

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, a group of seven individuals who are here from the Cancer Patient Lodge in the Elphinstone riding. They are here with us today to observe the question period, and we'll be meeting for coffee and tea afterwards.

I would want all members to join with me in welcoming these people here with us today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hardy:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to introduce through you and to the Legislative Assembly, 17 employees from the Department of Rural Development who work in the Walter Scott Building. These employees, most of them have never seen the Legislative Chambers at work, and they've been invited here today to hear question period and to be part, and see the part they play in developing the legislation for this Assembly.

They do a lot of work, Mr. Speaker, in regards to developing legislation, and I thought it would be just appropriate if they saw how the Chambers worked. And I'm sure all the members here would appreciate the work that they do for rural Saskatchewan and for the people of Saskatchewan. I would ask all members to join with me in wishing them well here, and I hope they find that this is both informational and educational.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce a group of 17 grade 6 students to you this afternoon. They're in your gallery. They're from Hodgeville, Saskatchewan. They are accompanied today by Alison Peake and Mark Gross.

I'm going to be meeting with them later. I'd ask the members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming them here today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, a couple of gentlemen from the city of Melfort who are in visiting with officials from the Department of Health on a very important issue. In our city of Melfort we are planning an adult day-care facility, and these two gentlemen are representatives on the board in question. I will be meeting with them a little later in the day.

And I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming these two gentlemen, Mr. Wes Moneta and Mr. Vic Stasiuk from the city of Melfort. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Goulet:** — Mr. Speaker, it is indeed my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you, the grade 4, 5, 6, and 7 students from Wollaston Lake in northern Saskatchewan, along with their teacher Mr. Jeff Orr. Wollaston, of course, is about a six-hour drive north from La Ronge, and I think it's very important for the students to have come all the way down here and to see the goings-on in the legislature.

I'll be meeting with them at room 255 for some drinks. Also I would invite the legislature to give them a warm welcome.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Merger of SMDC and Eldorado Nuclear

**Ms. Atkinson:** — My question is to the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation. Mr. Minister, this morning in Crown Corporations Committee you declined to answer questions on SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) as it relates to the merger and privatization proposal with Eldorado Nuclear Limited. The mandate of the Crown Corporation Committee is to deal with matters in the year in review as defined by the annual report. A 1979 ruling on the mandate of the committee stated, and I quote:

Questions which related to plans made during the year under review for future years would technically be in order as long as the questions related to plans specifically referred to in the annual report being reviewed.

Page 1 of your annual report refers specifically to the merger-privatization, while pages 3 and 5 talk about the privatization plans for the corporation. Mr. Minister, what are you trying to hide?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, obviously we're not trying to hide anything. I think it was February 22, 1988 we had a news conference in Saskatoon, a joint conference with the federal government and the provincial government, talking about the proposed merger and privatization, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me that if you're trying to hide something, you don't do those kinds of things. That's number one.

Number two, Mr. Speaker, there was quite a bit of time spent this morning in Crown Corporations Committee talking about certain information that members opposite wanted to be tabled before the committee. I talk about strategic plans of SMDC; I talk of financial information that is of a proprietary and commercial nature, Mr. Speaker, and as I said to the people in Crown corporations this morning, the only people that that would help would be the Denisons and the Rio Algomias

and the Uranerz and all of the competitors in the field, Mr. Speaker. It's never been done in the past.

The other thing that I said this morning in Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, was that from 1975 until 1982, when I was sitting on the other side of the table, I got exactly the same answers to the same kinds of questions that are being delivered today.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Minister, you have a duty to answer the questions put to you by the members of this legislature. You have declined to uphold your duty, so I will ask you some questions in this form.

Mr. Minister, if you have absolutely nothing to hide, will you today table any independent evaluations that you have that have been done on the assets of SMDC?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, these people ought to make up their minds. They talk about all of these things of a commercial nature remaining in the public domain, remaining there in the hands of government for all time. We take a different view of the world. We think that it makes a lot of sense to offer, to the public, participation in a lot of these commercial ventures.

On the other side of the coin, Mr. Speaker, on the other side of the coin, they want all of the competitors to have access to all of the information that is used to develop strategic plans for this company, that they would like to keep for the public sector and therefore blow away any competitive advantage that they might otherwise have, Mr. Speaker, in the market-place, in strategic planning, in corporate development, and so on and so on. We're not prepared, Mr. Speaker, to do that. We're not prepared to jeopardize the competitive advantage.

What we're talking about at this point, Mr. Speaker, is a proposed merger with a closing date targeted for July 1. There's nothing yet to say that that will in fact take place. We're very hopeful. But if in the event that it doesn't, there's no way we're going to have all of this information floating around for those people to give to their friends in the private sector resource companies.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Atkinson:** — New question. Mr. Minister, when I look at the major uranium projects that are in this annual report, I note that many of the uranium companies that you referred to in the private sector form part of the joint ventures that your government is involved with — Uranerz, Denison, and the list goes on and on and on. So I don't really think you have much to be fearful of, Mr. Minister.

Nevertheless, Mr. Minister, you called this process public participation. But this public participation is only done in secret. Now my question to you is this: if you're not involved in a cover-up, if you're not involved in a cover-up, will you today table in this Assembly all documents relating to the merger of Saskatchewan

Mining Development Corporation and Eldorado Nuclear? Will you do that today, Mr. Minister?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, the line of questioning sends one very significant message, and that message is that members opposite don't now understand business; they haven't; they're not likely to in the future. And Heaven forbid that they should ever get back to take control of the range of power, Mr. Speaker.

What I will undertake to do in the event, in the event, Mr. Speaker, that a merger does take place — and we are hopeful that it will, and we are confident that it will — in that event, Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for Public Participation, I'm sure, will table all appropriate documentation as to the deal that isn't prohibited through confidentiality agreements or otherwise deemed to be unadvisable because of proprietary and commercial reasons, Mr. Speaker. That seems to me to be eminently fair.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Further supplementary. Mr. Minister, regardless of how embarrassing the details might be for your government, you have a sworn duty to provide the information to the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, will you tell us today what debt load SMDC has assumed as part of the deal, over and above existing long-term debt; and how is the debt load of the new corporation structured? Can you tell us that information today?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that I got the question. There was a little too much noise coming from across the way. And, Mr. Speaker, the noise just keeps coming. I find it a little interesting though that they are today showing so much concern about this corporation that they wanted to wind up and close the mines, Mr. Speaker, close the mines, to the detriment of the people of northern Saskatchewan and to the economy of Saskatchewan generally, and asking these questions at a time, Mr. Speaker, when the member for Athabasca, who supports the continued operation of the mine, unfortunately isn't here to speak in favour of the continued operation, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Supplementary. It's obvious that the minister responsible for SMDC did not hear the question so we will ask it again. And I'll ask it very slowly.

Mr. Minister, will you tell us today — can you do that — what debt load SMDC has assumed as part of this deal, over and above existing long-term debt; and how is the debt load of the new corporation structured? Did you hear that, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — I'd be happy to tell the hon. member that there's no additional debt load as a result of this.

### Funding for Transition Houses

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question . . .

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

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services.

Mr. Minister, wife battering and other forms of family violence are unacceptable, but unfortunately a reality in our society. And it's incumbent on any government to do all it can to ensure the protection of these victims.

Mr. Minister, at a time when many transition houses are turning away hundreds of women and children who have suffered family violence, why is your government being so lean in its funding to transition houses? Why did you cut funding to the Regina Transition House by \$38,000 over the last two years? And why have you only increased funding to the Saskatoon Interval House by only 2 per cent, and to The Battlefords Interval House by less than 1 per cent, Mr. Minister? Can you explain those unjustifiable funding cuts?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Schmidt:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I could tell the member opposite that we spent the money on health care, but he wouldn't believe that. I could tell him we spent it on education, but he wouldn't believe that. I could tell him that this government has increased funding to family violence prevention centres by 91 per cent, and he wouldn't believe that. And I could tell him that we increased funding in Regina by 67 per cent, and he wouldn't believe that.

And we have a political agenda here that this member opposite and certain of his friends continuously are trying to tell the people of Saskatchewan that we are not doing enough.

We have spent that kind of additional money over the last five or six years. We have just announced a new centre for south-western Saskatchewan, where there were no services; we have to look at south-eastern Saskatchewan. And this member says that's not enough.

Well I tell him that we also have to take care of health care and education and social services and highways, and we have to balance everything in this province, and we are doing as much as is possible. We've done more than they ever did.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Prebble:** — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Minister of Social Services. Mr. Minister, last year the Saskatoon Interval House had to turn away 432 families who'd suffered from family violence because there was not the staff or the facilities in Saskatoon to help them; in Regina, 167 women and their children had to be turned away; in La Ronge, 53 women and children; in The Battlefords, 45 families were turned away, all because, Mr. Minister, your government will not give adequate funding for those transition houses to do their job.

My question to you, Mr. Minister, is: how can your government spend \$200,000 for a ceremony to spade

some dirt at the site of the opening of the Shand power project — a project that which we don't think makes any economic sense — when you say you haven't the money to protect these women and these children from highly abusive situations.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Schmidt:** — Mr. Speaker, those people, if their statistics are correct — and I can't accept member's opposite and his usual statistics, that's why I have no way of verifying those — but I can tell you that no one was turned away from assistance at Social Services with respect to lodging, counselling; no one was sent back to a violent family home; that when people come to us, we provide them with shelter, we provide them with counselling. Not everything is done by the non-governmental organizations. I have a department with nearly 2,000 employees that also assists people in need.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I can assure you that those statistics are correct. For 432 families to be turned away from the Saskatoon Interval House trying to escape violent situations is a disgrace.

But I have a new question, Mr. Speaker, for the minister. Mr. Minister, the majority of residents in transition houses are children, and many children come to transition houses in crisis — physically abused in some cases, in many cases mentally scarred by what they've had to endure. The provincial association of transition houses has emphasized to your government repeatedly the needs for child counsellors in the transition houses, and your government has repeatedly turned down that request.

My question to you is this, Mr. Minister: will you now promise to provide funding in your budget for child counsellors in transition houses? And do you not think, Mr. Minister, that these children are worth helping, or does your PC philosophy of survival of the strongest extend even to them, Mr. Minister?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Schmidt:** — Mr. Speaker, when you compare . . . you're looking at wisdom and credibility here — credibility of our government, their government . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. The minister is trying to answer the question, but I'm sure many members are having difficulty hearing him.

**Hon. Mr. Schmidt:** — The criticism of not spending enough money comes from the member who wanted to close all uranium mines. He doesn't have any idea of where we're going to get the money to provide social programs.

Our government funds 191 non-governmental organizations with \$27 million per year. We spend \$34.5 million on family services in this province. We increased that by 2.5 million last year. My department spends \$368 million, of which \$168 million is for family and improving the lot of children and families.

The welfare bill is not even \$200 million. We spend about 168 million on counselling, on assistance to children, on trying to save families, on all of the kind of things that you are talking about, money has to be spent on — on young offenders. We spent \$168 million. We are doing everything that money can do to improve the situation in society.

But to some extent society has to improve itself. And I ask the minister opposite: how many millions will it take to make good people out of everyone in this province? Will money do it?

**Mr. Prebble:** — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you had only \$339,000 to spend on the Saskatoon Interval House. Two years ago, Mr. Minister, they got 332,000. You've increased their budget only \$7,000 in two years when they're turning away 432 families. And, Mr. Minister, time and again families are having to go to hotels around this province to stay, often without protection, because you don't provide the transition houses with enough money to protect these families.

And my question to you is: when will you get your priorities straight, Mr. Minister, and stop spending money like your \$200,000 on the opening of the Shand power project, and instead put that \$200,000 where it's needed, which is in the services like transition houses in this province?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Schmidt:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, he fails to recognize that we added more beds in Regina; we added more beds in Yorkton; we added more beds in Melfort; we added more beds in Swift Current that is coming up now. He fails to realize that. And he talks about transition houses. Transition from what?

Our government will spend more and more money and put more and more effort into family support centres and family support services.

But you know, the member opposite should really settle down, relax, and not get so excited and emotional, because this is not a political issue. We are talking here about assisting families, and we spend millions of dollars. We have a department with 2,000 employees, more or less, and we are doing everything that's possible. What I am saying is that families, and society as a whole, has to help each other a bit more. No one is turned away from help from my department or from the NGOs (non-governmental organizations). One way or another, our department helps people. And if you say somebody had nowhere to go and they were placed in a hotel, that was only until they could find an apartment.

### Reorganization of SPC

**Mr. Solomon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. I'm going to give him another chance to answer a question that he wouldn't answer from my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Mr. Minister, you've been telling the people of Saskatchewan that your plans to split SPC into four companies will make for a more efficient corporation. Would you inform this House today what the level of salary and benefits will be for your three new presidents: Oscar Hanson, president of the Saskatchewan Energy Corporation; Virgil Nelson, president of Trans Gas Limited; and Gerry Labas, president for Provincial Gas Limited? And can you tell us the size of support staff for each man? And can you tell the people of Saskatchewan how is this increase in bureaucracy and increase in cost to the taxpayer making SPC a more leaner and efficient company?

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, all of the people that he talks about work there now and they have — in the case of Oscar Hanson, I expect for around 30 years; in the case of the other two, certainly a long time.

**An Hon. Member:** — It's not true of Labas.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Well he says it's not true of Labas. Labas worked for SaskPower, I think, in 1980 or '81. He was a secondment to my office for some time after that. And he's now back at SaskPower, back in the career that he had started under the previous administration. And I think that all three of those people are very competent people, Mr. Speaker, but well, I could answer that question by saying, Mr. Speaker, it makes eminent good sense to me to have a transportation company, Trans Gas, taking care of those matters that are related to transporting gas, a sector, Mr. Speaker, that's anticipated to double over the next few years.

It makes sense, Mr. Speaker, to have someone responsible for the utility, Mr. Speaker, the gas utility. And, Mr. Speaker, and they say, how much, how much? I fully expect that they will go over there making exactly what they're making now. I don't anticipate any different arrangement, Mr. Speaker.

And it makes every bit as much and perhaps more sense than what they did, Mr. Speaker. They had two subsidiary companies at SaskPower — one was Many Islands in Alberta, the other was North-Sask Electric. It's okay for them, Mr. Speaker, to have subsidiary companies within SaskPower; it's not okay for us. I don't understand . . . maybe I do understand the double standard that is so common to those folks.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Solomon:** — A new question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. The minister did not answer the first question. He didn't explain to the people of this province how increasing bureaucracy and increasing costs will make SPC a leaner company.

So I want to maybe ask you a new question and this relates to the new billing procedures. Your 200,000-a-year man, President George Hill of SPC, also indicated that Saskatchewan people can expect separate bills from both the gas utility and the electrical utility. That means two invoices instead of one, two cheques, two stamps, and twice the bureaucracy. Can you tell the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister, how doubling the

amount of invoices and bills and double the amount of paper work makes for a leaner more efficient corporation?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, what we're talking about is the administrative functions and the strategic planning and the corporate planning of all of these things. SaskPower is a parent company; SaskPower is a parent company. Trans Gas and utilicorp, whatever it is we call it, — all of them still belong unless they suggest that we should do otherwise, Mr. Speaker. All of them still belong to SaskPower.

I fully expect they'll all stay in the same building. They will be sending the bills out in the same envelopes. The bills will be paid at the same banks, the same credit unions, the same power offices, the same gas offices and so on, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, we expect, as do the people of SaskPower, board management and 2,800 employees of SaskPower, expect that this will further enhance the efficiency of SaskPower to the benefit of all of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and we will not be drilling wells, Mr. Speaker, or buying gas from Alberta. We will not, over the next ten years, pump 2.5 billion into the Alberta economy, Mr. Speaker. We will be doing . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Solomon:** — Mr. Speaker, this is a question to the same minister.

This is a very peculiar response. Your colleague, the Minister of Education, amalgamates the Department of Education. You, as minister in charge of SPC, divides it by four — from one to four. That's very peculiar.

My new question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister in charge, relates to Friday's Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* editorial. And they ran an editorial which seems to have your number, Mr. Minister. The headline says: "Splitting SPC not rational." It says, and I quote:

Taxpayers will be skeptical about the chances of running four corporate bureaucracies more cheaply than one.

If the provincial government is toying with the idea of privatizing the natural gas distribution system and flying a trial balloon at the moment, it should quickly reel in the string. If it merely wants to tinker with the administration of this venerable Crown corporation, it should give the public solid evidence (Mr. Minister, solid evidence) that changes are needed.

Will you do that today? Will you present some solid evidence in this House today?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, what's even more peculiar than SaskPower, as you say, breaking it up and education bringing it together, is that members opposite, and I suppose the *Star-Phoenix*, are against both. You're against both. I mean, your arguments just don't work. Another one . . . the *Star-Phoenix*, back in 1976, spent a lot of time in their editorials talking about their opposition to the imposition of the ward system. Now I understand that they've flipped over, too. So maybe in time they'll flip over on this one.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## ROYAL ASSENT TO BILLS

At 2.33 p.m. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bill:

Bill No. 31 — An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Year ending on March 31, 1989.

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 2:35 p.m.

## MOTIONS

### Referral of Estimates to Standing Committee on Estimates

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Before orders of the day, by leave of the Assembly, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice:

That pursuant to rule 86(5) the estimates and supplementary estimates for the Legislative Assembly being subvotes 1, 3, 5, 7, 17, 20, 23, and 26 of vote 21 be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred to the Standing Committee on Estimates.

Motion agreed to.

### Referral of Bills to Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills

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

That the order for second reading of Bill No. 16, An Act respecting the Licensing of Persons who Perform Work of Gas Installation or Sell Gas Equipment, be discharged and the Bill referred to the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills.

Motion agreed to.

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

That the order for second reading of Bill No. 9, An Act to amend The Fire Prevention Act, 1980, be

discharged and the Bill referred to the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills.

Motion agreed to.

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

That the order for second reading of Bill No. 10, An Act respecting the Licensing of Persons who Perform Work of Electrical Installation or Sell Electrical Equipment, be discharged and the Bill referred to the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills.

Motion agreed to.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### MOTION UNDER RULE 16

#### Availability of Information Regarding Government Spending

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my remarks I will be moving a motion to the effect:

That this Assembly condemns the Government of Saskatchewan for refusing to release information about government spending practices and privatization deals, and thereby depriving the public of the opportunity to review the government's mismanagement.

Before I get to that motion, Mr. Speaker, I want to make a few remarks. One of the more interesting, if obscure, publications in the history of Saskatchewan is a brief pamphlet called *Pocket Politics: A Quick Reference on PC Policy for Candidates*. Now this pamphlet was produced in 1982 for the provincial election that year. It was intended to provide PC candidates in that election with a handy reference to PC policies that they could carry around with them wherever they went, wherever they campaigned.

This was a necessary reference, I would assume, because PC candidates couldn't be expected to carry all those policies around with them in their heads. Well maybe some could, but I suspect that a lot couldn't. You have to remember, Mr. Speaker, that was the year that we had candidates like Paul Meagher, Bill Sveinson, Lloyd Hampton and Gay Caswell. And in the face of questions from voters and the media, better they should have a handy quick reference that they might consult rather than take a chance on them blurting out their own unique perspectives on the questions before them.

I want to deal today, Mr. Speaker, with one of the items in that particular pamphlet. In the past we've dealt with other items of PC policy and other items in that pamphlet, suggestions such as free telephones for senior citizens in Saskatchewan, policies such as a removal of the sales tax for the people of Saskatchewan, and a policy that there be a 10 per cent reduction in the income tax for the people of Saskatchewan.

But I don't want to deal with those broken promises, I want to deal with the first item in that pamphlet under the heading of "Responsible Government." Now these items come in a question and answer format. And the question in this case is:

Is it true that Saskatchewan has no freedom of information legislation?

And the answer is:

That's correct. A PC government will be committed to freedom of information legislation.

Now remember, this is the PC position, the PC Party position of only six years ago, and they said, and I repeat again:

A PC government will be committed to freedom of information legislation.

But that was the promise, Mr. Speaker. That was their commitment.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what is the reality? What has happened? Do we have freedom of information legislation? No. No, we don't, Mr. Speaker. There is no legislation. Has the government, even if there is no legislation, acted substantially to provide a more open government in Saskatchewan? No, it hasn't, Mr. Speaker. And I don't think that anyone would say that they have.

Now I know that their campaign pledge in 1982 did not promise a more open government, but I would assume that when they talk about freedom of information legislation, that they did so because they perceived there to be a need for more openness in government.

In light of their commitment, it's interesting to review the facts. It's interesting to review the history of the PC government since they made that particular pledge to the people of Saskatchewan and since their first election in 1982. Because I tell you, the facts tell a different story.

The record of this PC government in six years shows us a government that has done everything it can to promote secrecy and to deny the people of Saskatchewan access to information. That's the record of the PC government. Their campaign promise says one thing; their record speaks a very different message.

I want to consider in that context, Mr. Speaker, something called Bill 5. And the people of Saskatchewan might ask, what is Bill 5?

(1445)

Bill 5 is an Act of the legislature that was passed in December of 1987 — passed by the government using their majorities and notwithstanding the opposition from this side of the House — which gave the government sweeping powers to reorganize, to create or eliminate entire government agencies and departments without having to submit these changes for public debate to the Legislative Assembly. What used to be a matter for public

debate is now something which can be done in secret behind closed cabinet doors — from a public forum to closed cabinet doors. They say more open government; we got more secretive government, Mr. Speaker.

I want to consider just very briefly the Shand power station as another example of where the government is withholding information. The government plans to spend hundreds of millions of dollars — in fact the estimate of the total cost of that project is \$1 billion or in excess of \$1 billion — to build a new power station in Estevan which as it turns out to be the constituency of the Premier.

Now this is a very, very major expenditure by the people of Saskatchewan that is being undertaken by the Government of Saskatchewan, but it's an expenditure for all of the people of Saskatchewan. And when we asked the government — when we asked them, is Shand the least expensive option when it comes to future power supply? They will not answer. And they refused to share the information they have with respect to the costs of this particular option of providing a power supply. They refused to provide that information; they've refused to share that with the public. They say, Mr. Speaker, they say more open government; we get a more secretive government.

Now there's a long list of other examples where the government acts with great secrecy and has simply failed or refused to make information available to the public. Many of these concern the privatization deals that have been struck by the government. But I'll let my other colleagues, who will want to join in this debate, speak more about those particular examples.

I want to focus on a particular case of the government withholding information from the public — and in this case about its spending practices — and I say thereby depriving the public an opportunity to review the government's mismanagement. And I refer to the *Public Accounts*. Now the people of Saskatchewan might well ask: what are the *Public Accounts*?

The *Public Accounts* are simply a detailed list of the expenditures undertaken by the government in their line department during a certain fiscal year. And the *Public Accounts* that we're concerned about are for the 1986-87 fiscal year, or for the year ended March 31, 1987.

We have on many occasions asked the government to table those *Public Accounts* to make them available in keeping with the tradition of this Legislative Assembly, and the government has refused to do that.

Now it's important for the public to be able to know what is in those *Public Accounts* for a couple of reasons. The expenditures are made possible because of taxpayers' dollars. This is the people of Saskatchewan's money; it's not the government's money. This money belongs to the taxpayers of this province; it doesn't belong to the government. The government is elected to handle the spending, but tradition holds that the people have a right to know how their government spent their money.

And I think in any other venture people buy a service or a product and they believe that what they see is what they

get. And it's no different, I would submit, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to government. When they spend money, they have a right to know how it's been spent.

And the public should also have access so that they are better informed as to how the government actually spent their money. The public needs information so that they can judge the government. The people need to be able to make decisions that are well-informed.

And we also submit that these *Public Accounts* should be timely. If I have a question today and the answer is not provided, some two years later there's a question of how well has the question really been answered because of the time delay.

And many of us would submit, and especially those in the media, a long delay is like getting no answer at all. And one might say *Public Accounts* delayed is *Public Accounts* denied. And that's why the *Public Accounts* should be timely. That is why we have made that case over and over again inside this Legislative Assembly, outside the Legislative Assembly.

And I think the people are especially interested in these *Public Accounts* because the particular year that we're concerned about referred to an election year, and the people want to know how it is that a government who said, well we estimate a deficit of \$400 million, could actually end up with a deficit of \$1.2 billion and be out by \$800 million. These things are simply not conceivable anywhere else, and I think the people of Saskatchewan have some legitimate questions. They want to know why there was such an increase and where the increases occurred.

And again, it's no secret that the government has refused to table the *Public Accounts*. They give any sort of reason that they can think of that arises from their fertile imagination as to why these *Public Accounts* should not be tabled. They say it's a tradition that these be tabled at the same time as the auditor's report, but when you check the records of the Legislative Assembly, it's an entirely different matter. When the auditor's report is late, the *Public Accounts* are tabled, nevertheless.

They say that the Minister of Finance needs time to be able to prepare answers to any questions which might arise out of the *Public Accounts*. Never mind the fact that if questions are asked of a minister in the House and he doesn't have the answer immediately available, he can take notice like any of his cabinet colleagues and come back to us with the answer. What they say, Mr. Speaker, is simply not credible. The records and traditions of this Legislative Assembly show that.

And I would also say that the experience from other jurisdictions shows that this government is not credible. Every other Legislative Assembly in this country, in Canada, has tabled the *Public Accounts*, either because of respect for tradition or because there are laws in the Accounts. And I might add, the Parliament of Canada has also tabled its *Public Accounts*. Again there seems to be great respect for traditions throughout this country, except when it comes to Saskatchewan.

I think that this motion is entirely appropriate. My time is nearly up, Mr. Speaker. I think this motion is appropriate. It should be supported because it speaks to their disdain for the public's right to know, for the public's right to information. It speaks to their secrecy. And considering their past policies as enunciated in the 1982 election campaign, their pocket politics, I think this motion speaks to the hypocrisy of this government to say one thing one day and their practices being something entirely different. It speaks to their hypocrisy.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — And finally, this motion speaks to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, who are more and more interested in having information about the government and how it's run.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Sutherland:

That this Assembly condemns the Government of Saskatchewan for refusing to release information about government spending practices and privatization deals, and thereby depriving the public of the opportunity to review the government's mismanagement.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Koenker:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this motion, as has been indicated by my colleague, is to condemn the Government of Saskatchewan for refusing to release information. And I want in the time that I have available to me, to pin the tail on the donkey, so to speak, as to why this government has refused to table information.

And I want to pin responsibility for refusal to share information very squarely on the shoulders of the Premier of this province, because if it weren't for him and for his approach to the tabling of information and for an up-front honest approach to the government's affairs, I think that the people of Saskatchewan would see a lot more information forthcoming.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the culprit behind the secrecy and all the private deals that lead to privatization is none other than the Premier himself. He is the perpetrator of this deception. And I would like to begin to review the record, just very briefly, from the last provincial election, and show very clearly how it is that this Premier talks out of both sides of his mouth.

On October 10, Friday, October 10, 1982, during the course of a provincial election campaign, the Premier of Saskatchewan appeared in Saskatoon and pledged to the people of the province that he would spend \$50 million over the next five years for seed money for the high-tech community of Saskatchewan, \$50 million over the course of the next five years — an election promise. And that promise, Mr. Speaker, has yet to be honoured. It has yet to be honoured.

A year after the election promise was made, on October 19 of 1987, this Premier stood in this Assembly with respect to the high-tech promise he made, and he said:

I promised that in the next five years we would have a program in this province that encourages high-tech development, that we would rank among the best of the country, and that we would spend up to 10 million a year over a five-year program. I promised that, Mr. Speaker.

And you heard that with your own ears. And then the Premier continues:

All I can say to the hon. member is: you watch, you watch us deliver on a five-year program in high technology.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are watching. It is now yet another half a year and we see nothing forthcoming with respect to the Premier's promise made a year and a half ago, during the midst of an election campaign. No \$50 million over five years in seed money for high-tech firms.

This same Premier also talked about \$10 million a year during the election — it's not an exception when it comes to high tech — he also talked about \$50 million a year . . . \$10 million a year over the next five years to manufacture farm chemicals in Saskatchewan — \$50 million in total, and we have not yet seen any evidence of this money being spent. He talked about all kinds of other projects, but he failed to address or recognize his commitment, made during the course of the election, to manufacture farm chemicals here in Saskatchewan. And there's been an ominous silence on this issue from the Premier.

This same Premier, Mr. Speaker, proposed during the same election campaign in 1986 that a new fertilizer plant would be built here in Regina, and it's now almost entered the land of mythology that this plant will even be seen. There's no evidence that the government can produce on the promise made by the Premier.

And so you begin to see by these examples that the Premier himself sets the tone for the kind of duplicity and secrecy and cynicism that pervades the election promises made by this government.

And I could go on, and I could talk about the Premier going to Swift Current and promising a bandage factory at Swift Current; that there would be \$12.5 million spent on a bandage plant in Swift Current; that construction on the project would start in the spring of 1987, and it would be completed and built by the fall of 1987. And we don't have a bandage plant in Swift Current, and we don't even have the prospect of a bandage plant in Swift Current.

There are many promises that this Premier has made. He's promised that there would be an Expo tower in Moose Jaw as well. He's lavish in his promises. And I want to point out more specifically how, when it comes to the Department of Agriculture, which is very narrowly his own responsibility, that again there is duplicity.

(1500)



Three and a half years ago this government and this Premier announced that there would be an agricultural development fund. And they put up a lot of hype and a lot of hoop-la in association with this announcement that over the next five years — it's always a five-year plan — that there would be \$200 million spent on an agricultural development fund. And I quote from a Saskatchewan Agriculture brochure on the agricultural development fund, from the Premier's message in this brochure, with his name signed underneath it, it says:

The agricultural development fund launches a new era for farming in Saskatchewan. For the first time in provincial history, the Government of Saskatchewan, through the agricultural development fund, is making a long-term commitment to enhance the competitive and productive position of Saskatchewan farmers.

Well that's about as far as I can go and agree with this message. They certainly are making a long-term commitment to Saskatchewan farmers, because they're a long way from coming up with \$200 million for Saskatchewan farmers in the agricultural development fund.

I look at the totals to date so far, given the three successive estimates of government spending that have been tabled, and even in the estimates, which have been underspent, this government in the first three years of the agricultural development program has only, by their own estimate, spent \$83 million. Now if they're on a proper trajectory, to spend \$200 million over five years they would have to have spent \$120 million by this point in time to be on target.

Mr. Speaker, what this really means, with the first three years of the five-year program eclipsed and only \$83 million spent so far, is that this government is going to have to double their spending in the agricultural development fund from \$30 million this year to \$60 million next year in order to honour their commitment. Do you think that there's a fat chance of that happening? There's not the slightest chance at all of that happening.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the actual figures for the first year of estimates with respect to the agricultural development fund show, for example, that when it comes to agricultural research — and the government pledged, the Premier pledged, that \$10 million would be spent on agricultural research in this agricultural development fund — how much was spent? Two and a half million dollars — 25 per cent of the total he estimated would be spent.

What about the second year in the program? Very interesting, Mr. Speaker. We just don't know. We just don't know because the *Public Accounts* have not been tabled in this province to let the people of Saskatchewan know what this government is spending on the agricultural development fund. Because if they knew, the results in Eastview and Elphinstone would be even worse than they are.

So this points, Mr. Speaker, very clearly to the problem

that this government faces and the reason why it ought to be condemned, very justifiably, because it refuses to release information. It plays with numbers and statistics; it deliberately attempts to mislead the people and to confuse people . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order, order. The accusation of an individual or government deliberately misleading is not parliamentary. I don't think that the member actually meant it in those terms, but I'm bringing it to his attention. To accuse a government or individual members of deliberately misleading is not acceptable.

**Mr. Koenker:** — I apologize, Mr. Speaker. I certainly didn't mean to deliberately do that myself.

I would just like to conclude by saying that we see this as a continuation of this whole problem when it comes to Shand and the development of the power station there. The people of Saskatchewan simply can't get the information that they need and are owed by this government, with respect to it being the largest project in provincial history, to adequately analyse the benefits of this project.

So I condemn this government in the strongest terms for its failure to provide information.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that this motion has come forward today and I'm happy to be able to speak to it. I'm happy, Mr. Speaker, because this motion has a very broad sweep of relevance, so broad in fact that members can make speeches on any matter that requires government spending.

Unfortunately, that's how the opposition in this legislature drafts its motions — with a very wide, wide brush, Mr. Speaker, so wide in fact that they can say nothing on any point that they think they want to make, and then talk about anything under the sun. But, Mr. Speaker, I will not do that because I do indeed have something to say as a private member of this Assembly.

To start, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that at the end of my remarks, I will be moving the following amendment:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting the following:

This Assembly censures any member who uses his position as an MLA to subvert the democratic system through the frivolous or venal abuse of our courts for purely political motives and in particular, regrets the recent statements that the courts should assume the constitutional authority for determining the timing of public release of government documents.

Mr. Speaker, that is a strong statement, but it is no stronger, I suggest, than the fetid piece of work we are debating today. And it is certainly no stronger than the reprehensible actions by the member for Regina Victoria in corrupting the role of individual MLAs.

Mr. Speaker, I think in entering this debate, it is important

to review the background of the public accounts and how these accounts are reviewed. The first thing I want to remind the public about is the fact that it was under the NDP, especially under the guidance of the member of Saskatoon Riversdale, that had the activities of the Public Accounts Committee conducted in secret — in secret, Mr. Speaker.

This is highly relevant to the motion we are debating today because it is supposed to focus the opportunity of the public to review public spending. How can the public review government spending when the review is conducted in secret? It cannot.

To ensure that the media have the right sourcing — and do not think I am abstracting this from the air — I refer them to Hansard of April 2, 1981, where the member for Riversdale makes a spirited case for secrecy in the Public Accounts Committee. Let me quote one statement he made at that time, Mr. Speaker:

Either you get into detailed, specific workings of expenditures in private, in the absence of political and publicity glare . . . or you open it up to the public.

He also argued if you agreed to open the process to the public, you would also have to agree to keep it non-political and non-abusive.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this government opened it up to the public. We, this government, a Progressive Conservative government, were concerned that the public did indeed have an opportunity to review the spending practices of government. And so we did away with the secrecy of the NDP.

And did the NDP heed the concerns of their leader, that the process would then have to be a highly non-partisan one? You know very well that they did not. Instead, they have sent a member before the courts to try and have the judicial system intervene in the authority and privileges of this Assembly, of the Public Accounts Committee, and without reflecting on previous rulings of the Chair.

In my own opinion, Mr. Speaker, they have impinged upon my responsibility as an individual MLA. If MLAs no longer have the responsibility and the right to seek such disclosures as they see fit, if the legislature no longer is the master of such small but vital matters as the release of *Public Accounts*, then it seems inescapable to me that the authority of the legislature has been questioned and the role of the members diminished.

And this, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what the member from Regina Victoria, on orders from his leader, has done. You know, Mr. Speaker, and I would think they would be a little wiser. I would think that they would be a bit more concerned about the traditions and values of this particular institution. But they seem to have utter disregard for the legislature and disdain for our valued democratic system.

Mr. Speaker, I believe too that this motion reflects upon the entire strategy of the members of the NDP opposition in this legislature. It is a strategy that, I am sad to say,

seems to be having some effect, at least as it is reflected in much of the commentary in the press of today. It is a strategy, Mr. Speaker, to undermine the confidence of the people in the democratic process, to reduce the estimation of the people for the political process and political activities.

You will recall that last year they made a great commotion about special warrants. It was the bogymen of the year. And the simple fact is that special warrants are a tool used throughout the British Commonwealth, the Commonwealth of Nations. Research shows, Mr. Speaker, that our use of special warrants was in fact nothing particular at all. The numbers were a little higher than usual, but the measures were consistent.

And then, Mr. Speaker, in reading the minutes of the Public Accounts Committee, I was treated to the accidental admission of the member for Saskatoon South that he would try to break the rules whenever he could and that it was not up to him to keep the proceedings honest. And that got into the minutes of the committee, Mr. Speaker. It is there on the public record for anyone who cares to look.

And this year we see again the NDP running up the red flag, going to the courts with what even the judge determined was a frivolous action designed to remove authority from the legislature. They stand in this House, Mr. Speaker, day in and day out, and attack individuals who cannot defend themselves because of the immunity rule. The member for Nutana can call the cancer clinic in Saskatoon and ask for the confidential records of cancer patients, and then they have the unabashed gall to question government speakers on the right of free speech.

It is appalling to me, Mr. Speaker, that they can be so cavalier with such fundamental, such absolutely vital principles. And these actions require nothing less than the full censure of this Assembly.

You know, Mr. Speaker, that it was the member for Saskatoon Riversdale who said that, "No system is perfect, including public accounts." And I will grant him that. But to go from that in 1981, when he was the government House leader, to try and drum public fears through highly questionable practices, this strains credibility, Mr. Speaker.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, when the NDP was the government and the opposition tried and tried to get answers to some very basic questions, and the opposition tried without success. And I tell the member from Riversdale that irresponsibility is going to come back to haunt. It will hound him back onto the eastern cocktail circuit from whence he came. That member may be glib and smooth, Mr. Speaker, but the bottom line in the end is integrity, it is consistency, and on these that member fails miserably.

You might remember, for example, Mr. Speaker, just recently the NDP have been badgering ministers on this side of the House in estimates about parking spaces. I watched as the Minister of Human Resources was being hounded by members opposite about such vital concerns as the parking spaces, and I stop because I recalled a time

when a different opposition was trying to get similar answers, and so I went and looked up the old estimates.

Let me quote for you a man who clearly knew where he stood at the time, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

It is virtually impossible for a minister to come in and to answer details on subvote 1 related to, number one, cars, or number two, to government services. I am not going to tell ministers that they have the responsibility to know how CVA (central vehicle agency) policy for deputy ministers on cars operates. I am not going to be standing here as a minister in my estimates taking responsibility for cars. I am not going to get up here as a minister and answer to you on the estimates, and you had better find out that leasing policies and building policies is under the control of government services.

You know, Mr. Speaker, that forthcoming gentleman was the member for Riversdale, and the member who said that parking spaces now are a very big concern.

(1515)

Mr. Speaker, there are many more things that I could talk about that takes credibility away from those members opposite, when they raise such a motion in this legislature, but they don't have any.

So I think I will read my amendment into the record, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order. The member's time has actually expired, however, in the interest of the House proceeding, I will allow him to continue if the other members . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — No way.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Opposition does not agree.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure and pride to stand here today, as the member for Saskatoon Nutana, to talk about some of the issues that are important to the people of this province, particularly issues surrounding the refusal of the government opposite to release any information as to its spending practices and privatization deals.

Mr. Speaker, I note with interest that the member from Thunder Creek once again attacked the Leader of the New Democratic Party, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale. And I want the members opposite to know that we will take our leader any day over the members opposite leader.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Atkinson:** — I understand why the members opposite continually rise from their chairs and refer to the member from Saskatoon Riversdale. They refer to the member from Saskatoon Riversdale because they know that their

leader can't stand up to the Leader of the New Democratic Party.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Atkinson:** — I wait with some anticipation for the next provincial election when we will once again, we will see a leaders' debate in this province where the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Riversdale, will debate the Premier of this province, and we will see who in fact has the support of the people of this province.

Mr. Minister, or Mr. Speaker, it gave me a great deal of pride to be in Saskatoon yesterday with the Leader of the Opposition when he addressed the board of trade and the whole issue of privatization.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition made it quite clear to the board of trade that he did not favour the privatization deals of the members opposite, and he also made it quite clear that once we're elected, once the New Democratic Party is elected in 1990 or 1991, that we will be reviewing those deals to see whether in fact they've been good business deals.

Now why do we have to review those deals? The reason we will have to review those deals in 1990 or 1991, whenever these people have the courage to call a general election, is because these people refuse to release to the public any information surrounding their privatization strategies. Now they talk about privatization, and I can see why they use that word, because it describes exactly the way that they're going about these deals. It's all done privately with Conservative Party friends, and privately with their big business friends — secretly behind closed doors and in private. That's why they call it PC privatization.

But Saskatchewan people have begun to ask, Mr. Speaker: what does the PC government have to hide? What do they have to hide? And we witnessed today in question period the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation, and we witnessed this morning in Crown Corporations Committee his refusal to release any of the details surrounding the privatization of Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation.

We also witnessed this afternoon in the House during question period this minister responsible for Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation mislead the people of this province. When we asked that member opposite what the implications were in terms of the long-term debt of SMDC, in terms of the merger, he said that there was going to be no additional long-term debt. And that's simply not true.

If you look at the record, Mr. Minister, you will note that this new merged corporation, this new-called, this new company, has assumed a long-term debt of some \$600 million. The portion that is the responsibility of the people of this province is \$400 million. The long-term debt presently of SMDC is about \$322 million. So in fact, Mr. Minister, we have assumed an additional debt of \$78 million, all in the hopes that when these shares are floated

that we will recover the money. Well, we'll wait and see. In view of the stock market and what's been happening in this country and throughout the world, we will see whether in fact these shares are floated in a successful way.

Then I want to talk about the Saskatchewan dental program. Where was this government when we asked questions about the privatization of the dental program? Where were they? They didn't release to the public of this province one single detail of the arrangements that were made between the College of Dental Surgeons and the Government of Saskatchewan. Instead what we saw was 411 dental workers fired and equipment sold off.

And then we have Saskoil and the floatation of Saskoil shares. Once again, when the members opposite on this side of the House asked for the details, did they release the information to the public? They did not. These people are dealing with Saskatchewan assets, owned and controlled by the people of this province. They are selling them off, giving them away, and when we ask for the details of the deal, when we ask for information, when we ask how they value those assets, and we ask for the independent evaluations, do they provide them to the members opposite — no way. What they do is they hide in some sort of rhetoric that they don't want to let their competitors know what's going on.

Well when you look at the Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation and you look in the annual report, you will note that most of the major players in the uranium industry in this province are in fact involved in joint ventures with the members opposite through the Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation. So what's wrong? What's the problem? If you have nothing to hide, if these are such fantastic business deals, then you should not be afraid to release to the public, for public scrutiny, the deals that have been arrived at.

And then we have Saskatchewan Minerals. Here was a fine little company that returned to the people of this province more than \$50 million in royalties and dividends. It returned to the people of this province over \$60 million in wages. And in terms of grants in lieu of taxes, it returned over \$2 million to the communities in which Sask Minerals was located in. And they've just sold off this company to two out-of-province companies — this Crown corporation, this public asset to two out-of-province companies, one in Ontario, and one in Quebec.

When we asked for an independent appraisal of those assets, when we asked the minister responsible in Crown Corporations, she said, oh no, she wouldn't be able to give us that information, that we maybe could get it from the Crown Management Board. And this is the excuse after excuse after excuse. They will not release the details.

We have had several, several privatizations in this province. We've had Saskoil, the dental plan, Manalta coal, the drag-line, the highway equipment, SED Systems, Sask Minerals, SaskCOMP, SaskPower, SMDC; we fear that there will be SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), and a whole host of other Crown corporations.

And have they released one detail to the public? They have not. Instead we have all these wild and woolly little business arrangements between the people who have bought or purchased these companies and the Government of Saskatchewan. Have we seen much cash for these companies? We have not.

I just want to review the SaskPower sell-off. Here we have \$325 million worth of assets, according to the government. But we don't know that; we haven't seen any of the independent appraisals. But here we have another sell-off of SaskPower, and what do we get? We get 13 million common shares in Saskoil — you know, Saskoil was the company that was privatized, the company that used to be owned by the people of this province, which is now owned by . . . 75 per cent of the shares are owned by people outside of Saskatchewan — and we got some cash, and this amounted to \$245 million. But we don't know how much cash we got.

We got 13 million common shares, but we don't know what the value of these shares will be when we go to sell them. Then we got 5 million Saskoil shares — purchase warrants valued at \$13 million, so they say — but have we seen the evaluation? No, we have not.

Then, apparently, we get a cash flow royalty paid over five years, valued at \$25 million. Well who knows what that is? And then we have a promissory note for 20 million.

Well here we have it, a \$325 million asset, according to them. But have they released any of the details? No, they have not. Will they release any of the details? In view of the past practice of this government, I suspect they will not. They are afraid that the public, upon scrutiny of their business dealings in this province, the privatization of public assets, will quickly throw them out of office. So they want to keep everything in secret.

So here we have it, another little business deal, a \$325 million business deal, but do we know anything about it, have we seen the details? We have not.

And then we have Saskatchewan computer corporation, a utility of the people of this province. This company has a return on equity of 33 per cent in some years, 120 per cent in other years, 100 per cent in other year — and we've just sold this thing off, apparently. But have we seen the deal? Have we seen the deal that's been entered into with Mercury Graphics and SaskCOMP and SaskTel and a number of other little private businesses? We haven't.

But we do know this — that we apparently have some shares in this company, this new WESTBRIDGE Computer, worth, according to the annual report, some \$11 million. We do know that. Whether or not those shares will be worth \$11 million and how they arrived at the valuation of those shares, we're not quite sure of, because they won't release that information to the public.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Time has expired.

**Mr. Hopfner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've listened with some . . . well I thought maybe what

should be some enthusiasm, to see if there was going to be anything new coming from the members opposite.

But here's what we're hearing, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're hearing there's no freedom of information, secretive, broken promises. You know, Mr. Speaker, this is what we've heard day in and day out ever since 1982.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say, this is becoming a real laugh, a joke — a joke. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that what the NDP are trying to do to this legislature is just make a mockery out of it. Mr. Speaker, the quackery the NDP are practising is nothing but an attempt to demoralize this institution.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Nutana was talking about a debate — a debate — they will debate anybody, anywhere, any time, on the particular privatization or public participation; they're all over the map.

And I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, I have — last week and I have previous — have always attempted to get these people in a public debate. I had challenged these people to come out into my riding. And I challenge them any time to come out and put their spending habits and everything on the line and I'll put ours. And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, we will find out who can manage this province and who can't.

I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite, the only thing they know is to try to use scare tactics. They still have not moved off of that, Mr. Speaker. They have talked about it. We were going to just take away hospitalization in this province, health care and everything else like this, you know. And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, there has never been more money, more dollars put into such facilities and care as there is today. They are the ones that had moratoriums, Mr. Speaker, and all this kind of non-government spending. We were the ones that expanded on almost every aspect in government that you can possibly think of.

Mr. Speaker, even the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Riversdale, Leader of the NDP, will not even ask questions in this legislature of this government. He is afraid, Mr. Speaker. He will not take a position in this province — absolutely no position whatsoever.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I just want to indicate to you that I get a little bit sick and tired of hearing that rhetoric. But it's time, it's time, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP were called to account for themselves. It's not sufficient to allow the NDP to repeatedly say, well gee, folks, we aren't opposed to anything, it's just that we're opposed to everything this government does because it is this government doing it. And that's it! That's just basically the reason that they get up and talk and jabber away.

Well I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, even their past leader, Mr. Blakeney, had indicated publicly that he was in favour, in favour of privatization and public participation, and he says it's time to move that way. There's the old folks over there saying, oh no, we've got to hang on to that old tradition, that old tradition, that old NDP tradition, because we're afraid to move; we're afraid to move.

(1530)

Well, Mr. Speaker . . . and further, if they're sincere about the concerns and the public release of documentation and stuff like that, I would like and ask them right now to go on record with the next speaker, to come on record and to say that he will precisely give us a date and a time that if at any time that they may, and Heaven forbid, ever form government in this province again, that they will give us a commitment here today that on such and such a time and a date they will always table a particular public account. I want to hear that from the members opposite because they know, traditionally, that a particular timetable cannot be very well kept because of various different situations. But of course they're not going to do that, Mr. Speaker, because they know they can't keep such a commitment.

Well, Mr. Speaker, they can say whatever they like and be as irresponsible as they like because for some reason no one's questioning them on it, and we have not questioned them on it enough. So I want to do that now.

Mr. Speaker, I challenge, like I said before, any one them over there to a debate. And here are the ground rules, just one and it's very simple: no vague hints as to what might happen if the NDP were the government. You come to my riding — and I'll even pay for your trip — and one of your oratorical wonders can stand up on a platform and announce exactly when each year you would release your public account. Stand up and tell my constituents about your plans for government spending in direct and simple terms.

For example, you will have the opportunity to tell the people exactly how much you plan to raise welfare rates, as you have been demanding we do with specifics. You will have the opportunity to tell the people exactly how much more you would pay in wages to the bureaucracy, as you have been demanding we do. You will be able to tell the people exactly how much revenue you plan to lose by closing the uranium mines, as you have been demanding we do.

Tell them which one of the Crown corporations you will privatize or which one you will create. Tell them exactly what your spending plans are for agriculture, what your spending plans are for health, for education, for nursing homes, for dental care and drugs. Tell the truth. Tell them. It's that simple.

You come out to my riding and I give you this direct and simple commitment again, as I and our government has been always doing. I will abide by that same rule, and I will tell the people our specific and direct spending habits.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I just want to get back into the basics of this individual, why he moved this motion, and that is basically, Mr. Speaker, is that he wanted to make a political thing out of this. And this is what is demoralizing about the whole situation.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not finished with this. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to inform the opposition right now that they will

have another crack at the cat when we get into Public Accounts Committee. The NDP will have another crack because I'm going to be asking my colleagues on that committee to have the committee undertake a full and comprehensive review of the whole question of the process of public accounts.

The committee should look into the question of members trying to make the courts responsible for the release of that document. They should look into the questions raised about members of the committee announcing that it is their intent to break the rules whenever possible, as the member of Saskatoon South has stated on the record.

They should look into the role of the committee and indeed of the legislature, and in reviewing the government. And so, Mr. Speaker, I want to move an amendment:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following therefor:

this Assembly censures any member who uses his position as an MLA to subvert the democratic system through the frivolous or venal abuse of our courts for purely political motives, and in particular regrets the recent statements that the courts should assume the constitutional authority for determining the timing of public release of government documents.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to so move this, and it will be — and I'm sure the member from Moosomin, who will be seconding this, will have much more to say on this. So, Mr. Speaker, with that I would beg you to bring this forward. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. The member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster has moved an amendment to the motion. I have considered . . . Could I ask the hon. members to please refrain from carrying on a debate while I'm trying to make a ruling.

I have read the amendment. I have referred to the rules of parliamentary debate, more specifically to *Erskine May, Parliamentary Practice*, 20th Edition which states:

No charge of a personal character can be raised save upon a direct and substantive motion to that effect.

Amendment to a motion is not substantive, and therefore I must rule that the amendment is out of order.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Speaker:** — The debate continues.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to make a few comments on this motion. But I want to, first of all, begin by making a few comments about some of the things that have been said by members opposite. And I really think it should be of some note in this House, and in the public who may be viewing these proceedings on television today, that the government opposite, rather

than dealing with the substantial intent of the motion and debating the question of: why has certain information, which the public has the right to know, not been made available? Attempts only to put in a frivolous motion by the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster, after the member from Thunder Creek forgot to move it on time, in order to try to not debate the motion as it is, Mr. Speaker.

Now that in itself, that in itself tells you something about what is going on here and why this motion is here today. And what is going on here today, and in recent weeks and months, is an attempt by this government to be secretive and not allow the public of Saskatchewan know the kind of shady, corrupt, and unscrupulous deals which it is pulling on them. Why, otherwise, would they not want to make something as rudimentary, as straightforward as the *Public Accounts* public?

Now I listened to the member from Cut Knife-Lloyd, and he's always of some interest to listen to. He does not say a great deal, Mr. Speaker, he seldom does, but he rants and raves and quotes a few things that somebody else wrote for him and then makes no sense. But I want to tell him this: he said that he would debate anywhere, at any time, with anyone. If he could only get up and speak again, I would like to ask him: if that is the case, why won't he allow this legislature to debate the public accounts?

The Minister of Finance, who is in his seat here today, why won't he allow this legislature to debate the public accounts? If they are so free and willing to get into those kinds of debate, why do they hide them? what is so wrong, what is so corrupt, that we will discover in these *Public Accounts*, that the government has yet not tabled them. That is the question here today.

What is wrong with the deal with Sask Minerals and the sell-out of Sask Minerals that they won't provide the information to the legislature and to the public? What are they hiding with the cushy deal with Saskatchewan Computer Corporation and WESTBRIDGE with their cronies and political friends controlling it and are going to make themselves millions of dollars? What is so corrupt in that deal, in that arrangement, that they won't make it available to the public?

Now, Mr. Speaker, I heard the member from Cut Knife-Lloyd — and I hate to refer to him because he doesn't deserve this much time — but he made one other comment which I think was of note to this legislature. He bewailed the fact that some people had suggested, had suggested that this Conservative Party and this Conservative government would be attacking hospitalization and medicare and, oh, he was so scandalized by it all. Well I want to say to you, sir, yes, we said that this Conservative government would undermine medicare and hospitalization, and they did.

Tell me, Mr. Speaker, in spite of the fact that in the 1986 election campaign they went around promising everyone in Saskatchewan that medicare and hospitalization were sacred — they wrote it in their literature; they had it on the television commercial; they said it was a sacred trust — in spite of all that, after the election they betrayed that trust, and they betrayed the people.

Tell me this: is the destruction of the dental care plan for our children not an attack on hospitalization and medicare? Yes, it is. Is this destruction of the prescription drug plan not an attack on medicare and our hospital and health care programs? I think it is. Is the doing away with many public health inspectors, tampering with the very foundations of an important service under our health care program? I think it is. Is the fact that there are 11,000 people waiting on a waiting list to get hospitals in Saskatoon not a betrayal of our health care services? Is the fact that, for the first time in the history of this province, we've got cancer patients having to go on the waiting list not an attack on our medicare? I think it is.

So while the members opposite want to deviate from this debate and try to put those kind of motions, there are some facts that the public has a right and should know.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Thunder Creek, the one who forgot to move the motion, said that the Public Accounts Committee didn't used to meet in public. That's true. And then he said, well finally it did. Well that's true too. And who would disagree with that?

There is no one in this House who would disagree with the fact that now time goes on and the Public Accounts Committee is open to media, and that it's not a bad idea. But I ask him, what is the good of it all if we can't even have the *Public Accounts* before us so that this Public Accounts Committee could hold a meeting to consider them. That's the point here, Mr. Speaker. That's why this motion is on there.

There is no purpose to having any kind . . . there's no purpose in having a Public Accounts Committee if the government sits on the *Public Accounts* and won't make them available to this legislature, won't make them available to the committee so that they can be scrutinized and so that the right questions can be asked, and so that we know how many of those ministerial assistants that they've given 15 per cent and 22 per cent increase to, how many of them got those increases, while people in transition, needing transition homes, which my colleague, the member from Saskatoon University was asking about today — 15 and 22 per cent increases to political hacks who work for the ministers.

They got that kind of money, but they're turning 432 threatened families, mothers and children, away from our transition houses because they don't have the money to pay for them.

The *Public Accounts* will tell us where they spent the money in order so that they can afford to put it where it's needed more. Now obviously, Mr. Speaker, they have spent the money wastefully and frivolously and don't want the public to know. Now I know they would like to hold them off until the summer in the hope that somehow, in the hope that somehow nobody will notice in the quiet, dull rooms of the hot summer heat.

(1545)

Well I want to say to them, Mr. Speaker, and to you, that that's the basic philosophy or strategy that they applied

on June 17, 1987 when they brought in that disastrous budget. And didn't the public know? Of course they did.

I say to the House Leader opposite, don't fool yourself. The public will know when those *Public Accounts* are tabled, all of the misexpenditures and the corruption that has taken place in the election year of 1986 and 1987. So why not make them available in this legislature so that the work can go on, and so that the Public Accounts Committee can start doing their study?

Now we heard today . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well now the member from Regina Wascana is speaking from his seat again, Mr. Speaker. Now the only time he speaks in here is when he feels that there is a point being made on this side of the House, so obviously we're making a pretty good point here.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time that this government has broken the law of this province. There was a case of special warrants which one of the members referred to a while ago. And he said, oh, the opposition made such a fuss over those. Well I say again, yes, the opposition made such a fuss over the fact that the government refused to have a budget in this House, and that it was spending tens of millions of dollars by special warrant.

Even the Legislative Law Clerk said that the government was acting illegally. And it was only then, it was only then, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier decided he can't hide anymore. And so he had to call a session of the legislature and he announced it almost a month ahead of time, which was rather unusual, to try to cover up for the fact that this government was trying to hide the major cut-backs that it was initiating, without coming to this legislature with a budget so that it would have to answer for them. It breaks its own laws and they're breaking their own laws again with regard to the public accounts.

Editorial in the *Star-Phoenix*. And I know I'm not supposed to read the name, but the editorial, if I could read the name, would say, the member from Melville, the minister in charge of Labour, has ignored the law.

Now for a government that continues to talk about morality and integrity, I ask you, Mr. Speaker, how can they ignore the very laws which they are entrusted to defend and uphold? But they do it. And these are only three examples — the Minister of Social Services breaking the law; the Premier and the Minister of Finance breaking the law; the Minister of Finance now breaking the law and the traditions of the legislature by not making the *Public Accounts* available in this House.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Your time has elapsed.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I count it indeed a pleasure to stand and to say a few words regarding the motion presented by the member from Regina Wascana. However, before beginning, Mr. Speaker, I would have to say that my first year and a half in this Assembly . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — No, no. Not the member from Wascana.

**Mr. Toth:** — Victoria, pardon me. I am totally floored and astounded by the type of debate and rhetoric, brought forward by members opposite. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I had far more regard . . . I expected far more from many of the members opposite.

The member from Regina Victoria has brought forward a motion condemning this government to have refusing to release information on government spending, privatization, and . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . and he says, depriving the public of opportunity to review the government's management. I would endeavour, Mr. Speaker, to say a few words to the motion.

I find it amazing, Mr. Speaker, that during the member's years on Regina city council he was known as a champion of secret meetings — behind closed doors. The member from Regina Victoria accuses this government of refusing to release information about government spending practices and public participation.

**An Hon. Member:** — That's a lie.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, order. I would just like to remind hon. members that whether they are on their feet, as the hon. member is now, or whether they are sitting in their desk, as the hon. member just is, unparliamentary language is not acceptable.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe this government ought to be proud of its commitment to openness in government. In fact, this government was not the government who refused television camera crews in public accounts; that was the doing of the members opposite when they were in office.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition speaks about freedom of information, yet I recall the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, during his years in government, giving great pronouncements against freedom of information. Prior to the 1982 election, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government of this province kept hidden from the people of this province the real financial state of Saskatchewan. And yet they come in this Assembly today to talk about openness. Mr. Speaker, who are they attempting to fool? What are their motives?

And I realize, Mr. Speaker, that when we are in debate . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order. The hon. member is attempting to give a speech, and I think all the members realize that in this particular case he never, ever interrupts anybody. I'd just like to ask members to give him a chance to speak in this House this afternoon.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe if we reviewed the record, we would find that members of all governments over the past number of years have used, on many occasions, terms and evaded the points that have been brought forward. They've used evasion when it came time to giving direct answers, and no one is immune from using evasive answers. Time and

again during the opposition's administration, they literally fudged on the answers with respect to their spending habits, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are being treated to the spectacle of some members opposite . . . the pious member from Regina Victoria, in his fashion, a dissertation about openness in government. I compare his remarks to an arsonist speaking on the virtues of the fire department, or a fox offering to watch the chickens.

Does the member for Regina Victoria not realize that it was his party, the present opposition when they were in government, who refused to tell the people of Saskatchewan about the details of potash nationalization? Has he no idea that it was his party, the NDP, who avoided telling the public the costs of their advertising extravaganza on the family of Crown corporations? Has he forgotten the mockery his party made of the questions on the order paper that they hauled in here and tried to make a show of it?

Yes, I agree, Mr. Speaker, the member for Regina Victoria was not a member of this Assembly when those events took place. That is not a valid excuse, because he was guilty of the same kind of secrecy and evasion while on Regina city council. Mr. Speaker, I will no longer accept the hypocrisy of the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, we find there was no set rule with respect to *Public Accounts*. Yes, there have been traditions, but from time to time in our history traditions have been set aside for valid reasons.

While we cannot deny there is delay in the *Public Accounts*, I can say with confidence that the *Public Accounts* will be tabled shortly, and the members realize it and the members know it. In fact, Mr. Speaker, over the years, the years of my involvement in public life, I have found that a little patience goes a lot further than confrontation.

Mr. Speaker, let us take a real hard look at the record of this government with respect to public participation. The member of Regina Victoria accuses this government of secret deals or depriving the public of information. That accusation is simply not true.

It was this government, a Progressive Conservative government, that had the vision and leadership to establish a Department of Public Participation. It was this government, the first government department of its kind that was established in North America.

This government has made a public commitment to public participation because we are confident of what it will do to enhance the economic future of Saskatchewan.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, talking about public involvement, I happen to have been involved in a public meeting on public participation in Whitewood a little over a week ago. And I will say this — that of the 140 or so people involved in that meeting, as I was walking around and talking to different people at different tables, there were people from all political persuasions.



And one gentleman said to me, he said, I don't know how I received this invitation. In fact he was one of my strongest critics in the past election. But he said, I just want to say thank you to whoever invited me. He said, this was very enjoyable; I thoroughly enjoyed being here and offering my input. And he's a card carrying member of the party opposite. But he enjoyed the opportunity to sit down with the Minister of Public Participation to discuss public involvement.

We want every citizen of this province, Mr. Speaker, to know about our policy of public participation. And we welcome each and every opportunity to discuss public participation.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is the NDP who do not wish to take a formal position on public participation because I don't believe they really know which way they want to go at this time.

Let me take a few moments to talk about the idea of public participation. Mr. Speaker, in Australia the Labour government down under has brought about some very successful privatization for public participation ventures. In France, where they've just elected another socialist president, President Mitterrand, in that country they, too, have had success with public participation. Yet the NDP in this province fail to realize that public participation cuts across all political boundaries. It isn't just reserved for one political party.

Liberal, Socialist, Communist and Conservative governments in all parts of the world are engaged in public participation initiatives. The NDP opposition here in Saskatchewan do not appreciate the fact that public participation means economic diversification and prosperity for our province and for the people of this province.

I wish to commend this government for having the foresight and the leadership to embark on a policy of public participation. Mr. Speaker, the public participation program will offer all of Saskatchewan people the opportunity to share in the growth of their province and their economy by them being able to invest directly in Saskatchewan interests.

Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate that the concepts of investment and economic growth may be foreign to the opposition considering their unflexible and undying support for socialism. In fact, the sale of SaskPower bonds is a good example of the positive benefits of public participation. The SaskPower bonds provided a new and innovative way of raising capital. And for the record, I want to point out that these bonds raised a total of \$297.5 million for the corporation to fund and expand their operations.

The same can be said, Mr. Speaker, for the public share offering by Saskoil which raised \$110 million. Yes, public participation is working. It works for the benefit of you and I and all the people of this province. Take a look at the example of WESTBRIDGE. The Saskatchewan computer union favoured the merger. All of their jobs are secure. WESTBRIDGE is now the largest computer services company . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Time has expired. There's one minute left.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the moment that we have left, I would just like to reiterate one of the main arguments with an example, Mr. Speaker. The motion that we are debating is:

That this Assembly condemns the Government of Saskatchewan for refusing to release information about government spending practices and privatization deals and thereby depriving the public of the opportunity to review this government's mismanagement.

One very pointed example, Mr. Speaker, and I refer to the estimates of this year and of the year previous, under the estimates in grants to school construction. Repeatedly, any grants to school construction, the government has estimates \$63 million this year; the year before, \$62 million.

My understand is, according to information I've been given, that the government has only spent \$25 million worth of that, and at the same time proclaiming and saying that it is budgeting . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Time has expired.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we can move directly to Motions for Returns (Debatable).

Leave granted.

## MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Debatable)

### Return No. 16

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After a few remarks I'm going to be moving the following motions for return. And it reads as follows:

With respect to the consulting services of Mr. Oliver Letwin: (a) whether the Department of Public Participation has a contractual arrangement for Mr. Letwin's services; (b) the remuneration specified in the contract; (c) the amount paid for Mr. Letwin's services since April 1, 1987; and (d) who the parties to the contract are.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this is an important piece of information that the public of this province is entitled to have. As we understand it, Mr. Oliver Letwin was a policy adviser to Margaret Thatcher during all of the privatizations that took place in Great Britain. As we understand it, Oliver Letwin has been in this province on two occasions, as I understand it, speaking to large gatherings of Conservative Party supporters about the benefits associated with that new and latest economic fad that seems to be dominating Conservative governments everywhere: privatization.

(1600)

Now, Mr. Speaker, privatization is something that's totally foreign to Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has always had a tradition of the mixed economy. We've had a tradition where private enterprise, the public sector, and co-operatives came together to ensure that we had a diversified and enhanced economy. With privatization, this new concept is something totally foreign to Saskatchewan people, and hence I understand why the government doesn't have any inside advisers advising them on how to go about privatization.

Mr. Letwin is someone, as I understand it, from Great Britain. He has been contracted by the Conservative government to offer advice on how to sell off public assets. And thus far, Mr. Speaker, it would appear to us that Mr. Letwin's advice has not been all that beneficial to the people of this province.

It's been a very expensive proposition because it seems to us that our assets on some occasions have been sold for way less than fair market value. And it would also appear to us that in some cases our assets have been given away, totally given away.

So I think it's appropriate that the government give us this information. And therefore I would move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return No. 16 showing.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, the form in which the return would be ordered if we don't amend it, I'm quite prepared to pass it in the form that it exists except that it would receive a nil return. And so I would offer the following amendment:

That the motion be amended by removing the words "Mr. Oliver Letwin" and substituting therefor the words:

N.M. Rothchild and Sons, Limited.

and further, by removing the words "Mr. Letwin's services" and substituting the words:

the services of N.M. Rothchild and Sons, Limited.

That, Mr. Speaker, will put the order in such a form as to allow them to get the information that they seek, Mr. Speaker.

So I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice:

That the motion be amended by removing the words "Mr. Oliver Letwin" and substituting therefor the words:

N.M. Rothchild and Sons, Limited.

and further, by removing the words "Mr. Letwin's services" and substituting the words:

the services of N.M. Rothchild and Sons, Limited.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to speak to the amendment. I would encourage the minister

to be as forthcoming on this particular motion — or on other matters, as he is on this particular motion. I would presume, Mr. Minister, Mr. Deputy Premier, that you won't be afraid to give us the information that is contained in the other motions for returns.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — I am not going to argue with the amendment. It seems like the amendment is in order and will give us the information that we're seeking, if it ever gets here. And that's the point, Mr. Speaker.

As we rise here on the first order for return of this session, we are faced with a rather unusual situation. I would only urge the minister not to have that happen again as what he has allowed to happen with all of the orders of return which were ordered by this Assembly in October of 1987.

Some over seven months ago this Assembly ordered, Mr. Speaker, returns, large in number, so that information could be provided to this Assembly. On this very day which is, I believe, the 41st day of this sitting of the legislature, over seven months since those returns were ordered, we are yet waiting for the House Leader opposite, or one of his colleagues in the cabinet, to lay on the Table those orders for return.

Now we've just had a debate on the secrecy of government and the refusal by this government to make information available. Members opposite chose to talk about the past and would not talk about that issue. That's their business; the public will judge them accordingly.

And I hope, Mr. Speaker, that we will not again see what these orders for return that we're considering today, the same thing as we're seeing with those were ordered in October, 1987. That is absolutely unacceptable. It is totally contrary to what the purposes of this legislature are, and one of the purposes is for the government to be accountable.

The government is not being accountable, has not been, and I would urge the ministers when they . . . or the House Leader opposite, when he gets up on some of these motions, to give us an assurance, or give us a date and when, one, the orders for return from last year will be tabled, because he did say three weeks ago and asked in this House that he would look into it. He has yet to respond. And secondly, I would hope that he would give us a specific time when we will have these orders, which are being ordered today, made available to the House so that the public cannot be denied the information which it has the right to know.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

### Return No. 17

**Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, the House Leader gives me no encouragement by saying this will be tougher, and I guess we'll find out how much tougher.

The subject of this motion is the free trade conference, which was sponsored by the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce in Saskatoon in March of this year, a

considerable portion of the costs of which were borne by the government, and the purpose of this motion is to ask that these costs be reported to this House.

The conference was a large conference attended by people from all over North America, I believe, and it is difficult to even contemplate how much the cost of that conference may be. And we're particularly interested because we don't understand the purpose of it. If the purpose of the conference had been to discuss the contents of the agreement and particularly to educate Saskatchewan people as to the contents of the agreement, then I think any expenditure would have been justified.

This government, as well as its counterpart in Ottawa, have made no bona fide effort at all to tell the Saskatchewan people or the Canadian people just exactly what is in that agreement and what its impact will be for this country this year, next year, in 20 years, and in a hundred years, and for ever. Rather, it's going around selling us . . . trying to sell us that agreement as though it were some kind of a magic medical remedy which, if we took, would cure us of all of our ills.

Well it's no such thing. It's a very complex agreement full of provisions that will impact on the futures of all of us and our children and our grandchildren and so on, for ever. And it's an agreement that ought to be fully discussed and disclosed and be fully understood by the Canadian people.

But this conference goes nowhere in that direction. This conference was a kind of a pep rally, when a bunch of people who were known to support the agreement got together and patted each other on the back, patted each other on the back and said, what a wonderful thing this is. Well I'm afraid that it wasn't convincing of anybody who wasn't in there at the time and who wasn't already committed to the agreement.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Regina Lakeview, the following:

That an order of the Assembly do issue for a Return No. 17 showing:

With respect to the free trade conference sponsored by the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce in March, 1988, the costs incurred by the Department of Trade and Investment.

Motion agreed to.

#### Return No. 18

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my intention to ask some questions about a former member of this Legislative Assembly and a former cabinet minister in the PC government, one Paul Schoenhals.

Mr. Schoenhals was defeated — and I might say soundly defeated — by my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Sutherland, in the last provincial election. The people of Saskatoon Sutherland obviously had no confidence in his abilities and therefore defeated him. Or, as you might say, he was involuntarily retired.

Yet we see Mr. Schoenhals shortly after the election being appointed as the chairman of the Saskatchewan potash corporation at, we understand at a very significant salary, a very healthy salary. For the first time in history we have a full-time chairman of the potash corporation in addition to having a full-time president of a potash corporation.

And the people of Saskatchewan might well ask, given the difficulties of the potash corporation in the last three years with lagging sales and the like, why, on top of a full-time salary . . . or on top of a salary for a full-time president, do we also need a salary for a full-time chairman? Why do we need this double expenditure to do something that no one really seems to be quite clear what it is that he's doing? It's all very vague.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, we feel the public has a right to know what it is that Mr. Schoenhals is being paid, what his remuneration is.

And therefore, I would move, seconded by my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Sutherland, to move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 18 showing:

With respect to Mr. Paul Schoenhals, former MLA; (a) whether Mr. Schoenhals is paid by the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan; (b) the total amount of his remuneration in 1987.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask all members to vote this down.

**An Hon. Member:** — Why?

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — And I'll explain why, since the member asked.

**An Hon. Member:** — Holy smokes!

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Holy smokes. And the reason, Mr. Speaker, is that it's the long-standing practice, I say long-standing . . . I remember hearing Mr. Elwood Cowley, the former minister responsible, and the now Leader of the Opposition, and others, and even us — on the question of management team remuneration the practice has been to give the aggregate sum of the management team. The practice has been to offer that when it's been asked in Crown corporations in that way, Mr. Speaker, and that's been the tradition.

(1615)

This is the same question that was asked last year. The same result was that it was voted on. Ten years ago, when we were sitting on the other side, that's the way these things were treated. And that's the way that we will treat them now, Mr. Speaker.

So I would ask all members to vote against this particular return, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Koenker:** — Mr. Speaker, the suggestion by the Deputy Premier is simply outrageous, and I am scandalized by it, that the public is not entitled to know

what the former MLA is earning by virtue of a political patronage appointment. I think that it's crystal clear to the people of Saskatchewan that that is a political appointment. I know for a fact in the constituency of Saskatoon Sutherland that people recognize it as a political appointment. And as such, I think there is absolutely no reason for them to be denied knowledge of what their former member of the legislature is now being paid by the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, and his remuneration for 1987.

I think this is symptomatic of a closed government that wants to make patronage appointments and secret deals, and I know for a fact that the people of Saskatoon Sutherland would have a particular interest in knowing what their former member of the legislature is now earning as chairperson of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

And so I speak very strongly against the suggestion of the Deputy Premier.

**Mr. Koskie:** — I want to join into this debate also. And I think it is the most ludicrous thing that I've seen before this Assembly. Here is a member, Paul Schoenhals, that was rejected by the voters of Saskatchewan. He had the opportunity to go into the private enterprise, which he supports. But what they have done . . . This is not management, Mr. Speaker; this is a specially created position to pork-barrel a position for the former cabinet minister defeated in the last election.

Here is a man that stood in this legislature when he was a cabinet minister and was appointed to head small business, who indicated and confessed to this House that he had absolutely no small-business experience whatsoever. And they have appointed him. He's not part of management. Paul Schoenhals is in a position that was particularly created to give him a pork-barrel position at the expense of the potash corporation, at the expense of the people of Saskatchewan.

And so I'm going to ask the Deputy Premier to reconsider it. In fact, I invite to ask the Deputy Premier a question, if he would entertain it. I'd ask you: would you entertain a question in respect to your amendment saying that this man is a part of the management team? Will you entertain a question?

**An Hon. Member:** — No.

**Mr. Koskie:** — See, it speaks for itself.

But let us put it very clearly, Mr. Speaker. In the Crown corporations, when it comes to the executive team, it is true that you get the global figure. But I'll tell you that in the review of the Crown corporations, when it came to what was paid to the chairman and board members, that information was detailed and particularized for each and every board member. And this member is not a part of management, and he's a part of . . . chairman of the board.

And I say to you, Mr. Deputy Premier, it's another cover-up. You're ashamed to disclose to the people of Saskatchewan the degree of pork-barrelling that's going on. Here is a man that is costing the people of this

province close to a quarter of a million dollars, in our estimates, and if it's not a quarter of a million dollars, we have a right to know. This is not management. This is a part of the board of directors. We should know the per diem. We should know the expenses. We should know every detail in respect to him.

I think it's ludicrous that the minister, the Deputy Premier, tries to cover up in respect of one of his colleagues who hasn't even got the qualifications to go into the private enterprise. What he is is a leech on the public corporations; that's what he is. And we can't even find out how much this leech is costing us — somewhere around a quarter of a million dollars. And a total cover-up again.

I ask all members to consider the implications of what you're doing. You're changing the rules of Crown corporations. Despite what the Deputy Premier says, this is not part of management, and in management we had the understanding for global. This is a position especially created for the leech who couldn't even find a job in the private enterprise.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Speaker:** — Is the Assembly ready for the question? Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? Carried.

**An Hon. Member:** — No.

**Mr. Speaker:** — No? Will all those in favour please say "aye".

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**Mr. Speaker:** — All those opposed, say "no".

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**Mr. Speaker:** — I believe the nays have it.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Speaker, could I ask for the interpretation on the ruling here, so it's clear here, so we can determine whether we want a standing vote, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. There was a voice vote, and on the basis of a voice vote it was defeated, but there can be a standing vote.

**An Hon. Member:** — We want a standing vote on this one.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Well you can. It's up to you. Okay, standing vote. Call in the members.

(1629)

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

## Yeas — 19

Prebble	Atkinson
Rolfes	Anguish
Shillington	Goulet
Tchorzewski	Pringle
Koskie	Calvert
Brockelbank	Trew
Mitchell	Smart
Simard	Van Mulligen
Kowalsky	Koenker
Solomon	

## Nays — 27

Duncan	Meiklejohn
McLeod	Martin
Andrew	Toth
Berntson	McLaren
Taylor	Hopfner
Smith	Petersen
Muirhead	Swenson
Maxwell	Martens
Schmidt	Baker
Hodgins	Gleim
Gerich	Gardner
Hepworth	Kopelchuk
Hardy	Britton
Klein	

## Return No. 19

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll be moving an order in a few minutes, but I just want to make a comment with respect to the subject at hand, which is Mr. Ralph Katzman. Mr. Katzman is a case of a voluntary retirement from the . . . by the government benches opposite. There is some question as to whether he was pushed out, but I'll be kind and charitable and say that he retired voluntarily.

Now Mr. Katzman is one who was a member of this Assembly for a good many years, has an outstanding, even if somewhat less than distinguished record of service to the people of Saskatchewan. Upon his retirement he indicated and let it be widely known that he was going to move on to the field of newspaper publishing and was going to publish a newspaper in Saskatoon.

However, we find that that particular arrangement has not come to fruition, at least as of yet that we're aware of. And it appears, it appears, Mr. Speaker, that as opposed to going into the newspaper publishing business, this retired former member has now found his way into the services of the government.

Now I think the people of Saskatchewan are concerned to know that if he could not find the kind of remuneration that I think they would want to bestow on a former member with long-standing service through newspaper publishing, is he being adequately paid in the employ of the Government of Saskatchewan? And they will want to know that. They will want to make sure of that — a retired former member is being well paid.

And therefore I would move . . . and I don't think that in

this particular case that Mr. Katzman is part of any management team in the Department of Highways, even if he might be part of a management team in the private sector in newspaper publishing. But I don't think that he's part of any management team.

So therefore I would move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Centre, an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 19 showing:

With respect to Mr. Ralph Katzman, former MLA: (a) whether Mr. Katzman is employed by the Department of Highways; (b) his title; (c) his salary.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to resist the temptation to get into the long list of pork-barrel appointments made by the members opposite when they were sitting in this office, except to . . . the first three names on my list are members of the Koskie family. Then there's a couple of other names like Don Cody and Dave Miner and John Burton and Louise Simard . . . pardon me, Mr. Speaker, I can't use the person's name, and I withdraw that name and I apologize. I sincerely apologize, Mr. Speaker. Then there was a Don Faris and there was a Kramer and the list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I know full well that some of these people that I would call patronage appointments, pork-barrellers of the highest order, simply . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Parasites.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Parasites, leeches . . . and I'm taking coaching from members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

**An Hon. Member:** — The member from Quill Lakes said that. He said that about his own relatives.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Exactly. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I know full well that some of these people were very competent and made a contribution and were there because they ought to have been there.

And, Mr. Speaker, in the interests of providing information, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to amend this one, but it's a very, very small amendment and it's to make it consistent with a couple of others that are coming and . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Well let us be the choice of that.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — And you'll decide, right? Maybe, maybe, and you'll get to vote whichever way you want to vote, but be sure that you vote the right way, because not every time will the Speaker be generous enough to give you a second crack at it, my friend.

So the amendment that I make, Mr. Speaker, will have the effect of changing (c) his salary to (c) his salary range. And the reason for that is people who are recruited into government are recruited into a particular range, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure that they would take the licence, in any event, and allege that the guy is at the highest level in

any event. So I don't know why they would be so critical of this; it's just a matter of consistency, Mr. Speaker. So I therefore move, seconded by the Minister of Justice:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after "(c)" and substituting therefor the words:

the salary range for such position.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Speaker, I was anticipating that we wouldn't have to go through the rest of these motions at any great length, but I'm listening to what the hon., the House Leader is saying. And really I think this is an atrocious example of hiding information again.

Now listen, Mr. Speaker: here we have a case of an ex-member of the legislature, ex-legislative secretary, who resigned and did not run in the last election, but because he was a Conservative member of the legislature, is given some cushy job in the public service while a lot of other people who are applying are being ignored and forgotten. Now that's one point, Mr. Speaker. I won't dwell on that.

What I want to dwell on is the amendment that the member opposite has just introduced. Now here is why he has introduced it. There are salary ranges in governments, as there are in any other employment places, even in the private sector. But people usually start at the bottom of the salary range and work themselves up.

Now I wonder, why would this Mr. Katzman, the former member for Rosthern, not be prepared to admit that he has maybe been hired at the maximum of the salary range, while this government is saying to other public servants and teachers and others, you will start at the bottom, and he's saying to many other people, you're going to have zero increases.

This is a person who comes in to the regular public service and is not required to start at the same point in the salary range as any other individual would have to be to the point, to the extent that the hon. — the House Leader has to get up and amend this straightforward motion. To refuse to give information on what they're paying Mr. Katzman and simply wanting to give the salary range, there can only be one reason, and that is that he is not legitimately starting at the point in the range where everybody else would and that he is getting a special privilege because he was a former member of the Conservative caucus.

I find that, Mr. Speaker, objectionable. I think that this amendment is a bad amendment and only reinforces the debate that's taken place in this House all afternoon, and that is a debate about this government refusing to provide at every turn, no matter how small or big it is, because they hold this legislature in contempt and they hold the public of Saskatchewan in contempt, and think that this legislature exists for the privileges of the cabinet ministers and not for the public of Saskatchewan. I say it's the other way; this is the legislature of the people of Saskatchewan, and they have a right to know.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

## Return No. 20

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — I'll be moving an order shortly, but I just want to make a few comments with respect to the next former cabinet minister. And moving on down the pork-barrel, we come to Mr. Jack Sandberg, who's a former MLA and former cabinet minister in the PC government.

We were given to understand that Mr. Sandberg, even though he was involuntarily retired from the public service of Saskatchewan, has been rehired by the PC government in a capacity with the Saskatchewan Power Corporation.

So we are curious to know what his title and salary might be. We know that the people of Saskatoon Centre spoke clearly and loudly in the last election that they did not want to retain Mr. Sandberg's services, obviously thought him overpaid as a cabinet minister, and therefore needed to be replaced by a more progressive member in terms of the sitting member from Saskatoon Centre.

So I think the public of Saskatchewan have a right to know and are interested to know just what Mr. Sandberg's position is. We understand it's in public relations, and they'll want that confirmed because his public relations prior to 1986 weren't that great, and as a consequence lost the election.

People of Saskatchewan also want to know just what he's being paid. Given the very high power rates in this province, to what extent can these be attributed to not only George Hill, but also to Jack Sandberg, another former PC cabinet minister being appointed to a well-paid position in the government service . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . So therefore I'll move in a minute, as soon as the member for Weyburn quits chirping, as is his custom to do on every occasion, I will move, as soon as he quits chirping, Mr. Speaker.

I will move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Centre, that an order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 20 showing:

With respect to Mr. Jack Sandberg, former MLA: (a) whether Mr. Sandberg is employed by the Saskatchewan Power Corporations; (b) his title; (c) his salary.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, for the same reasons as the past order, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after "(c)" and substituting therefor the words:

the salary range for such a position.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

(1645)

### Return No. 21

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Moving on down the trough, Mr. Speaker, we come to the case of Louis Domotor, and I'll be moving an order shortly. But Mr. Domotor is a former member of the Legislative Assembly, I understand, for Humboldt. He was replaced in the last election by another member. Obviously the public had no confidence in Mr. Domotor, and yet now we see Mr. Domotor — or we suspect that Mr. Domotor is being employed by the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

Now we know from past campaign literature and Mr. Domotor's sterling record just what his professional competence areas are, so we're curious to know what his title is in the property management corporation. I think the people of Saskatchewan want to know that Mr. Domotor is appropriately placed in his position in that great corporation, and whether or not he's on the management team, and whether we'll get any information at all.

But they want to know just what his job description is, what his title is, and what he's being paid. I think the public again has a right to know and is curious to know what a former cabinet minister, who was defeated in the last election, just what particular favours the present government is choosing to bestow on him, and I think it's something the public wants to know.

So therefore I will be moving, seconded by the member for Regina North, an Order of the Assembly do issue for a Return (No. 21) showing:

With respect to Mr. Louis Domotor, former MLA: (a) whether Mr. Domotor is employed by the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation; (b) his title; (c) his salary.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to take the criticism from most anybody in this House, but from that particular individual who I understand has throughout his life been a professional, political hack and has never had a real job — he couldn't get a real job in Manitoba, so he came to Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and got a job with Sask Housing at a time when Sask Housing was doing very little, and he made sure that it did less, Mr. Speaker. So I'm prepared to take the criticism from most anybody, but not . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order, please. There are simultaneous debates taking place, I'm afraid. I recognize the Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — It's by far the best debate, Mr. Speaker, and the best side of the debate at least. And I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice:

That the motion be amended by deleting all words after (c) and substituting therefor the words "salary

range for such a position."

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to spend a very brief time talking about this particular motion for return. We've seen this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, a demonstration of closed secretive government, something that this government was very much opposed to at one time, but is very much in favour of now.

Now the Deputy Premier has said that he's not prepared to take criticism from the member for Regina Wascana which, by its alternative, may suggest that he's prepared to take some criticism from me for this particular amendment that he's offered to the House.

The closed, secretive government that we see demonstrated here this afternoon covers a wide variety of positions in this government, positions within the public service, within Crown corporations, and within the property management corporation, which is a corporation that we know very little about because this has been the most secretive — this is the most secretive of government Crown corporations that we are familiar with at this time.

I think the motion seeks to find more information about this particular Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation to which Mr. Louis Domotor has been appointed. It's necessary that we clarify in our minds whether the person is qualified for this position and where in the salary range Mr. Domotor started his position with the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

By the amendment the Deputy Premier offers here, he will prevent us from obtaining that kind of information. Therefore I am opposed to the amendment.

I think the government should come clean with the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation because they've stated — and they've hung their flag on this, Mr. Speaker — they said that this corporation will be efficient, well run and well managed and will be the flagship, the flagship, of the Crown corporations in that it will establish once and for all an efficient operation in the administration of the government assets and buildings.

This motion seeks to get some information with regard to that corporation, and the Deputy Premier is denying that information by the amendment which he's offered to this motion, and I would have to oppose the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

### Return No. 22

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Moving right along to one Mr. Keith Parker, and I would advise you that it will be my intention to move a motion for an order of the Assembly.

Now Mr. Parker, even if in the last instance with respect to Mr. Domotor we may have touched a nerve with the Deputy Premier and leads him to make all kinds of wild

allegations about my employment record, I would certainly counsel the Deputy Premier to check his facts, and he would know that my very first employment was with the Manitoba government; I applied for a job with the public service commission and was hired by them. Now you might say that's political patronage. I don't know how he draws that interpretation because it was a Conservative government at the time, so I don't know how you draw that interpretation.

But in any event, with respect to Mr. Keith Parker, I don't think that the same nerve will be struck. Mr. Parker never made it to the cabinet, even though he's a former member of the Legislative Assembly, a former PC MLA. No, he didn't make it to the cabinet. Given the fact that historically Moose Jaw always has a member in the cabinet, that one of the two members from Moose Jaw didn't make it, gives one . . . leaves a pause for reflection on the competencies of the former members for Moose Jaw. Now it's noted that both the former members from Moose Jaw were defeated, so obviously the people from Moose Jaw shared those feelings about the competency of those former members.

Yet we see now that Mr. Parker, this former PC MLA, has been appointed to a position with the Saskatchewan Liquor Board. So I think that it's only right that the people of Moose Jaw and Saskatchewan know just what particular job Mr. Parker has been appointed to and what salary he is being paid, because after all they weren't impressed with his competencies and decided to retire him. Yet we see this government rehiring him and appointing him to some position. And the minister for privatization said he was a good man and it was a good thing to do. Well, he's working for that member. But I think all the people of Saskatchewan want to know just what his job is and what his salary is.

So therefore I would move, seconded by the member for Prince Albert, that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 22 showing:

With respect to Mr. Keith Parker, former MLA: (a) whether Mr. Parker is employed by the Saskatchewan Liquor Board; (b) his title; (c) his salary.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after (c) and substituting therefor the words:

the salary range for such a position.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

### Return No. 1

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be moving this motion in a few minutes. First I want to state the reasons that we are after this information has everything to

do with public accountability, open government, the things that we have seen demonstrated time after time today, where members of the government continually stonewall, continue to not be forthcoming with information that the taxpayers, the people of Saskatchewan, have every right to access to.

It's interesting that their rhetoric prior to their being elected is completely different than their actions now that they form the government.

So without further remarks, I move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Centre:

That we issue for return the total amount paid by each government department, agency, and Crown corporation for the period September 8, 1987 to the date this return was ordered, to commercial airlines and travel agencies for air fares, including in each instance: (1) the names and position of those for whom the fares were authorized; (2) the cost, purpose, and destination points for each trip; and (3) the air carrier on which each trip was taken.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, the information in the form requested was ordered in the last session and, Mr. Speaker, it resulted in a great waste of man-hours in the civil service in gathering what is ultimately useless information. In some cases it involved overtime, pulling of invoices from storage, or retrieving microfilm records. Some of the information has still to be retrieved, Mr. Speaker, and it is the reason that returns ordered last September have not yet been completed.

The amendment that I'm going to make, Mr. Speaker, is to avoid the mistake, which I take the blame for, of last session, Mr. Speaker.

Back in 1980, Mr. Speaker, the then deputy premier, now Leader of the Opposition, said a similar thing, Mr. Speaker. He said:

I don't know when our officials can be expected to do the job. I don't know how long it will take. I'll be very interested in knowing how many man-hours, or man-years, depending on the measurement, will be used in this area that it will take to complete this kind of question.

(1700)

I'm not critical of members opposite for the question; I was the guy that designed it last year. All I'm saying is that, Mr. Speaker, in the present form we're going to get into the same mess that we were into last year.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after the words "air fares."

I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Open government, this is not all about. What you are doing is totally



gutting this order for return. You are being very, very tight-lipped with the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, the people of Saskatchewan that pay your salary and my salary and a good number of other salaries. These people have every right to understand how it is the government is spending their hard-earned, hard-paid tax dollars on their behalf.

Democracy is not necessarily the cheapest form of government, but democracy demands that governments be accountable to the taxpayers and to the people. I urge back-benchers and members of the government to vote against this amendment, and, after the amendment is defeated, to vote for the motion as a method of keeping an open and an accountable democratic structure here in Saskatchewan.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.