of the most important professional groups with which he has to deal in his ministerial capacity.

And I would ask, as my first question, for the minister to respond to that predicament because he must know that, as Minister of Health, it's obviously important for the Minister of Health to maintain the trust and the respect of the professional organizations with which he must deal in a professional capacity.

And from what I've heard, most particularly in the last few days — although the feeling has been growing over the last few months — but most particularly in the last few days, it seems to me that some professional health associations in Saskatchewan, and particularly this one relating to doctors, have some grave doubts now about their relationship with the minister. And if that turns out to be the case, then it's not a healthy or a productive or a constructive situation to exist in the Saskatchewan health care system.

And I wonder what the minister would suggest his colleague, the Minister of Health, might do to repair the obvious damage that's been done.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well I believe that there has been some consultation with the Minister of Health. My officials indicate that from what the first draft of the Act was as to what is here today, there has been considerable change, and that has come about through some consultation. I suppose whether there has been adequate consultation or not depends from which stance one views

it.

I did say, and the member was in the House the other day, that in regard to the cap and the payments and so on, there is a meeting set up on November 11 for further consultation. And in discussion with the Minister of Health, I know that from time to time he has had consultation both here in Regina in his office, and has gone to Saskatoon to meet with the SMA.

So I guess it depends from which stance you're looking at it. One side can say, well we haven't had adequate consultation. The other side can say, well we certainly have.

But I think when we see that there have been some changes from where the first Bill — and the officials indicate that to me — where it was first drafted as to what is introduced here in the legislation, that there has been considerable change, would be an indication that there has been consultation.

You infer in your question that continued consultation and good relationships with the SMA is important to health care in Saskatchewan; I don't dispute that at all. And I have every faith that the Minister of Health will continue in those types of consultations.

And as you and I both know, with the ruling of the arbiter on the salaries of doctors there is going to have to be a continued consultation between the SMA and the Department of Health. And I feel very confident, and can assure you that that type of consultation, to my mind, will take place.

Mr. Goodale: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I would urge the minister to keep that point uppermost in his mind because, from what I have heard lately, the relationship between the minister and the medical association is certainly far from the best, and far from what it should be. And it could well lead to the difficulties that the minister has just alluded to in relation to an even larger problem, having to do with the money running out already this year for the payment of doctors' fees. And that is an issue that is obviously going to take a tremendous amount of ingenuity and creative goodwill to deal with. And a good relationship between the minister and the medical association is critical.

Mr. Minister, I'd like to turn to the matter of the joint professional review committee. And the minister, I'm sure, knows that this is a serious issue. It has important implications for the profession. This is one of the substantive matters that seems to be bootlegged into this legislation, not the merely administrative matter that the legislation was originally described as being, but a very substantive matter sort of slipped in at the tail-end of the legislation. And that's obviously one of the things that has concerned the profession.

Mr. Minister, I'm sure you know that the profession itself, quite apart from what the Department of Health was doing, the profession itself was working on the drafting of a proposal for the revamping of this professional review committee. All of that work was going on by the doctors themselves. And all of a sudden, now they find that kind

of review that they were doing to modernize and change and improve these provisions, that all of that is now pre-empted by this arbitrary legislation that comes before them without the proper kind of consultation or advanced knowledge. And it is a serious matter, Mr. Minister, because obviously in the legislation the minister takes control of this review process by having the authority to appoint the director of professional review.

Some major new fine levels are authorized. There is a very limited right of appeal. There is no clear right on the part of a physician who is accused of something to obtain advance information about the accusations against him. One body seems to be established here as the investigator, the prosecutor, the judge and the jury, and there is no proper procedure specified in the legislation that clearly indicates that the principles of natural justice will be followed and applied.

The minister earlier suggested, well that's all true, but you can rely on the principles of natural justice and the common law. I think, Mr. Minister, the profession would be far happier with this situation if you were prepared to be a little more specific about that in the legislation. There is precedent for that specificity with other pieces of legislation, and I would urge you very seriously to consider including some of those written guarantees and protections for the profession right here in this Bill, so the worries that are affecting the SMA can be alleviated.

And if you're not prepared to do that, I would ask the minister: what happens then if the SMA looks at this Bill, considers the lack of consultation, considers the fact that the government appears to be trying to pull a fast one, and what if the SMA basically says then, well we're not going to participate in your joint professional review committee. You can have your kangaroo court, and we're not going to have anything to do with it. What happens if the SMA takes the position that this procedure is so unacceptable that they're going to boycott your procedure? Then I think you've got a big credibility problem, Mr. Minister, and I think it would be wise to address it in advance so that that credibility problem doesn't literally blow up in the face of the Department of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well I guess in reply to your question is that the department feels certainly that, and they want to have something that is fair and that works, and they feel they have designed that. Also that the SMA wants to be an integral part of this because they have the opportunity to be there as peers for their members.

And I think if . . . I cannot see them opting out and not taking part in this because they are one of three aspects of it, and the other ones are the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the professional body of the medical profession in Saskatchewan who support this Act and the review, and the Department of Health. So if the SMA decided not to take part, I'm sure the other two would go ahead.

But I cannot see the SMA, when they have the opportunity to come in there as peers to judge their own members, why they would withdraw from the procedure.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Chairman, just one final question for

the minister, and that has to do with a change in the legislation that the government has apparently decided not to make. And once again they seem to be falling down in terms of meeting the expectations of the Saskatchewan Medical Association. It's my understanding that where this legislation touches upon the right of a qualified physician to set up a practice in Saskatchewan, that the legislation is, in effect, permissive; that is, that the government is not obliged to provide the physician with what I will, for shorthand purposes, call a billing number — although that's not what we call it in this province — the government is not obliged to provide the physician with a billing number. The government may provide the physician with a billing number.

Now I am not aware, I am not aware of a circumstance in Saskatchewan, yet, where the government has arbitrarily turned someone down. But with rumours of what might happen in this province and what is certainly happening in other provinces, I think it's understandable that those in the profession would have a fear or a worry that that might occur in Saskatchewan, and therefore I think it is reasonable of the profession to ask the government to put in the legislation a guarantee that a qualified physician would not be turned down for that "billing number."

I want to ask the minister if the Saskatchewan Medical Association specifically asked for that type of a provision to be included in this legislation, and why the government chose, if the request was made, why the government chose to turn it down?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes, the SMA did ask for that clause within the Bill. It has never been included within Saskatchewan, and we prefer to stay with that.

The other side of that, if you wrote it in in legislation, that is the right to give an automatic billing number. That's why it would really boil down it, and that hasn't been the practice.

(0100)

Mainly, they have been granted. In the main they have been granted, but I think it is the decision of the department and of the government not to write that in as an automatic right that a billing number would automatically be given to any doctor who applied.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Minister, in terms of the possible cancellation of what we're referring to here as billing numbers, I understand the legislation provides for billing numbers to be cancelled on 30 days notice.

Can I ask why provisions are not included in the legislation to require that any cancellation be for cause, and not just an arbitrary decision by the government — that there must be good reason, good legitimate cause for the cancellation of any billing number? And why is there no guaranteed right of appeal against the cancellation of a billing number?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — They indicate to me that there never has been a billing number pulled without cause. There always has been cause, so the fact that there might be one done without cause never has happened, and we don't

see that taking place in the future.

Mr. Goodale: — Just one final question then, Mr. Minister, and I'll leave it at that. Do I take it from your answers, with respect to these questions about billing numbers, that you have no immediate plan, or plan in the near future or foreseeable future, that would arbitrarily restrict the numbers of practitioners based on location or type of practice or any move that might in any way parallel what has been done with respect to billing numbers in the province of British Columbia. Will you just confirm that there's no such plan afoot in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — In answer to the member, I can say that there are no immediate plans to do that, but I could not give you the assurance that somewhere in the future that consideration may not be undertaken. At the immediate time I can tell you it is not on the drawing board, but I couldn't stand here tonight in all honesty and say that . . .

An Hon. Member: — By the year 2000.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes, for the next five or 10 years that would never be considered because it may; it may.

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Mr. Minister, could you please advise us whether or not you've taken a look at the constitutional aspects of the Bill, the fact that you're creating a body which can levy a penalty of \$50,000; the fact that you haven't written in a guaranteed hearing, which is . . . really then depends upon the good will of the joint professional body. could you please comment on those two aspects and whether or not you've looked at the constitutional concerns that may arise with respect to the Bill; and if you've received a written opinion, whether you would table that opinion and give us an opportunity to review it.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Certainly there has been constitutional considerations taking place in the drafting of the Bill. We have no written confirmation of the constitutionality of the Bill. We feel quite confident that it is constitutional, and we know if it isn't, the courts will tell us pretty quick that it isn't.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Earlier the . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, please. Order. Let's allow the member to ask his question.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Earlier the minister indicated that we should not evince any concern about the fact that the data bank which was formerly in the hands of the MCIC will now be in the hands of Health department officials and that proper security would be maintained. I wonder if the minister would be willing at some early point to issue public guide-lines so that the public will know who the authorized users will be of that data base, and under what conditions access can be obtained to that data base, and which departmental officials will not have access to that data base.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well as I told the member from Saskatoon earlier this evening, nothing has really changed. I mean, it's the same people processing the same material, and they have done it in a confidential manner for years and years, and I am very confident that that will continue in the same way. So I don't see any need for guide-lines or anything of this nature.

The Act stipulates the confidentiality, as it did in the old Act, as it is in the new Act. So to the member, I don't see the necessity for guide-lines. I believe very, very strongly that the confidentiality will continue as it has in the past.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 13 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 14

Mr. Chairman: — House amendment made by the Acting Minister of Health, section 14 of the printed Bill:

Amend subsection 18(1.2) of the Act, as being enacted by the subsection 14(3) of the printed Bill, by striking out "to" where it appears for the third time in the third line and substituting "of".

Clause 14 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 15 to 20 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 21

Mr. Chairman: — Amended as the printed Bill:

Amend clause 21(h) of the printed Bill by adding "wherever it appears" before "in" in the first line.

Clause 21 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 22 to 26 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 27

Mr. Chairman: — House amendment to the printed Bill, by the Acting Minister of Health:

Amend section 27 of the printed Bill:

(a) by striking out subsection (2), and substituting the following:

(2) Subsection 40(3) is amended by adding the following after "Act":

" , 1981, the Board of Chiropractors under The Chiropractic Act or the Council of the Saskatchewan Association of Optometrists under The Optometry Act, 1985"; and

(b) By striking out "49.9" in the last line of subsection 40(4) of the Act, as being enacted by subsection 27(3) of the printed Bill, and substituting "49.91".

Clause 27 as amended agreed to.

Clause 28 agreed to.

Clause 29

Mr. Chairman: — House amendment of the printed Bill:

Amend subsection 29.1 of the printed Bill:

- (a) by striking out “(1)” in clause (a); and
- (b) by striking out clause (b) and substituting the following:
- (b) by striking out “commission” wherever it occurs in clause (b) and in each case substituting “minister”.

Clause 29 as amended agreed to.

Clause 30

Mr. Chairman: — We have another House amendment:

Amend clause 30(e) of the printed Bill by striking out “By striking out” and substituting “by repealing”.

Clause 30 as amended agreed to.

Clause 31 agreed to.

Clause 32

Mr. Chairman: — Amendments to clause 32 made by the Acting Minister of Health:

Amend sections 49.1 to 49.3 of the Act, as being enacted by section 32 of the printed Bill:

- (a) by striking out “49.9” in the last line of subsection 49.1(1) and substituting “49.91”;

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: — And:

- (b) by striking out “he” in the third line of subsection 49.2(2) and substituting “a physician”;

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: — There’s a further amendment made by the member from Saskatoon Nutana on section 32 of the printed Bill.

Amend section 49.2 of the Act, as being enacted by section 32 of the printed Bill by adding the following subsection after subsection (9):

- (10) In making an order pursuant to this section the committee shall observe the rules of natural justice.

Amendment agreed to on division.

Mr. Chairman: — Further amendment to section 32, part

(c):

And we’re back now to the Acting Minister of Health’s motion on part (c):

- (c) By striking out subsection 49.21(2) and substituting the following:

(2) The judge hearing the appeal shall consider only the record of the proceedings of the committee with respect to the order appealed from and the evidence presented at those proceedings and may make an order:

- (a) affirming or varying the order appealed from;
- (b) referring the matter back to the committee with directions to reconsider it; or
- (c) quashing the order appealed from and substituting any order that the judge considers the committee ought to have made.

Mr. Shillington: — May I ask a question, Mr. Chairman, before the question is put? In your view, Mr. Minister, does this allow an appeal on a question of law and fact? Would you . . .

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes.

Amendment agreed to.

(0115)

Mr. Chairman: — We have another amendment to section 32 of the printed Bill, made by the member from Saskatoon Nutana. And I’m going to have to rule that amendment out of order, because the changes that have been made, it is no longer possible to do something and make an amendment to something that no longer exists.

And we have a further amendment made by the Acting Minister of Health on section (d):

- by striking out “subsection” in last line of section 49.22 and substituting “section.”

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: — Further amendment to (e):

- by striking out “letter” in the third line of subsection 49.3(4) and substituting “mail.”

Amendment agreed to.

Section 32 as amended agreed to.

Sections 33 to 36 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill as amended.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I’d like to thank my officials that helped me put this piece of legislation through tonight. Thank you very, very much. And thank the member opposite for her questions.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I, too, would like to thank the officials that have accompanied the minister tonight. I just want to remind the minister, the Acting Minister of Health, that last December when we were here into the wee hours of the night, we were also debating the Medical Care Insurance Commission and amendments to the Act. And it's quite odd that once again, at the wee hours of the night towards the end of the session, the last few seconds of the session, that we are once again debating an Act to amend The Medical Care Insurance Commission. And next year we won't have any amendments before the legislature because the Medical Care Insurance Commission is no longer.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 55 — An Act to provide for the Division of Saskatchewan into Constituencies for the Election of Members of the Legislative Assembly

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

Motion agreed to.

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

(0125)

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 31

Muller	Martin
Duncan	Toth
Andrew	Sauder
Berntson	Johnson
Taylor	McLaren
Smith	Hopfner
Swan	Petersen
Muirhead	Swenson
Maxwell	Martens
Schmidt	Baker
Hodgins	Gleim
Gerich	Neudorf
Hepworth	Kopelchuk
Hardy	Saxinger
Klein	Britton
Meiklejohn	

Nays — 24

Blakeney	Atkinson
Prebble	Anguish
Brockelbank	Goulet
Shillington	Hagel
Koskie	Lyons
Tchorzewski	Calvert
Thompson	Lautermilch
Rolfes	Trew
Mitchell	Smart
Simard	Van Mulligen
Solomon	Koenker
Kowalsky	Goodale

The Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

Bill No. 77 — An Act to amend The Power Corporation Act

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

Motion agreed to.

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

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

Bill No. 94 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act (No.2)

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I move the amendments now be read a first and second time.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I move, with leave, that the Bill now be read a third time.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 99 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (No. 2)

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave for first reading of an Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (No. 2).

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I beg to inform the Assembly that his Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the subject matter of this Bill, recommends it to consideration of the Assembly. And I move a Bill, An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be now read a first time.

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

(0130)

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 99 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (No. 2)

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, we are moving tonight second reading of a Bill to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. This is an Act, as we all know, that deals with the salaries and the benefits paid to members of the legislature. This, over a period of time, has been always very contentious, and a difficult matter for members of the Assembly to deal with.

This Bill, I hope, and in consultation with the members opposite, will perhaps put that concern to rest for some period of time. What this legislation will do, and what it contains, is two fundamental changes to the Act. First of all, it will delegate from this Assembly the question of members setting their own salaries, and, I think, a question and a problem faced by legislatures and parliaments across the country.

What this particular piece of legislation does is delegate to a panel, consisting of not more than five people, to determine the salary levels for members, indemnity for members, and indemnity for special duties — that is, the Premier, the cabinet ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, whips, Speaker, and a variety of other issues. The panel will then report back to the Speaker as chairman of the Board of Internal Economy.

The people on this committee will be agreed to, will be appointed by Executive Council, with the approval of the opposition. The members of this committee will be selected of prominent people within our province, with the only caveat being that anybody that sits on this committee can in no way have a connection or interest with the government — let me give you an example of that: a president of the university or somebody working in the university who draw their revenue from grants from government — so that there can in no way be a suggestion of conflict of interest.

When that panel reports to the Board of Internal Economy, the Board of Internal Economy will have three options. It will be allowed to accept the report, to reject the report, or to amend the report, but only in a downward way. In other words, the board will not be allowed to increase any of the recommendations.

This board will, in reviewing the salaries of members, will look at the entire parameter of what members make by way of duties, and special duties, and that type of thing. The second thing that this legislation does is delegate to the Board of Internal Economy the various matters of members dealing with themselves.

About seven or eight years ago this particular Board of Internal Economy was first structured in this province on an experimental basis. In most jurisdictions where there is a Board of Internal Economy, things like member services — your travel back and forth to your riding, your telephone, your communication allowance, that type of thing is dealt with in the Board of Internal Economy, and that's for members collectively to decide what that should be. That of course, as you know, is reported through your office when the budget is produced and presented each year.

The second thing, and while not mentioned in this legislation, is that we've had some discussions between members of the government and members of the opposition that we will make a concerted effort between now and the beginning of the next session by which to reform some of the rules of this Assembly.

Now we all know and have experienced that process, and perhaps in this session. It has been difficult at times. I think there is the will, and I anticipate the will, by

members on both sides of the House, to try to deal with the rules to the betterment of all. This is an important open forum by which we debate, but it also changes as times change — witness the introduction of television some five or six years ago. And I think we look at the way we might deal with rules looking at other jurisdictions and that type of thing.

I might also say, Mr. Speaker, that prior to the introduction of this legislation it has been discussed with the members opposite and the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg. And this particular legislation has been introduced with the agreement of all sides, and that's the way it should be, and that's the way it must be when we deal with the question of rules or deal with the question of salaries. This legislation will change the way we deal with salaries of ourselves, and I think that's an important step forward, and I think it's a proper step forward.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move second reading of an Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

Mr. Goodale: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, it's late and I'm rapidly losing my voice, but I do want to say a word or two about this legislation. The Bill we have before us, Mr. Speaker, on the surface may appear to be very mechanical and very technical in its appearance, but it contains what I consider to be an important principle and a principle that's applied, I believe, in many, if not most, other jurisdictions. And I'm glad to see that a principle is being applied here in Saskatchewan with respect to the salaries and the benefits of MLAs.

Mr. Speaker, the principle that I refer to is simply this: that we, in our favoured position in this House, should not sit in absolute judgement and with complete control over our financial position and rewards. Instead, the substance of what is done from time to time in relation to these matters affecting all MLAs is referred by this legislation to an outside panel of impartial Saskatchewan citizens, and they will set the standard, according to their judgement of what is proper and what is appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, they will examine all factors affecting our remuneration, affecting our remuneration directly or indirectly in any way, and they will make a report. And we in this House, or rather in the committee on internal economy, will abide by that report or we can vary it. But if we choose to vary it, any variation would have to be in a downward direction only. An external panel will therefore, Mr. Speaker, effectively set the maximum for MLA remuneration. It's a cap, and we can accept that or less.

And I think that way of doing things is important. It removes from MLAs a serious conflict of interest problem. And it involves representatives of the public in setting a monetary value on the services rendered by those elected to this institution. And that is, Mr. Speaker, I think, as it should be, we should not be, in this House, the financial adjudicator on how much or how little we are worth.

In future we will not legislate numbers to establish our rate of pay or other benefits after this legislation. We will

simply list the various categories by which MLAs are paid, and others with external judgement will fill in the numbers, taking into account the public interest, including general economic circumstances and all the various pay categories involved and how they relate to each other.

Mr. Speaker, I think that is a significant change. I think it's a good change for the better, and I will support the legislation.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to make just a brief comment in respect to this legislation as the night wears on. As has been indicated by the previous speakers, the Bill before us sets up a method of payment . . . method whereby the payment to MLAs will be established.

And as has been indicated, that will be done by a panel. Up to five members can sit on the panel appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and that is done with the consultation . . . the choice of those in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition. As has been said, it's always very difficult for legislators to address the question of remuneration for the members themselves. But I think that we should all note that this Bill this evening comes at an end of a long and arduous session.

Members have here worked over 100 days and fully participated in the debates and in the business of the province. And let's acknowledge the facts that we have disagreed, we have debated, and sometimes hotly, and sometimes at length, but throughout it all each member of the Assembly on either side of the House has sought to represent the best interest of his or her constituents. And that's why we are here.

For each of us is obligated, and it's a solemn obligation of being elected, to represent our respective constituents to the best of our ability. We must meet with them where they are. We must travel. We must meet with them when they call, and we must listen to them. And we must bring their concern and their views to this Assembly.

And this Bill deals with the ability of the members of the Legislative Assembly to serve their constituents and to have the resources to do that effectively. And that's the question that this Bill addresses by setting up the independent panel. The Bill before us provides, as I said, an independent panel to examine and assess these issues.

And so, Mr. Minister, without further comment, I believe that these issues should be reviewed and addressed by such an external panel. And I believe that this is the most appropriate way to review it, and we will support the legislation.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time, and by leave of the Assembly, referred to a Committee of the Whole later this day.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 100 — An Act to amend The Members of the Legislative Assembly Superannuation Act, 1979 (No. 2)

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to move first reading of An Act to amend The Members of the Legislative Assembly Superannuation Act, 1979 (No. 2).

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I asked for leave, and I thought that's what you asked the Assembly as well. I took it that's what you asked.

I beg to inform the Assembly that His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the subject matter of the Bill, An Act to amend The Members of the Legislative Superannuation Act, 1979 (No. 2).

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

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 100 — An Act to amend The Members of the Legislative Assembly Superannuation Act, 1979 (No. 2)

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, this is an amendment with regard to The Superannuation Act with regards to pensions. It allows pensions to . . . the flexibility to go from age 55 down to age 50.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and, by leave of the Assembly, referred to a Committee of the Whole later this day.

(0145)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 99 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (No. 2)

Clause 1

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Chairman, there is a number of House amendments there. I have passed them to the members opposite and to the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg. I have indicated what this Bill in fact does. So I leave those House amendments on that side and I would add nothing further.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 9

Mr. Chairman: — Amendment to clause 9 of the printed Bill:

Amend section 58(12) of the Act by:

Being enacted by section 9 of the printed Bill:

(a) by striking out clause (c);

(b) by striking out clauses (a) to (c) and the second

line of clause (d) and substituting clause (a) or (b); and

(c) by renumbering clauses (d) and (e) as clauses (c) and (d) respectively.

Clause 9 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 10 to 18 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 19

Mr. Chairman: — House amendment to section 19 of the printed Bill:

Amend section 67(1) of the Act by:

As being enacted by section 19 of the printed Bill:

(a) by striking out “July 1 of each year” in the first line and subsection 3 and substituting “July 1, 1988, and thereafter as required by resolution of the Assembly”;

(b) by striking out the last two lines of subsection 3 and substituting “allowances, disbursements and other payments”;

(c) by striking out “and substituting its own recommendations” in clause 4(b); and

(d) by adding “so as to reduce to recommended level of allowances, disbursements or other payments” after “report” in clause 4(c).

Clause 19 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 22 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill as amended.

Bill No. 100 — an Act to amend The Members of the Legislative Assembly Superannuation Act, 1979 (No. 2)

Clauses 1 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 99 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (No. 2)

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move the amendments be now read a first and second time.

Motion agreed to.

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

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

Bill No. 100 — An Act to amend The Members of the Legislative Assembly Superannuation Act, 1979 (No. 2)

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — 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.

MOTIONS

House Adjournment

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice, by leave of the Assembly:

That when this Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day it shall stand adjourned to a date and a time set by Mr. Speaker, upon request of the government, and that Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven clear days notice, if possible, by registered mail, of such date and time.

Motion agreed to.

ROYAL ASSENT TO BILLS

At 1:57 a.m. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bills:

Bill No. 26 — An Act to amend The Notaries Public Act

Bill No. 28 — An Act to provide for the Postponement of the Tabling of Certain Documents (No. 2)

Bill No. 32 — An Act respecting the Emission of Air Contaminants

Bill No. 46 — An Act respecting the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology

Bill No. 47 — An Act respecting Regional Colleges

Bill No. 29 — An Act to amend The Legal Profession Act

Bill No. 38 — An Act to amend The Prairie and Forest Fires Act, 1982

Bill No. 39 — An Act to amend The Law Reform Commission Act

Bill No. 40 — An Act to facilitate Economic and Social Development in Rural Areas

Bill No. 54 — An Act to amend The Vital Statistics Act

Bill No. 59 — An Act to amend The Animal Protection Act

Bill No. 61 — An Act to amend The Department of Parks and Renewable Resources Act

Bill No. 33 — An Act respecting Veterinarians

Bill No. 34 — An Act to amend The Prescription Drugs Act

Bill No. 51 — An Act to provide for the Imposition of Taxes on and the Collection of Taxes from Certain Purchasers of Certain Fuels and to provide for Rebates of Taxes to Certain Purchasers

Bill No. 52 — An Act to amend The Department of Revenue and Financial Services Act

Bill No. 53 — An Act to amend The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act

Bill No. 57 — An Act to repeal The Scrap Vehicles Act

Bill No. 60 — An Act to amend The Forest Act

Bill No. 63 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Insurance Act

Bill No. 64 — An Act to amend The Partnership Act

Bill No. 65 — An Act to amend The Business Names Registration Act

Bill No. 80 — An Act to amend The Members of the Legislative Assembly Superannuation Act, 1979

Bill No. 56 — An Act to amend The Litter Control Act

Bill No. 58 — An Act respecting the repeal of The Agricultural Research Funding Act

Bill No. 62 — An Act respecting the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation

Bill No. 81 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the enactment of The Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation Act

Bill No. 95 — An Act to provide for the Registration and Regulation of Persons Engaged in the Real Estate Trade

Bill No. 55 — An Act to provide for the Division of Saskatchewan into Constituencies for the Election of Members of the Legislative Assembly

Bill No. 77 — An Act to amend The Power Corporation Act

Bill No. 94 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act (No. 2)

Bill No. 99 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (No. 2)

Bill No. 100 — An Act to amend the Members of the Legislative Assembly Superannuation Act, 1979 (No. 2)

Bill No. 98 — An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Years ending respectively on March 31, 1987 and on March 31, 1988.

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 2:02 a.m.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this draws to a close our spring session. And before adjourning the House, Mr. Speaker, I just want to wish yourself and all members a very happy summer, and we hope to see you all again next fall for another exciting time in the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I move this House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: — Before I officially adjourn the House, I too would like to reflect on the past 100-and-some days, certainly historic length, and the historic legislation that has been brought in, and the tribute today which was paid to the Leader of the Opposition, which is also historic. I believe that this session has, from many different perspectives, been an historic one.

Before I officially adjourn the House, however, I would like to dispel any rumours that the Deputy Premier may have been circulating that the fall sitting starts on Monday.

This House now stands adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 2:04 a.m.