

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — I hereby report to the Assembly that I have examined the following petition under rule 11(7). I lay it on the Table for reading and receiving:

Of certain residents of the province of Saskatchewan praying that the Legislative Assembly may be pleased to urge the Government of Saskatchewan to stop eroding post-secondary education in Saskatchewan.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, a group of 24 grade 6 students from the town of Gull Lake, Mr. Speaker. They are seated in your gallery.

They have travelled about three hours to be with us this morning and have had a tour of the Assembly. They are accompanied by their teachers Cam Lock, bus driver Ruth Kirk, and a number of chaperons.

I hope the grade 6 students enjoy question period and their stay in the legislature. I would ask all members to welcome them and wish them a safe journey home.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you, and to all members of the Legislative Assembly, a couple of guests this morning in your gallery.

I am pleased to introduce to you this morning Mr. Roy Jamieson, newly appointed executive director of Transport 2000 Canada. Mr. Jamieson is in Regina to address delegates of the annual meeting of Transport 2000 tomorrow, which I will have the pleasure of meeting him at that time and joining him with that organization. Accompanying Mr. Jamieson is Mr. Keith Knox, president of Transport 2000, Saskatchewan branch of the national organization.

I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming these two gentlemen to the legislature this morning.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the Minister of Highways in welcoming these two guests. I'd like to point out that one of these guests shares a rather famous home town, that of Bridgewater, Nova Scotia. And of course he shares that home town with the Hon. Allan Blakeney, ex-of the Legislative Assembly, I too will be joining the Minister of Highways at their Transport 2000 meeting tomorrow, and I very much look forward to that. So welcome to the two guests.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome 30 grade 4 students from Montmartre that are here with us this morning. They're accompanied by their teachers Geraldine Kuzmich and Sandi Brown, and the chaperons Carole Englot, Doug and Pauline Baumgartner, Dennis Hofer, Pat Chittenden, and Barry Lytle.

I hope you enjoy the proceedings in the House, and I look forward to meeting you afterwards for treats and pictures and a discussion of what has taken place here. Welcome to Regina. I'd like everybody to join with me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with a great deal of pleasure this morning that I'd like to introduce to you, and to the other members of the Assembly, 45 students from Lindale Elementary School in Moose Jaw.

A word of explanation, Mr. Speaker. I don't represent any of the city of Moose Jaw; however, these are all students from the rural unit around and they're bused into the city.

They have with them this morning their teachers Erna Adamache and Adele Kuhling, chaperons Mrs. Mews, Mrs. Anthony, Mrs. Kock, Mrs. Stirton, Mrs. McKenzie, and Mrs. Machmer, and their bus driver, Mrs. McLaren.

It is my old Alma Mater, Mr. Speaker. Some 26 years ago when the door opened, I was one of the first in, and I've been back many times since, and shortly will have some family of my own attending that particular institution. So it's always nice when the kids from Lindale come down, and I'll be happy to meet with them and have drinks and pictures afterwards. I'd like all members of the Assembly to join me in giving them a warm welcome.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member from Thunder Creek has pointed out, the students from Lindale are all coming from within his riding. However, as the school is located within my riding, I want to join with him and other members of the Assembly in extending a special welcome to the students and the chaperons from Lindale, and I wish them a very interesting day here at the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Disbursements to Property Management Corporation

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address a question to the Minister of Finance. Mr. Minister, as you are aware, the auditors report attached to the 1986-87 *Public Accounts* questions your classification of disbursements to the Property Management Corporation as loans when they should have been properly classified as expenditures. In effect, the auditor indicates that that means that there should have been added to your massive

deficit of \$1.2 billion yet another \$182 million. And to put it another way, your total deficit during that election year was 1.4 billion rather than 1.2 billion — an overrun of \$1 billion in the election year.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, have you adjusted your consolidated deficit upwards to reflect this deception?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well, having slaved over *Public Accounts* to get them before this Assembly, and having to wait now eight days before we finally get a question on *Public Accounts* and to find out, Mr. Speaker, that this is exactly the debate that we have had since 1986 when this government established the Saskatchewan Property Management Crown, is an absolute shock to me, Mr. Speaker, because this was supposed to be the big year on all the abuses and the corruption that they were alleging on *Public Accounts* and to find . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, order. Order. We're having a little problem hearing the minister.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — . . . to find out that after all of this perusal and eight days later that they've had nothing to back up the allegations they've made for the last four months, I think indicates the management of this government, Mr. Speaker.

This is exactly the same debate that we've had since SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) was set up. We set up and made it abundantly clear at the time that Sask Property Management was to deal and handle many of the assets of the province of Saskatchewan. It is now funding many of the new capital construction. And if we had have done it the old way certainly we would have had different results, but, Mr. Speaker, several other provinces, including the province of Manitoba, have used this type of vehicle to manage government capital assets. The House has ample opportunity, has now done for two years, to debate in estimates the Saskatchewan Property Management Crown if they disagree with the concept. This is the same argument not we've had for the last two years.

Mr. Koskie: — A supplement, Mr. Speaker. I think, Mr. Minister, if it comes to the credibility between you and the auditor, the people of Saskatchewan will choose the auditor.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — I just want to indicate to you, Mr. Minister, are you aware the this latest deception by you has added to the people of Saskatchewan, to every man, woman and child, another \$182 to the provincial debt, and they didn't even know about it.

I want to ask you then as a supplement: when are you going to put an end to your cavalier attitude towards the fiscal management of this province? When can the people of Saskatchewan expect you to give some fiscal management to this province, and also some honesty and decency?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, last night I met with one of the rating agencies, and the message that they made clear is that they believe that the efforts of the government to reduce the deficit, control expenditures and get the books of the province in good order is outstanding, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, others across Canada, including the investment houses across Canada . . . Mr. Speaker, right now Saskatchewan's ability to borrow is virtually on par with that of the national government, Mr. Speaker. That of itself, that of itself, Mr. Speaker, proves the management of this government.

So you disagree with the property management Crown. Mr. Speaker, fundamentally, all that the property management Crown does is amortize the cost off a building over the length of the use of the building, Mr. Speaker. In the past it was all paid for in one lump payment when a building was built, even though the building may be used . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order, order.

Government Advertising 1986-87

Mr. Van Mulligen: — My question, Mr. Speaker, is also to the Minister of Finance. Mr. Minister, the Public Accounts for 1986-87 show that the line departments, the regular government departments, spent some \$14 million on advertising that year. Now you know that that particular figure does not include any advertising by Crown corporations, including the very massive advertising program your government had for the home program in the pre-election period in 1986.

Could you give this House an estimate of how much, including all Crowns, was spent on advertising by your government during the fiscal year 1986-87?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that he can ask the questions of the Crown corporations, but I have some interesting statistics and I ask the press to listen to the argument. If their argument is that we spent too much money, if their argument is that we spent too much money at, I believe, roughly \$13 million, I have done a comparison, Mr. Speaker, which I'm prepared to give to the press, which shows that the advertising rates charged by weekly newspapers, radio and television stations, daily newspapers, what the rates were in 1982 compared to what the rates were in 1986, Mr. Speaker. Okay?

Part of the higher cost is the rates charged by the outlets. It turns out on a comparison, Mr. Speaker, of the rates charged legitimately by the outlets, we in fact spent less in 1986 in an election year than the NDP did in 1982, Mr. Speaker. And those facts, Mr. Speaker, I am sure are a real shock to the opposition, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Finance who treats financial reporting like a

game of Clue — a clue here and a clue there.

Mr. Minister, you know and I know and everyone knows that your government has only given out bits of information in the Crown Corporations Committee about government advertising. The full and accurate picture of government advertising is probably closer to \$25 million as opposed to \$14 million.

Now the public expects complete and full disclosure of how you spent their tax dollars. And they're tired, I might say, of your very silly games. For once will you listen to the people of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order! Order. I'm afraid I'll have to ask you to repeat that question because your mike wasn't on. But I was getting up because it sounded like you were making more of a speech than getting to the question. Order. Order. Order. Order. And we have had some of that this morning. I think we'll all admit that maybe we should get back to question and answers as it is intended.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well I'm sorry if I seem to be making a speech, Mr. Speaker. I wouldn't be the first one in question period that's done that.

Anyway, my question is: for once will you be open and honest with the people of Saskatchewan, give them a full and complete accounting of what your government spent on advertising dollars, and tell them what you spent in 1986-87? Is it closer to the \$25 million figure as opposed to the \$14 million figure?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I want the public to know the reason that the NDP did not ask questions for nearly eight days on *Public Accounts* is because that they have been deliberately misleading the people of the province as to advertising, and got caught short, Mr. Speaker.

And when they get the exact information in *Public Accounts*, which it took them eight days in total, Mr. Speaker, and screw up their courage to ask a question, they find out that the amount spent on advertising in an election year, Mr. Speaker — in and election year — I less than they spent in an election year in 1982; but secondly, far less than they have been putting out in their advertising, far less than they used in the by-election, Mr. Speaker, and far less than they have been telling their party members in *The Commonwealth*, Mr. Speaker. They got caught short, Mr. Speaker. That is why it took them eight days to screw up their courage and ask a question about . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order.

Cost of Air Travel

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance and it deals with the Public Accounts. Mr. Minister, we see from the Public Accounts that the ministers of your government spent almost \$300,000 — \$300,000 flying around in the last fiscal year. That's bad enough, Mr. Minister, as a waste of

taxpayers' dollars. What's worse is that you spent \$1.2 million — 1 million, 200 thousand dollars over and above that, on Air Canada tickets. Mr. Minister, the rest of Canada has to wait to purchase shares in Air Canada, but it seems you've got the jump on them. What's happened, what's happened, Mr. Minister, to restraint, to belt tightening, to living within your means — or doesn't that apply to your government?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I don't believe, Mr. Speaker, for a minute, that the people of this province expect their government to simply sit in the city of Regina, and that's the argument being made.

Yes, our Premier has gone around trying to promote the province of Saskatchewan to the rest of the world, and we believe that that's what must be done for the economic development of this province, and that should be done, Mr. Speaker. And ministers do travel outside the province to deal and try to promote this province or promote the interests of this province, be it Ottawa, at meetings in Ottawa or Toronto and Vancouver, or wherever, Mr. Speaker. And I say that people believe that governments must do that.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, as well, that when we compare the travel of those front-benchers now in opposition whose idea of economic development was to have the then-premier of the province go to Moscow to promote economic development — that was his trip to Russia, his trip to China, and his trip to Cuba, Mr. Speaker — that's where they travelled. We're trying to get jobs and economic opportunity, and we'll continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: I'd like to just remind the hon. minister that he, too, is tending to make a speech. And I think we should all try to adhere to the principles of question period.

Mr. Solomon: — New question, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. Mr. Minister, if you consider that a trip to New Zealand, by yourself, to study the Maoris has benefitted Saskatchewan, we'd sure like to know what the benefits are.

Mr. Minister, \$1.2 million works out to \$4,800 you spent on Air Canada tickets every working day in the last fiscal year. That leaves very few places in this world unvisited, Mr. Minister. For \$4,800 you could be staffing 12 new hospital beds each day around the clock. Mr. Minister, when the waiting lists for hospitals reaches 10,000 and more, your government is spending that kind of money on travelling. Where are your priorities? How do you justify these kinds of travelling costs?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, they resurrect a trip back in 1983 which I think further proves how weak they have in criticizing the *Public Accounts* that they have now waited for eight days to ask questions.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order, order. I think we're becoming somewhat perhaps enthusiastic this morning and perhaps we should allow the minister to give his answers without too much interruption.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. I just repeat that request. You have asked the question; now allow the minister to give the answer.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — *Public Accounts* from 1983 wasn't the question, but that's how far back I guess we have to go because there's nothing in this year's *Public Accounts*, Mr. Speaker. So they're going back now to 1983.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, our ministers have been to Geneva. For the first time provinces are involved in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and that happens to be in Geneva.

Mr. Speaker, SaskTel has just signed a contract — \$10 million for a new project in Tanzania. We are signing projects in China. We are signing projects around the world, Mr. Speaker, because of the initiative of this government to take the opportunities for Saskatchewan people beyond the borders of this province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We can't draw barriers up and draw the great wall of Saskatchewan around this province anywhere.

Mr. Speaker, the world is changing, and Saskatchewan must be part of that, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan must sell its products around the world. And, Mr. Speaker, people must talk. Saskatchewan people must talk to Marubeni-Hitachi about opening a new manufacturing facility here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And Hoechst chemicals from Germany . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Lay-off Notices for PCS Workers

Mr. Mitchell: — My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the minister responsible for the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, and it concerns the lay-offs at the Cory mine.

First of all, Mr. Minister, I join the workers at the mine in demanding the resignation of Paul Schoenhals and Chuck Childers for their gross mismanagement of that corporation which had led to this lay-off decision.

Mr. Minister, when your government introduced The Potash Resources Act, you told us time and again that the purpose of the Act was to protect jobs by spreading the risk throughout the industry. Why then hasn't this Act been proclaimed so that it would have offered the Cory workers some measure of protection? And when do you intend to proclaim it, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well certainly the government will be proclaiming the legislation at the appropriate time.

I do remind the hon. member that one of the effects of the legislation and the legislative initiatives and the initiatives of this government is that we have been successful in having the price of potash up nearly 100 per cent over what it was in April of 1987 in the last year. Prices are up, and up substantially.

With regard to the spreading of the risk, I can tell the hon. member that we are advised that other mines will be having their inventory shut-down as the potash corporation has done.

I did make it clear to a question from the Leader of the Opposition the other day, and I'm surprised that the NDP, particularly the member from Quill Lakes, is opposed to this. What we tried to do in this case with the indefinite lay-off is that in order to bring inventories in balance with sales we could have shut all mines so that they were operating at about nine months rather than 11. We chose to keep the other mines operating for the normal 11 months of the year, and it certainly impacted on one mine. I say that.

But it is to the benefit of the other mines that they will be operating for 11 months of the year rather than nine months . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Quill Lakes, Mr. Speaker — and I wish he would put it into the record, formally into the record, his opposition to this policy of the potash corporation which is a benefit to his riding, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I believe the . . . Order, order. Order. Order. Order. I think that hon. members . . . I know it's Friday morning and sometimes things happen on Friday morning, but I'd just like to ask hon. members to try to adhere to the principles of question period, and I now recognize, I believe, the member for Fairview, if he has another question.

Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A new question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, you know perfectly well that the price increases in potash had nothing whatever to do with your legislation last fall — nothing at all. Nothing at all.

Secondly, from your own answer and your own admission, what you've done has been drastically unfair to the people working at the Cory potash mine.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — The lay-offs coming in the other mines will be lay-offs for short . . . relatively short periods of time and won't even resemble the kinds of lay-offs that you've accomplished at Cory.

Now this just shows, Minister, that you were never interested in protecting the jobs of potash miners when you introduced that legislation. The only reason you introduced it was so that you could create the impression of doing something.

Now yesterday the Saskatoon city council members expressed their concern about the effects of this lay-offs, and they asked that your government introduces some mitigating measures.

Mr. Minister, do you intend to introduce such mitigating measures, and what are they?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The day that Bev Dyck represents all Saskatoon city councillors, I think, is a surprising day for most Saskatoon city councillors — Bev Dyck, former NDP member, part of the potash nationalization group of the members opposite.

I have said now on three occasions, Mr. Speaker, that yes, in order to bring inventories in balance with the sales, we could have shut all of the potash mines under PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan) down for three months. We have had requests from Lanigan and towns that are affected, and they're concerned about their long-term stability and what could the government do about it. We've had those requests.

Yes, it impacts on Cory. But, Mr. Speaker, one of the objectives was to try and give the assurance in those other areas that they would be working for what is normally the 11 months of the year. We have communicated that with the employees.

Yes, it impacts on Cory, but there are some choices that we had to make, and we did make them so that there would be longer work at the other mines, Mr. Speaker. I know that's difficult; it's not an easy decision, but I believe, Mr. Speaker, in the interest of the people of the province and to those communities, it's a most fair decision.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — I want to address the minister, take up his challenge, and address the question to him in respect to this unfair closure of the Cory potash mine.

Mr. Minister, the question here is the lives and the welfare of 200 families. That's the issue. The fairness of your action is the issue, Mr. Minister. I ask you, Mr. Minister: when are you going to remove your ideological straight-jacket and start respecting the worker and their families at the Cory mine?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question from a challenge from the minister responsible of the potash corporation can be interpreted in no way other than he objects to the new policy that we have announced. And yes, it impacts on Cory, but, Mr. Speaker, the impact is beneficial to the communities where the other mines are located. Yes, we could have brought them all down, said they're all closed three months of the year, Mr. Speaker, or we could keep the other mines open when we try and balance the inventories with sales, Mr. Speaker.

I am most pleased, Mr. Speaker, to take the member from Quill Lakes' stated opposition to this policy, which will mean shut-downs for a long period of time in his community of Lanigan, and, Mr. Speaker, I am shocked that he would take that position. I have made it abundantly clear; yes, it was a difficult decision, Mr. Speaker, but I believe, in the interest of most of the potash workers in this province, it's a fair one, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Koskie: — Supplement, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, are you aware that your government destroyed the careers of over 400 health workers of this province, that you destroyed over hundreds of highway workers when you laid them off?

I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, today: will you reverse this here cruel decision; will you in fact give some decency and some respect for the Cory workers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — If there was ever a decision that cost Saskatchewan potash workers jobs, it was the nationalization of the industry which set up two new mines in New Brunswick, Canada, Mr. Speaker, two new mines with Saskatchewan taxpayers' money to compete with Saskatchewan taxpayers' jobs — Saskatchewan mining jobs, Saskatchewan potash jobs, Mr. Speaker, because of the political ideology of the New Democratic Party, Mr. Speaker, of which he was a member.

You put them out of work, you created surpluses, you created over-supply and over-capacity which threatened the whole industry, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are taking the decisions to bring stability to the industry, stability to jobs in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Welfare Reform Projects

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce today two further welfare reform projects. First of all, there is community works projects have been announced, totalling \$816,759 in 49 Saskatchewan communities.

These communities will hire 179 welfare recipients to do community improvements on a total of 57 projects. The community projects will redirect welfare expenditures to create jobs and provide on-the-job training. All clients will earn more while working than they would have received on welfare.

The second project extends welfare cheque pic' up for single employables to Saskatchewan's four largest cities. The plan requires all unemployed single employables under the age of 50 to pick up their welfare cheques in Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw, and Prince Albert, at our Social Services offices.

In the month of May, 349 cases, or 18.3 per cent of clients

did not pick up their cheques. Where the cheque is not picked up, it is cancelled, and a follow-up done to attempt to locate the client.

The city breakdown of unpicked-up cheques is as follows: Regina, 128 — 16.3 per cent of cheques not picked up; Saskatoon, 189 — 19.8 per cent of cheques not picked up; Moose Jaw, 16 — 15.2 per cent of cheques not picked up; Prince Albert, 16 — 24.2 per cent of cheques not picked up.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, that this is the first month for welfare cheque pick-up in Saskatoon, which might explain the higher rate for that city, and that in the first month we usually have a higher rate of failure to pick up. As yet we do not have a reason for the 24.2 per cent default rate in Prince Albert, where most single employables are already working on work training projects such as Par Industries.

Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged with the success of welfare reform, which has reduced the number of people on welfare by 5 per cent in the last year. These reforms have permitted record high payments for families and disabled people, and at the same time have saved the taxpayers \$13 million in the last tax year.

I'm pleased to give you this report, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is true to the pattern that we've seen, unfortunately, in this Legislative Assembly that the minister comes to this Assembly today to express, unfortunately in a tone almost of glee, that the attack on the poor of the province of Saskatchewan continues by the Government of Saskatchewan and Department of Social Services.

I don't know when it will be, Mr. Speaker, that this government will realize that people, the poorest of the poor . . . There are approximately double — twice as many people receiving a living and families receiving social assistance in Saskatchewan today as there were when the PC government inherited the responsibility of governing this province. And ever since that time, under the guise of welfare reform, we've seen attack after attack.

I don't know when the government of the day will realize that the poorest of the poor in our province would prefer to be working for wages, not working for welfare, and not some half-baked scheme of people working for two weeks and then two weeks off, and doing that at minimum wage. It makes far greater sense to all the people of the province — and particularly those who are directly affected, those who are without work — to be working for wages, not working for welfare.

It's a sad statement, Mr. Speaker, that in Saskatchewan today we are condemned in the nation by having the second highest rate of poverty and that there are kids going hungry to our schools throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

I guess one of the more offensive comments that the minister makes today is to speak about the directive for

welfare recipients to be required to come in and pick up their cheques on a regular basis, which is part of a continuing process of demeaning those who more than anything else, Mr. Speaker, would like to stand with pride and dignity, to stand with self-respect and the self-respect that comes with being self-supporting and self-sufficient.

Yet what we have is the minister saying today that we're going to single out those people in yet another way, and exacerbate the indignity, the indignity of being required to depend on social assistance in the province of Saskatchewan because this government has failed to stimulate the economy and to provide the environment where people in Saskatchewan can be working for wages instead of working for welfare.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, that it is a shame that we have the Minister of Social Services standing in this Assembly today and stating as progress, that these are the kinds of initiatives that he sees as being appropriate to deal with a very, very serious problem in the province of Saskatchewan — a problem, as I said before, that has doubled in the term of this government's office.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, could I ask leave of the Assembly to introduce some guests who have just arrived in the galleries.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and to members of the House 16 students from the Princess Alexandra Community School in Saskatoon. The school is in the constituency represented by our leader, the member from Riversdale, who unfortunately cannot be here today.

These 16 students are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and they're accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Donna Hrytzak, and by chaperons, Becky Hanson and Judy Thiesson. I'll be meeting them after this introduction to have some pictures taken, and out on the lawn to have some drinks and to answer their questions.

But I would like members of the Assembly to welcome this group of students to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 38 — An Act to amend The Residential Tenancies Act

Hon. Mr. Berntson: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. member, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Residential Tenancies Act.

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

Bill No. 39 — An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — On behalf of the hon. member, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 19 — An Act to amend The Statute Law

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

That the order for second reading of Bill No. 19, An Act to amend The Statute Law, be discharged and the Bill referred to the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills.

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

Bill No. 24 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Agricultural Returns Stabilization Act

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to propose second reading of Bill No. 24, an Act respecting The Saskatchewan Agricultural Returns Stabilization Act.

As a result of this amendment, the limit to loans and advances to stabilization under The Saskatchewan Agricultural Returns Stabilization Act, as specified under section 11, will be raised from \$100 million to \$200 million.

Mr. Speaker, to help members understand the purpose of this amendment I would like briefly to provide some background on the actual legislation being amended.

The Saskatchewan Agricultural Returns Stabilization Act is the enabling legislation for stabilization plans in the province of Saskatchewan. These plans include the cow-calf-to-finish market insurance plan, the feeder-to-finish market insurance plan, the Saskatchewan hog assured returns program, and the national tripartite stabilization for hogs and lambs.

Under the provincially operated plans, loans are made under this legislation when pay-outs exceed levies. Section 11 of the Act provides that these loans cannot exceed \$100 million. Current loans to provincial market insurance plans under the Act are at \$89.7 million, Mr. Speaker. If further loans are required, the \$100 million limit could soon be reached. While the requirements for loans may not exceed \$100 million, the volatility of livestock prices could change loan requirements in the future. Therefore, the plans would cease to operate as

currently structured when this limit is met.

(1045)

Mr. Speaker, this would mean that not only all stabilization plans now in existence would cease to operate, but that no new stabilization plans could be introduced. Our intent, therefore, is to remove any possibility of such an occurrence, and I believe the farmers of Saskatchewan will welcome this change which ensures that all stabilization plans will continue with the provision of the new \$200 million limit.

Mr. Speaker, with new challenges and ever changing conditions in the agricultural industry, section 11, The Saskatchewan Agricultural Returns Stabilization Act which was introduced in 1978, has become outdated and simply does not meet the needs of the farmers today.

I believe our amendments to raise the limit from 100 to \$200 million, under The Saskatchewan Agricultural Returns Stabilization Act, 1988, will give Saskatchewan farmers confidence in knowing their stabilization plans will continue and not be jeopardized by limits set by a previous government in 1978.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 24, an Act to amend The Saskatchewan Agricultural Returns Stabilization Act.

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we on this side of the House will certainly never stand in the way of any Bill that would extend moneys to farmers involved in the livestock industry. However, there are a few points that I'd like to bring out and there's some questions I'll be asking later on in committee.

As the member said, the SHARP program, the cow-calf-to-finish, and the feeder-to-finish programs are affected by this Act, and the \$100 million cap has been approached at the figure \$81 million or thereabouts.

We in Saskatchewan now have seen that the beef and pork prices have been relatively good. However, pork has come down the last little while, which is not so good. But we've seen the plans . . . the levies exceeding the pay-outs, whereby the SHARP program has come down to about a \$16 million deficit.

The cow-calf part of the beef stabilization is coming down. The only part that's not coming down right now is the feeder-to-finish, and it only has slightly increased in the deficit. Deficit in the beef stabilization, I believe, is about \$65 million and declining. And as I said, the SHARP is 16 million and declining.

A few questions come to mind when you're asking the House to double the limit. And I have two queries that I will be bringing up and questioning on. One is, I have to ask myself, is there a reason that the limit has to be doubled with regards to the federal tripartite program, that Saskatchewan is in the SHARP (Saskatchewan hog assured returns program) and may be going in the beef program? That question comes to mind. Is there something, some cost that we don't know about right

now, because the levies are coming down?

The other thing on the positive side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that I would like to think that another reason for doubling this cap on expenditures in these programs would be that we would not be going into the federal tripartite program on beef whereby we may at some point in time, need more money from the provincial program. Because I feel, as many livestock producers feel, that the federal program is a much inferior program, compared to the Saskatchewan beef stabilization program.

So I, with a bit of optimism, I'm hoping — and I'll be asking these questions in committee — I'm hoping that this is a good indication that we will not in fact be going into the federal tripartite plan.

We know that the SHARP program is being phased out. It's at the 70 percent level and will be phased out over the next four years now. And if we go into the tripartite program in beef, it will also be phased out. So there is some question whether the limit would have to be doubled, and if it was an arbitrary figure or what. But these questions I'm sure can be answered quite effectively in committee.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just would like to say now that I will be asking some of these questions, and a few more. And I hope that the government has seen fit to drop the tripartite plan and continue with the Saskatchewan proposals.

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

Bill No. 9 — An Act to amend The Fire Prevention Act, 1980

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, The Fire Prevention Act provides for, among other things, the making of regulations, setting standards for the installation of oil burners.

Currently the inspection of oil burners is performed by gas inspectors of the department. You will be aware that gas inspection is being transferred to the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. It is necessary, therefore, to amend the sections of The Fire Prevention Act dealing with appointment of inspectors so that those same gas inspectors can continue to inspect and regulate oil burner installations.

We believe it to be in the interest of efficiency and cost-effectiveness to have gas inspectors perform this work. Qualifications of these inspectors include experience in the plumbing and heating field where they have also accumulated experience in the installation, repair, and maintenance of the oil burners. If they were not utilized, it would mean that other staff members would have to be trained, and for the few oil burners installed these days it would be extremely costly to do this.

I therefore move, Mr. Speaker, the second reading of Bill No. 9, The Fire Prevention Amendment Act.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is known to you and the House that this Bill originally was sent to the Non-Controversial Bills Committee, but in the process of study of the Bill in committee it was noted that the Bill is controversial because it goes beyond simply cosmetics or housekeeping.

It allows now the chief fire inspector to hire inspectors outside of the regular public service. It is clearly, therefore, an attempt and another move to privatization of a very important public service, one in which it is important to have independence and to protect against any possible situation where there may be wheeling and dealing or unfair acts where deals might be made and inspections passed, simply because somebody knows somebody. That's one of the reasons why certain functions of government are important and ought to be kept in the public domain.

Those are serious concerns, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is why the Bill has been sent back to this Assembly of consideration by the Assembly as a whole. The critic of this Bill, the member from Moose Jaw South, will want to say more on this and will study it further. And until he is able to do that, I at this point would like to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 25 — An Act to amend The Occupational Health and Safety Act

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to speak to second reading of what I consider to be a very important Bill for the safety of the workers and the general public in Saskatchewan and throughout all of Canada.

In order to adopt the work place hazardous materials information system, which we'll refer to as WHMIS, it is necessary to amend The Occupational Health and Safety Act. This has to be done to give the power to make appropriate regulations to implement WHMIS, that is the work place hazardous material information system.

It is required to provide a mechanism to ensure confidentiality of trade secret information, even though this information under the new system will be available in case of emergency on a central computer which will be located, for the sake of convenience, in Ontario, because Saskatchewan only has about 1.5 per cent of the production of hazardous goods in Canada. So Ontario is the logical location for the national computer that will store this information.

Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Deputy Speaker, just to give a little background as to the necessity for this particular type of legislation, this has been studied for years and years, and the most recent data is 1984, where it's estimated that the social costs due to hazardous materials in the work place amount to \$600 million annually in Canada.

The United States Occupational Safety and Health Administration has indicated that approximately one in four workers are exposed to one or more hazardous

chemicals. So therefore the provinces and the federal government have been meeting over the last few years, and I can say that I have personally been at these meetings and have tried to develop a system to deal with the problem of dangerous chemicals in the work place. The problem has been quite serious. In 1985 there were an estimated 575,000 different chemical products in North America. Hazardous materials may cause or contribute to heart ailments, kidney damage, lung damage, sterility, cancer, burns, rashes; and they may also cause fire, explosions, and asphyxia.

Due to the serious nature of these health problems and hazards, and the ongoing lack of information and the inability of health and safety organizations and the medical community to keep up with the technical changes in the chemical industry, the province of Saskatchewan, together with other provinces and the Dominion of Canada, have agreed to this Canada-wide system.

This system, the work place hazardous materials information system, establishes a uniform system of identification of hazardous chemicals. It requires labelling, in a uniform way, of hazardous chemicals in the work place and throughout society. And there is an agreement between employees, employers, and government regulators that this is necessary and this is the type of system that should be adopted.

And what this system does is that it sets up a process where you have a central information computer, which will be established in Ontario, to which industry and workers will have access to ascertain the dangerous nature of chemicals, the chemical composition, and the medical treatment, should be necessary.

Now one of the problems that arose was that in Saskatchewan we can't deal with hazardous chemicals on our own because most of them are manufactured outside Saskatchewan; many of them come from outside Canada; they have chemical formulas which are trade secrets. And up until now it has not been possible in all cases to get the trade secrets and the nature of the danger and what should be done for treatment in this province and even in all of Canada.

Under this system, all of that information will be stored in a central computer, and where the chemical is a trade secret, this system provides for the release of that information for medical purposes on an emergency basis so that there will be no such thing as hiding behind a trade secret when health is involved.

On the other hand, the system also ensures that there is not a leak of information that competitors can use. This will lead to the co-operation of world-wide chemical manufactures and the requirement that they give this information on a confidential basis to the central information computer system so that it can be available in an emergency. The medical community, the emergency response teams, will have access to the central computer to get on a 24-hour basis the necessary information for all of these 575,000 different chemicals that are available in North America.

(1100)

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I would say that this has been a very fruitful and co-operative area of protection for workers and for society in general. And it is unusual, unfortunately too unusual, that we do not have the kind of co-operation that we had here where the employers, the manufacturers, the employees, labour organizers, and the governments have all agreed upon a system that will benefit everyone.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this Bill introduced and debated today, and I am sure that the members opposite and the public will welcome the introduction of this Bill.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to Bill 25, An Act to amend The Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the minister has already explained, the Bill essentially seeks to keep Saskatchewan in line with other jurisdictions across the nation regarding a relatively recent national program to monitor and provide information about hazardous material in the work place. And I certainly recognize and endorse the process that has taken place, where it has been truly a tripartite conclusion in the interest of all parties that's been reached, that has involved labour and business and government working in co-operation.

Occupational health and safety is a very important issue, and as the minister has said, one which we have had number of problems dealing with adequately over the years. All too often, when people consider work place injuries, we're inclined to think of the more dramatic kinds of injuries — things such as the long fall or the broken bone or the extreme burn. And not to make light of those at all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we must also recognize that just in Saskatchewan alone over the last three years, as a matter of fact, injuries have taken the lives of 81 workers within our province; 25 in 1985, 29 in 1986, and unfortunately another 27 last year.

What we also must recognize, as has been said, that there are more and more risks that are being caused to workers in the work place who are required to handle dangerous chemicals and highly toxic substances, and all too often the workers are asked to handle or work with such substances that are not marked or not labelled, and whose hazardous properties are not widely known. And it is my view as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that is a circumstance which cannot be allowed to continue.

To put occupational health and safety into its context as well — and I'd like to do that in responding to the Bill — sometimes media or other will look at a dramatic, some of the more dramatic kinds of impacts affecting the work place, and all too often we're led to believe, inaccurately, but led to believe that the major problem affecting, related to work loss is work stoppage. That is the kind of thing that will grab the headlines, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But when we look at the reality, it is clearly in the best interests of business people, of employees as well and,

maybe a little less directly, but of governments as well that we turn our attentions to good occupational health and safety approaches.

Just to put this reality into a context in Saskatchewan terms over the past few years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me just briefly review the statistics related to work days lost through work stoppage, be that lock-out or strike, and the related . . . in each year the work days lost through injury.

In 1983, for example, Mr. Speaker, there were some 29,000 work days lost through work stoppage and some 599,000 work days in Saskatchewan lost through injury. And in that year we, in the province, lost 21 times as many days, work days, through injury as we did through work stoppage — clearly an indication of the importance of addressing occupational health and safety as related to the way it impacts and can negatively hurt both businesses and employees.

In 1984, some 12,000 days lost by work stoppage in Saskatchewan, 622,000 through work injury — 50 times as many, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In 1985, some 56,600 through work stoppage, 573,000 through injury — again, 10 times as many in that year. In 1986, 131,000 days lost through work stoppage, 470,000 through injury — a multiple of four in that year.

Interestingly enough as well, Mr. Speaker, while we're putting these things into context, in 1986 in Saskatchewan we lost 9.5 million days through unemployment work days in this province. And then last year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 26,000 days lost through work stoppage, 411,000 through injury — a multiple of 16 times as many days lost again last year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through injury as compared to work stoppage.

Very clearly, tending to occupational health and safety is in the best interest of everyone — in the best interests of business people where one of the very high costs of operating businesses is impacted by those massive numbers of days lost through injury as compared to work stoppage.

The questions that have to be asked related to the Bill that's before us today relate to the commitment of the Saskatchewan government to make the legislation work. It's not simply sufficient to have legislation come before this Assembly and be carried, and for all of us to then walk away and say we've done our job and that's all there is to do. Clearly there has to be a commitment to make the legislation work.

And so I give fair warning to the minister that when we move to committee of this, consideration of this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I'll be wanting to ask some questions related to the amount of resources that'll be put into training, training not only employers but employees, and in a co-operative kind of way in bringing into practice this October, along with the rest of the country, the work place hazardous material information system.

It will also be important as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Government of Saskatchewan outline its plans to direct its resources towards the supervision or the policing of the legislation too. The legislation is only as good as

it is enforced, and it will simply not be good enough, it will not be good enough if the explanation is that the occupational health and safety branch of the Department of Labour is going to simply reallocate presently existing resources. Clearly, this Bill is a new initiative which will require new resources both in training and in the supervising or the policing of the requirements of the Bill.

And so accordingly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do look forward to hearing the minister's plans in that regard. It is my view that this Bill is a step in the right direction, that it will contribute to increased safety and security in health of working people in the province of Saskatchewan, consistent with the initiative being taken across the nation. And consistent with that then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I simply wish to indicate that this Bill does have my support, and I will be voting in support of the Bill.

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

Bill No. 10 — An Act respecting the Licensing of Persons who Perform Work of Electrical Installation or Sell Electrical Equipment

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce for second reading The Electrical Licensing Act.

Members will be aware that we are currently administering the electrical licence and inspection of electrical installations under The Electrical Inspection and Licensing Act.

It is the proposal of this government to repeal that Act and replace it with an Electrical Licensing Act and Electrical Inspection Act. This division of activity will allow us to move the inspection to SaskPower where they can be integrated with the corporation's own field activities and with their own computerized accounting and control systems.

The Bill I'm speaking to today is The Electrical Licensing Act which will be administered and enforced by the Department of Environment and Public Safety.

The Electrical Licensing Act provides for the licensing of electrical installation, contractors, distributors, and supply houses who wholesale electrical equipment. This new Bill complements The Electrical Inspection Act in that definitions, issuance of orders, appeal procedures, penalties, and coming into force are very similar.

The provisions of this Bill, with respect to appeals, licensing of contractors and tradesmen, search and seizure, the reverse onus clauses, penalties and limitations for prosecution are very similar to those in The Gas Licensing Act which was approved by the Non-Controversial Bills Committee. Mr. Speaker, I do not think it necessary to infringe upon your valuable time by listing them here again.

This Bill is part of the package we have put together to improve efficiency in the inspection of electrical installation. Moreover, it provides for the improvement

of licensing procedures and remove some of the more repressive clauses of the old Act.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore move second reading of a Bill, Bill No. 10, An Act respecting The Licensing of Persons who Perform Work of Electrical Installation or Sell Electrical Equipment.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, I think I can clarify the position of the opposition on this Bill. The Electrical Inspection Act is quite controversial. This is The Electrical Licensing Act. We stand opposed to the transfer of the electrical inspection to SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation). We think that should continue a public function done by public officers. But that's a different Bill; that's Electrical Inspection Act.

This legislation simply allows the licensing of electrical contractors to continue in the department as it always has. As such, it is non-controversial and in fact was at the Non-Controversial Bills Committee, would have gone through, except an amendment was needed.

While I'm on my feet, I may say that we could save a lot of time in this House if we allowed the Non-Controversial Bills Committee to make minor amendments, rather than bringing them back because some printer forgot a dot or a title somewhere. We really need to change that committee so that minor amendments can be made.

I therefore say, Mr. Speaker, that we'll be voting in favour of it.

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

Bill No. 33 — An Act respecting the Registration of Leafcutter Beekeepers

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, as members know, alfalfa seed has become a valuable cash crop in Saskatchewan. We have developed not only our alfalfa seed industry, Mr. Speaker, but also a secondary industry, leafcutter bee cocoons.

The leafcutter bee is essential to the production of alfalfa seeds. This is an export market for leafcutter bee cocoons, provided that we can maintain a disease-free industry. We have consulted with those involved with the leafcutter bee industry on several occasions to determine how we can maintain our disease-free situation. At the request of Saskatchewan Alfalfa Seed Producers' Association, we are pleased to introduce an Act that is specifically designed for the alfalfa leafcutter bee.

The industry is concerned that no one has a current list of keepers of alfalfa leafcutter bees in our province. There are diseases and mites which can affect leafcutter bees that could spread to and within our province. Not knowing who is in control or who is in the business makes prevention programs, information, and control impossible at this time.

For example, chalkbrood disease is a fungus of leafcutter bee larvae prevalent in Alberta and the U.S. in alfalfa seed-producing areas, but not yet present in

Saskatchewan. It causes production of a mass of spores killing the larvae.

(1115)

The Act is designed to provide mandatory registration of leafcutter beekeepers in the province. The resultant list would be used basically for disseminating information, particularly concerning disease. Now inspection of producer premises is contemplated. The Department of Agriculture estimates that there are approximately 300 leafcutter beekeepers at present.

This Act contains no provision for inspection, detention or destruction of bees. There will be negligible cost to the operation of the Act. The department presently employs a provincial apiculturist whose principle area — I think that's supposed to be apiculturist, but I don't know — whose principal area is honey bees, and an apiculture specialist whose principal area is leafcutter bees. There are no employees to hire. There would be a small cost to establish a computerized mailing list and mailing costs for information which can be handled within existing budget resources of the Department of Agriculture.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, this Act will assist leafcutter bee producers, their dissemination of information. Disease control can be facilitated. Extension information can be distributed to producers which can make the industry grow and be more productive.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore move second reading of Bill No. 33, An Act respecting the Registration of Leafcutter Beekeepers.

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am in support of the registration of leafcutter bees, the people who raise leafcutter bees. However, there will be some questions, and I would like to know in committee things like what will they be doing to prevent disease; it think this is very important matter.

I know chalkbrood is coming into Alberta and the leafcutter bee keepers are afraid that without some proper testing and some controls . . . It's fine to have the information disseminated; however, I think there probably should be . . . this should go further. And in fact I think that we should be looking at a comparison with the honey-bee Act, under which they have the testing procedures for materials and hives that come in from out of province. And I will be in contact . . . I have a number of people I'd like to contact — haven't been able to yet — to discuss this question further with.

And after that, I believe that the provincial apiarist has a role to play. And I also, like I say, will have a number of questions in committee. So until I have fully satisfied myself that this legislation is sufficient or not sufficient, I would like to now move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 34 — An Act to promote Regulatory Reform in Saskatchewan by repealing Certain Obsolete Statutes

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I move, by leave of

the Assembly, seconded by the Minister of Health:

That the order for second reading of Bill No. 34, An Act to promote Regulatory Reform in Saskatchewan by repealing Certain Obsolete Statutes, be discharged, and the Bill referred to the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills.

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

Bill No. 36 — An Act to amend The Meewasin Valley Authority Act

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, the Meewasin Valley Authority was established in 1979. The authority includes three participating parties: the Government of Saskatchewan, the city of Saskatoon and the University of Saskatchewan. After some years of experience, a number of adjustments to The Meewasin Valley Authority Act have been identified by MVA (Meewasin Valley Authority) as being desirable.

Many of the changes included in the Bill reflect the authority's request in this respect and most of the provisions as introduced last fall in Bill No. 84. This Bill includes a range of provisions. On the technical side, it corrects an error in specifying the boundary of Meewasin Valley and updates a number of references to various statutes. It also amends the legal description of an easement recently granted to MVA and the public.

Subsection 3(1) and sections 5, 6, and 7 of the Bill consolidate and revise provisions pertaining to the process for adopting, amending, or repealing MVA's development plan. New requirements for a public notice and public hearing is to . . . pardon me, in this process are introduced, modelled on the provision of The Planning and Development Act of 1983. An outline of what the development plan may contain is now offered as guidance.

The legal relationship between MVA's plan and any adopted pursuant to The Planning and Development Act of 1983 is clarified. Since MVA recently adopted a new plan, these amendments give the authority five years to bring it into line with the new requirements. This is consistent with a review of the plan every five years as is MVA's practice in any event.

Sections 8 and 11 of the Bill deal with the enforcement provisions. The provisions for enforcement of by-laws for urban municipalities are adopted for by-laws of the authority. Less severe penalties for failing to comply with MVA approvals or requirements respecting proposed improvements are introduced. These are fines and court orders to comply, rather than just demolition orders to cease incompatible uses. These offer the authority more reasonable ways to achieve its objective.

Time limits for MVAs review of improvements proposed for public and private lands are both set at 60 days in section 10 of the Bill, rather than the more favourable treatment for public land which is currently the case. The

latter's limit of 30 days had proved impractical for the authority. The term of the Meewasin Valley appeal board is extended from two to three years. In practice, it has met only infrequently.

A time limit of 28 days on road closures within Meewasin Valley by participating parties is replaced in section 14 by the words "for a temporary period." As for urban municipalities, in practice, more flexibility has been required.

In section 9 and 20 of the Bill, changes are made reflecting a request by MVA to more sharply focus its mandate and eliminate MVA approvals which duplicate approvals already exercised by the provincial government under environment-related legislation. The authority's approval power over any improvements in the river channel or along the shoreline is maintained, however, by the amendment in section 9 of this Bill.

In section 18 of this Bill, a provision holding MVA funding from participating parties from the 1987-88 and '88-89 fiscal years at the same levels as provided in '86-87 is included. This is consistent with the amendments being introduced for other urban park authorities, and implements a provincial budget decision announced last year to hold the line.

Finally, this Bill extends existing legal protection given by the Act to the authority's participating parties and to its members and employees; to also cover the engineering, advisory and planning and development committees, plus other committees and positions provided for by the Act. Similar changes are being made for Wascana and Wakamow.

This amendment will help to reassure the many volunteer members of the committees serving the authorities. Again, this change has been requested by Meewasin.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore move second reading of Bill No. 36, The Meewasin Valley Authority Act.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I will be adjourning the debate on this for the critic, but I would like to make a few brief comments on the Bill to amend The Meewasin Valley Authority Act.

I want to first of all say that this Act, just like legislation which established the Wascana (Centre) Authority and Wakamow (Valley) Authority, I think is an example of society having very forward-looking approaches to preserving for the future, as well as for the present, a very important part of our world. I think it's . . . nobody would argue that our society, as societies throughout the world, too often with their preoccupation with straight decisions based on economics, have allowed the environment and have allowed important areas of the world in our cities and in other places to be destroyed and to deteriorate, many of which will never ever able to be replaced.

So the people who had the foresight to establish, first of all, the Wascana authority and then the Wakamow and Meewasin, I think, ought to be congratulated and commended. And those of us who are in this legislature now, and hopefully those who will come after us, will

continue to put a very high priority on these projects.

I note in the Bill, besides the technical amendments and other amendments, that there is again an example as we saw in the Wascana authority, the freezing of the funding. And I raise that, fully aware of the fact that there is some amount of restraint on the part of the government, and that there are financial difficulties that face Saskatchewan today. But I wonder and I question some of these decisions because if one really considers carefully the implications, it is not hard to figure out that in the end, by doing this kind of a freeze on funding, it will actually result in a higher cost.

And therefore I disagree with the judgement here. If we allow the existing infrastructure and other things in these parks to deteriorate, there's going to be a greater cost, whether it's two years from now, three years from now, or five years from now.

The other thing is, things that are planned for development in 1988 and 1989, as they were in 1987 or '86, are going to cost a great deal more, because of inflation, to develop in 1990 or 1991. I would hope that the government and the authorities, and other parties that are party to this agreement, would keep that in mind when they make these kinds of decisions.

Sometimes a short-term decision is going to cost a great deal more in the immediate and the long run. And I submit to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that's what's going to happen with decision, as is happening with Wascana authority, which my colleague from Regina Centre spoke about so well the other day, where the beauty of that park has deteriorated because of the neglect, because of the lack of adequate funding and the lack of adequate personnel to keep it up. I think that's regrettable, and in the long run will be much more costly sociologically and environmentally and in hard dollars.

I know that the critic for this Bill, the member from Saskatoon Westmount wants, as a result of that, wants to be in the House to speak on it and bring his views to this debate. And so on his behalf, I, at this point, adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1130)

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McLeod that Bill No. 12 — **An Act to amend The Medical Profession Act, 1981** be now read a second time.

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What this Bill pertains to is the appeal procedure for discipline hearings against doctors by the council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In the present system, what happens when discipline proceeding are launched by the council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons is that a doctor goes to hearing

in front of a discipline committee, a hearing in front of his peers. With respect to competency, the hearing is slightly different inasmuch as it's done in a clinical setting. The discipline committee then makes a recommendation to the council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and the council makes a determination as to whether or not the doctor should be disciplined and what the sentence should be.

The doctor then has the right to appeal, and the appeal is on the basis of a trial *de novo*. It's a mandatory appeal by trial *de novo*. And by trial *de novo*, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we mean a new trial, hearing the evidence once again. The appeal on trial *de novo* is to a tribunal, and this tribunal consists of a judge of the Court of Queen's Bench, and one member appointed by the University of Saskatchewan — which is usually a doctor, but not necessarily a doctor — and a lay person appointed by the Minister of Health.

Subsequent to that, there's been a further appeal to the Court of Appeal, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What the legislation intends to do, that is being put forward by the government, is to remove the appeal by trial *de novo* and to substitute it with an appeal to a Queen's Bench judge, as opposed to a tribunal, on the transcript of evidence and the record of the proceedings only. So the new trial is eliminated and we would, by this amendment, have an appeal directly to a Queen's Bench judge alone, as opposed to the tribunal, and it would be on the transcript only.

The Minister has said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that a trial *de novo* to a tribunal, an appeal on trial *de novo* to a tribunal, runs counter to the basic principle of our health profession's legislation — that basic principle being that the people best able to assess matters of professional competence and conduct are the members of the medical profession itself.

It is true, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that peer review, which is review by others in one's own profession, is a very valuable tool and a reliable one. And like other professions, the College of Physicians and Surgeons use peer review to maintain the quality of medicine practised in Saskatchewan. But I also want to point out that The Medical Profession Act also recognizes the need for consumer input into the peer review process. And in that regard it provides for the appointment of three lay, non-medical individuals to the council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. And these lay, non-medical appointments have a right to vote on questions of discipline where doctors are disciplined, when the decision of the discipline committee or the recommendation goes to the council, or other recommendations of committees of doctors, these three non-medical people have a right to vote on the council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

This concept of more consumer input, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is carried through in the tribunal because, as I pointed out earlier, the tribunal consists of a judge and a University of Saskatchewan appointment and then a lay appointment by the Minister of Health. And the University of Saskatchewan appointment could be a doctor or a non-medical person.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if society wants consumer input into the process of health care and governing the medical profession, then clearly an appeal tribunal of this nature is a step in the right direction. And the repeal of such a provision would amount to the removal of one area in which the non-medical people can have input into the medical profession.

Surely, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's in the public interest and in the interest of the medical profession for lay people to know and understand what happens in the profession. Health care, and the practice of medicine in particular, are of concern to the people of Saskatchewan. It's one of the most important areas in which the government is involved and for which it has responsibility and it is a matter of highest priority for Saskatchewan people. And so it should be because the taxpayers of this province pay some \$1.2 billion a year for their health care.

But it's not simply a question of money, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not simply a question of money; it is their health care, it is the health care of every man, woman, and child in this province. And it's for this reason that the government involves itself in this area, and it's for this reason that we've recognized the need for consumer input. And this amendment purports to remove that consumer input.

One of the arguments for the amendment against the present process is that the appeal by trial *de novo* to an appeal tribunal causes delays, and no doubt there are delays, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I share the concern expressed over these delays. But it's not just setting up the tribunal that causes the delays. The whole process has to be reviewed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I have been advised that it is going to be reviewed, or it is being reviewed, or at least review is being discussed.

So I think it's unfortunate that these amendments would come forward before the entire review has taken place, before the entire discipline process has been reviewed. For example, someone has suggested to me that competency hearings should be treated differently than discipline hearings. And I have no idea whether the medical profession will be looking at that, but it was suggested to me by a member of the medical profession that it should be looked at. And, indeed, if this is going to be looked at and changed, it may very well mean a subsequent change to the very amendments that we have before us today. And so I feel that the whole package should have been looked at all together.

I'm aware that the legal community and the medical community, the legal community because they invariably get involved in these hearings from the legal point of view, are divided as to the usefulness of the trial *de novo*. I don't wish to leave the impression that the medical community is opposed to it because it's my understanding that the SMA (Saskatchewan Medical Association) has approved these amendments; however, there are individuals in the medical community who have expressed concern to us.

The fact of the matter is, is that the existing law does give the physician a right to appeal in front of a tribunal by trial *de novo*. And that right has been there for decades,

Mr. Deputy Premier. It was repealed in 1965. It had been there for several years before in a slightly different form. Repealed in 1965 to '81, and then reintroduced in its present form. And the old provision with respect to trial *de novo* reads something like this, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

The judge may on application of either party proceed by way of a trial *de novo*, in whole or in part.

So the right to a trial *de novo* has been a long-standing right, but was repealed during the Thatcher years for a brief period of some 15 or 16 years. In the old legislation prior to 1965, however, it was an option. It was not a mandatory appeal by trial *de novo*, it was an option. One could go on the trial *de novo* or one could go on the transcript.

And I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that one of the reasons why we have had an appeal of this nature in The Medical Profession Act for so many years in Saskatchewan is because the medical profession is not the same as other profession in the province for many of the reasons I stated earlier: that is, because health care is so important to the men and women and children of this province, and because government gives it a special priority or should be giving it a special priority.

And it's not just that I'm opposition Health critic, but I receive hundreds and hundreds of letters on a regular basis with respect to the health care in this province. I don't receive those same numbers of letters, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the engineering profession or the architectural profession or the legal profession, even though I'm sure many lawyers would like to think the legal profession is of the same priority. The . . .

An Hon. Member: — But we know better.

Ms. Simard: — But we know better, one of my colleagues say. The fact of the matter is, is health care is important and I believe this is one reason why it has been treated in this fashion.

One of the criticisms of the present provision, the present provision in the Act, is that the trial *de novo* is mandatory as opposed to being an option. And some doctors and some lawyers have suggested that they would prefer to go on the transcript, an appeal on the transcript, and would prefer an option. However, others are of the opinion that the trial *de novo* procedure is definitely absolutely required.

Meanwhile, the government hopes to streamline the process and reduce the cost of legal proceedings against doctors — costs that are paid by the College of Physicians and Surgeons in prosecuting the cases and costs that are paid by the doctors charged.

However, in order to meet the government's objectives, it means that we are repealing a right doctors have had for many years in this province and some doctors have expressed to us grave concern about their removal of a right to a trial *de novo*. They want to be sure that the disciplinary process is as fair as possible and they feel that a trial *de novo* is extra insurance in this regard. And we

respect those concerns in the same way that we respect the concerns that the medical profession, the concerns of the College of Physicians and Surgeons that the medical profession be governed fairly, but also effectively and efficiently.

I have spoken to people across this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and after weighing all the arguments very carefully — and in particular, the College of Physicians and Surgeons' concerns about costs and delays and their desire to fulfil their responsibility as best possible — our caucus has come to the conclusion that had the government come forward with an amendment that removed the trial *de novo* and substituted it with a trial *de novo* as an option on appeal, the other option being an appeal on the transcript, we would have been able to support the proposal.

But this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, goes much further than that. It wipes out the right to a trial *de novo* that is long-standing, and has been relied upon by doctors for decades; and it totally removes input from the public at large, non-medical people, in the appeal process, with the exception of course that the appeal goes to a judge of the Court of Queen's Bench who is non-medical, but I don't consider the judge a member of the public at large.

It's our feeling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we need input from the public in all areas of health care, and our caucus has recently toured the province on regional meetings, right across the province, and one of the topics of discussion and debate was health care in the province of Saskatchewan. And if there was anything that came out loud and clear in those meetings — that were very well attended and in which there was excellent debate on the issue of health care — if there was anything that came out loud and clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was the desire of men and women in Saskatchewan to have more involvement and more input into the process of government and into the process of administering health care in the province of Saskatchewan.

And so we will, Mr. Deputy Speaker, be proposing amendments to the Bill which will preserve the trial *de novo* as an option, and we'll be doing that in Committee of the Whole.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McLeod that Bill No. 11 — **An Act to amend The Ophthalmic Dispensers Act** be now read a second time.

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This Bill is basically consequential upon The Medical Profession Act amendments. I believe that there may be some other housekeeping amendments primarily in it. I would . . . I will have some questions to ask on this legislation in Committee of the Whole, but it could move to the committee at this time.

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

(1145)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McLeod that Bill No. 13 — **An Act to amend The Denturists Act** be now read a second time.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, this could move to committee as well, at this time.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McLeod that Bill No. 14 — **An Act to amend The Dental Profession Act, 1978** be now read a second time.

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This Bill could move to committee at this point as well.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McLeod that Bill No. 15 — **An Act to amend the Optometry Act, 1985** be now read a second time.

Ms. Simard: — This could move to Committee of the Whole now, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn that Bill No. 21 — **An Act to amend The Cost of Credit Disclosure Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I first want to say that I believe that this legislation is simply not good enough to effect full and adequate disclosure of the cost of credit to protect Saskatchewan consumers. I think this legislation needs to go back to the workshop and be honed and polished so that in fact it serves not simply the interests of the financial institutions but the interests of Saskatchewan people who frequent these institutions, and I intend to explain a little bit of this concern this morning.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this legislation purports to deal with the cost of credit disclosure. That's what its name suggests, and it comes from the Minister of Consumer Affairs, but in reality this legislation serves the interests of lending institutions and large businesses such as Canadian Tire Stores. But, Mr. Speaker, my principal objection to this legislation revolves around Section 3.2, that has to do with notification of changes in variable interest rates. Variable interest rates are the real concern of this entire piece of legislation; that's why we have it introduced.

My concern is that provision be made in this legislation itself for the adequate disclosure of the cost of credit with respect to these variable interest rates in the legislation

itself, and not simply by regulation as the minister suggests. And I say this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in light of some of the concern that has been expressed federally in the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, which has been holding hearings this last year, and more recently this spring, into charges for personal financial services.

And I'd like to quote into the record the mandate of this particular Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs in the House of Commons, and I quote:

Witnesses will be called at the discretion of the Chair, and the Committee will review representations concerning the adequacy of section 201 of the *Bank Act* and regulations thereunder, to determine whether:

(a) present regulations ensure that the customer has sufficient knowledge of charges for the keeping of an account;

(b) posting a notice in a readily accessible place in the branches of a bank is a fair and reasonable way of notifying customers of changes in charges for the keeping of an account;

(c) any new charges for the keeping of an account can be effected without prior consent of the customer in whose name the account is kept;

(d) a right to written notification of changes in charges and a right to advanced authorization of new charges can be waived by the customer;

(e) current charges and recent changes in charges for the keeping of an account are reasonable and fair.

The purpose of this review is to determine whether Section 201 of the *Bank Act* and the regulations pursuant thereto are in need of revision. The increasing role of non-bank financial institutions in the provision of retail banking services, and the intended future application of Section 210 to these institutions is recognized.

Now this is of the essence, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it's precisely some of the provisions of section 21 of the federal *Bank Act* that are noted in this legislation, or by the minister, as pertaining to this legislation affecting the cost of credit disclosure.

But as we've just seen in looking at the standing committee's mandate to review the whole question of personal financial service charges, the issues are precisely whether the regulations are adequate. And the minister, with this legislation, wants to refer regulation of the service charges to regulations.

Secondly, the House of Common committee wants to know whether posting of notice in a readily accessible place is a fair and reasonable way of notifying consumers of financial services. And indeed that, modelled after section 21 of the *Bank Act*, is right here in the legislation

proposed by the minister. The question is: is that good enough to post written notice in a readily accessible place in the branch of a financial institution?

But also, you will note, the questions concerning the standing committee in Ottawa concern whether charges are reasonable and fair. And I want to just take a moment to show how important this issue is for consumers. Because according to the annual reports of the big five chartered banks in Canada, services charges for 1987 were as follows: for the Toronto Dominion Bank, \$138 million worth of service charges; for the Canadian Imperial Bank, \$235 million in service charges; for the Scotia Bank, \$113 million in service charges; the Bank of Montreal, \$283 million in service charges; and for the Royal Bank, 365 million — for a grand total of \$1.134 million worth of service charges by the five chartered bank in Canada.

And this represents, Mr. Deputy Speaker, an increase in service charges of almost 20 per cent over 1986 rates. And these charges relate, these service charges relate only to deposit accounts, safe keeping and payroll processing measures by the financial institutions. Excluded are any of the other fees charged by the banks such as foreign exchange fees, credit card fees, loan fees, securities' commissions, bankers acceptances, letters of credit, guarantee fees, and other items.

And if you consider the whole package of all of these fees for service offered by the five chartered banks, they amount to some \$4 billion — \$4 billion that Canadian consumers are paying in fees just to the five chartered banks, and this isn't to other financial institutions such as trust companies, credit unions, or other lending institutions or credit corporations.

Now I think this points then to the need for a very strict concern for cost of credit disclosure, an adequate disclosure in that regard, when it comes to this particular legislation proposed by the Minister of Consumer and corporate affairs.

The research branch of the library of parliament has issued, in March of this year, a background paper on financial service charges in Canada and notes, I quote:

It is relatively easy for a bank to meet notification requirements, although this does not mean that consumers are well informed about bank charges. With the growing use of automatic teller machines, moreover, some bank customers make less frequent trips to their branches so it is more difficult for them to be informed of changes in financial service charges. Increases in the direct deposit of pay cheques and the use of shared ATMs (automatic teller machines) also mean consumers may go into their bank branches less often.

Now what we find in this legislation, in section 3.2, is provision that when a change occurs in the annual rate of the cost of borrowing with respect to a variable interest rate loan — and a variable interest rate loan is exactly what it suggests, a loan that the rate of interest floats regularly — my understanding is that this can float

weekly, or potentially even daily according to the prime rate, the Bank of Canada prime, the treasury board prime rate or the institutional prime rate.

There is a wide range of discretion for how that rate fluctuates, but it's a variable interest rate loan. And this legislation suggests that when the change occurs in that, that the borrower under the agreement shall be notified in writing or by posting him a notice in a readily accessible place in each place where the lender carries on business.

Well first of all, it's not practicable or practical for a lending institution to notify all of their borrowers in writing if you have an interest rate that is fluctuating weekly, or perhaps even more frequently. It's just not realistic to expect that of financial institutions, to so that in writing. Certainly the costs would be passed on to the consumers.

But my point is, nor is it adequate for consumers to have notice placed in a readily accessible place because, as we just heard from the material presented by the Library of Congress to the Standing Committee, that's an open question, given the use of ATMs (automated teller machines) and the less frequent use of borrowers of financial institutions themselves. So to post a notice in a readily accessible place does not really serve consumers.

I had also note as a foot-note, that in this . . . as an inadequacy to this legislation, that simply to require the posting of a notice in a readily accessible place in the bank or financial institution doesn't really ensure that place is readily accessible to the borrower. A minor point, but an important one if we're talking about the cost of credit disclosure for consumers of financial services.

The borrower, in my view, Mr. Deputy Speaker, should be able to point to something in this legislation itself that speaks to full and adequate disclosure of the cost of credit. And as this legislation stands now, the borrower cannot do that. This legislation serves the interests of the financial institutions regulated by the province, namely credit unions, trust companies, and companies such as Canadian Tire Acceptance corporation.

I believe that section 3.2 should itself ensure that the borrower is definitely going to be informed of changes in the cost of credit. Other provinces have made provision for this disclosure. My understanding is that it varies from province to province, that in Nova Scotia notice must be given in writing every month; that in Prince Edward Island notice must be given in writing every five weeks; and that in Manitoba the lending institution must give a client a statement as well. I'm not sure of the precise time period, but there must be notification in writing.

(1200)

I think that points to the inadequacy of this present legislation, that we don't have that kind of provision with some parameters to ensure that there is written disclosure, and it's not just left to the happenstance of a borrower entering a financial institution.

So this problem becomes a little bit more pointed when we consider, not just the credit union system or the trust

company system regulated by the province, but Canadian Tire Acceptance corporation, which is also provincially regulated and would fall under this cost of credit disclosure legislation.

I want to begin by noting what was made public on Saturday, May 7 of this year in The Globe and Mail business section, that the profit at Canadian Tire Corporation was up a whopping 27 per cent in the first quarter of this year, but that most of the gains in this profit picture did not come from the Canadian Tire selling of tires, lawn-mowers, hammers, or spark-plugs; they came from Canadian Tire's credit card operations, from Canadian Tire Acceptance corporation. Canadian Tire Acceptance corporation accounted for the lion's share of Canadian Tire's 27 per cent profit in the first quarter of this past year.

For the first time, last year, that division passed the \$1 billion mark in credit sales for its own and other credit cards. This accounted for approaching half of Canadian Tire's total sales. The credit card division recorded a 29 per cent profit gain . . . Canadian Tire Acceptance corporation recorded a 29 per cent profit gain, far surpassing its revenue increase of only 13 per cent.

Incidentally, I think it's important to note that the annual rate of interest for Canadian Tire Acceptance corporation is 28.8 per cent on the balance outstanding. This is similar to that of most major retailers in Canada with respect to credit cards.

But I think that it points very clearly to the problem that we're talking about when it comes to the cost of credit disclosure and the minister bringing an Act that purports to effect that here, that Canadian consumers and Saskatchewan people are paying handsomely for the privileges of using credit and ought to be entitled to adequate disclosure which this legislation simply does not effect.

I want to continue by saying that other sections of this legislation are very, very inadequate when it comes to addressing the cost of credit disclosure — and I refer to sections 3.1 and sections 3.3, where reference is made to the lender charging a reasonable fee with respect to prepayment on a variable interest rate loan; or again in section 3.3, reference is made to the lender issuing to the borrower, with a reasonable period of time, a statement showing the amount of credit extended and the remaining number of payments, and so forth.

And my concern here is with respect to the use of the word "reasonable." I just don't think it's at all reasonable that this legislation should use the word "reasonable" if it wants to effect the cost of credit disclosure. You could simply insert or substitute — either one — the word "pre-agreed fee" in section 3.1. So that in other words, when people go to take out a variable interest rate loan they would sign on the dotted line agreeing up front to a pre-agreed, reasonable fee that affects their prepayment of their variable interest rate loan.

But this legislation doesn't do that. This legislation leaves the issue of disclosure of that cost of credit, and whatever is going to be regarded as a reasonable fee, to the back

end of the process when the consumer comes and wants to pay off the loan, prepay it, and is told that, maybe on a \$500 loan shall we say, that the reasonable fee in the eyes of the financial institution is \$50 — 10 per cent. And what may be reasonable to the financial institution is not necessarily reasonable to the borrower.

Why not tighten up this legislation and substitute pre-agreed for reasonable, to effect cost of credit disclosure up front and not in the end? What this really does, if there's disagreement over the interpretation of what is reasonable, is to put the consumer at the mercy of the legal system and lawyer's fees to argue if a particular prepayment fee is in fact reasonable or not. They should know that up front and this legislation is inadequate in that regard.

Similarly with respect to 3.3 in the legislation and the use of reference to a reasonable period of following the request of a borrower for a statement showing the amount of payment outstanding: why not simply state up front, when the consumer takes out a variable interest rate loan, that there is a pre-agreed fee of such and such, whether that be ... a pre-agreed reasonable period of time for securing a statement? So that the borrower knows up front that the reasonable period, let's say, in one week's time or two weeks' time or one month's time, but they know up front what is understood to be a reasonable time for securing a statement showing what payments remain. As it stands now, a financial institution in theory can make unreasonable delays in effecting disclosure of a statement to an individual.

So I think that again we're left ... consumers are left at the mercy of lawyers, and it shouldn't be so. We have lawyers in the government who ought to have drafted this legislation more adequately than has been done or else the minister and his department have not been doing their job in reviewing the legislation and effecting an adequate disclosure.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that this whole piece of legislation is really ill-conceived, that it simply does not effect what it purports to do, namely, effect the disclosure of the cost of credit. I've suggested how the legislation could be tightened up. I've pointed out the problems with the cost of credit and lending and borrowing and all sorts of financial transactions that are being reviewed in Ottawa by the Standing Committee of Finance to the House of Commons.

My understanding is that this legislation has been a long time coming from the department and it should be prolonged even more. It should be reviewed by the department. It should be withdrawn, so that it can effect protection and adequate disclosure of the cost of credit for consumers. The way it stands, this legislation serves the interests of the lending institutions. It does not effect cost of credit disclosure. It does not serve Saskatchewan consumers.

So I would like to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we will not be supporting this legislation, that it ill serves the interests of Saskatchewan consumers to pass what is shoddy legislation and to leave the finer details, as the government would suggest, to the regulations. Those

details should be dealt with in the legislation itself.

The minister has said that this legislation will make The Cost of Credit (Disclosure) Act easier to administer and to change in the future. Huh! Yes, very much so — for the financial institutions, but not for Saskatchewan consumers.

The minister has also said, in his earlier remarks on May 17, that consumer demand for financial products with variable interest rate loans is "substantial." by his own acknowledgement, there is increased demand for this kind of service. But if that's the case, why doesn't he effect protection for Saskatchewan consumers?

The only thing I can say is that he's out of touch with what consumers are really concerned about. I think he needs to take this legislation back to the drafting table. I think he needs to roll up his sleeves and get involved with his federal counterparts and be ... smarten up to what they're doing in reviewing financial service charges, and bring this legislation into conformity with what's happening federally, and not do such a disservice to Saskatchewan consumers as to pass it the way it stands. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. I want to add my voice, and I'll be very brief. I want to add my voice to that of the member who just spoke with respect to this legislation. It is extremely difficult, Mr. Speaker, for the ordinary consumer to calculate the cost of financial services. Most of us know what a car costs us, most of us know what groceries cost, but financial services are very difficult for most people to know what they're paying.

You regularly see people borrowing money on a credit card which could be borrowed at the local credit union usually at a half to a third as much interest. And these are, Mr. Speaker, very substantial sums. As the work of the finance committee in the House of Commons shows, there's a need for far better disclosure, not far less.

Consumers are ... banks and financial institutions are doing just about whatever they like with respect to charges and fees achieving enormous profits, and I think it's fair to say, Mr. Speaker, recovering some bad and ill-advised loans to third-world countries at the expense of consumers. I think that is pretty much the process.

Mr. Speaker, if one accepts the philosophical approach of members opposite, that these decisions ought to be left to the market price — let's assume that for the moment. I think everyone will admit that the market price won't operate unless there's sufficient information, and consumers just don't have it. Very few of them have the mathematic skills to calculate the cost of financial services.

When this was brought in I may say, it was ... I suppose, in fairness to the Liberal government of the day, it was a far-reaching and I think effective form of legislation. When it was brought in most, almost all loans, had a fixed percentage for the life of the loan. That was in another era, an era when inflation — a 5 or 6 per cent inflation rate —

was thought to be intolerable; when the dollar and the interest rate enjoyed a great deal of stability.

(1215)

When that changed and when financial institutions introduced variable rates, as they did in the instability of the '70s, the legislation became unworkable. And this legislation has not been enforced for a long period of time. It has been many years since this legislation was actually enforced — it couldn't be. There is no way that your local credit union or your local branch of the bank could comply with this piece of legislation. It was practically impossible to do.

There's no question but what amendments are needed. But I join my colleague in lamenting the fact that it's really been replaced with nothing at all. Consumers now have no protection; I think no effective means of finding out what they're paying, except to rely on the tender mercies of the finance institution to provide it in an honest way.

So I say, Mr. Speaker, that if you accept the philosophy of members opposite, if you believe that the market ought to dictate this, you must admit that it'll only work if everybody has sufficient information to make intelligent decisions. It is clear that consumers do not in this instance.

This government has removed, admittedly, an unworkable piece of legislation but replaced it at nothing, at a time when it's apparent from the operation of the finance committee of the House of Commons that a good deal more protection is needed. And this really is a shame, Mr. Minister, that this government has bowed to the wishes of the financial institutions and has failed to hear and appreciate the needs of the consumers and the public who elected them.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, wish to join my colleagues from Regina Centre and Saskatoon Sutherland in speaking to this Cost of Credit Disclosure Bill before the House today.

There's four concerns that I have, one being with regard to section 3(1) where we're talking about the terms or conditions of a variable interest agreement. And it states that:

“... a borrower under the agreement is entitled to make a prepayment and the lender shall not charge the borrower any penalty or (other) fee, (this is where it's interesting) other than a reasonable fee with respect to administration of the agreement, with respect to the prepayment.

Mr. Speaker, my concern is: why not name that reasonable fee, or state that the reasonable fee should be included in the agreement that is signed at the time that the loan is taken out?

The second concern that I have with this particular legislation deals with the changing of a variable interest rate. And prior to this legislation, those changes had to be ... the borrower had to be notified in writing. Now it is saying,

“in writing; or by posting a notice in a readily accessible place.”

Well what is readily accessible, and particularly in 1988 when more and more of us are increasingly using automated teller machines, remote banking services, and are not going into banks or credit unions with the frequency that just a few short years ago we had to do so? So the notice of change is totally inadequate in this Cost of Credit Disclosure Bill.

The third concern I have, Mr. Speaker, deals with:

A lender who:

(a) extends credit, other than variable credit; and

(b) alters the interest rate with respect to which the credit is extended;

shall provide to the borrower, (again) within a reasonable period following the request by the borrower, a clear statement in writing showing the number and amounts of payments remaining, including the projected final payment.

My concern there, Mr. Speaker, is again, what is a reasonable period? What is reasonable to you, I can assure you, is not what is reasonable to me on just about any given item. And I suspect that this Act is going to allow for a great deal of discrepancy and a great deal of hard feelings in terms of what is reasonable. Is reasonable one minute? Is reasonable one hour, one day, one month, or one year? And as I pointed out, what's reasonable to you is very seldom what's reasonable to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This Cost of Credit Disclosure Act typifies the deregulation and total abrogation of consumer protection by this government. They're backing away from the consumers, the people of Saskatchewan, many of whom have elected members not only on the government side but on our side. The difference is, I think, we are standing up for the people of Saskatchewan and saying let's have cost of credit being up front; let's do some things with protecting consumers. That's what I would have thought the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs was all about, is protecting people.

An Hon. Member: — It used to be; not any more.

Mr. Trew: — No more, as my colleague from Regina North West points out. My fourth concern, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that of Money Mart. Your government has done absolutely nothing to regulate cheque discounters such as Money Mart, and the case I'm speaking to right now is Money Mart.

I stopped by their newest operation last night on my way home, to check out what kind of an operation they have. Part of my interest, it's a long-standing interest, but part of my interest is I know that they charge very usurious rates for cheque cashing.

The second part of my interest is, the latest Money Mart that has opened is opened in my constituency, and quite

frankly, that is one business that I would dearly love to see change their method of operation or close down. Either one would be acceptable to me, but clearly . . .

Just to make it clear for members opposite what I'm talking about, I want to use the example of cashing a \$400 cheque. It's not a huge cheque, but on the other hand, it's not a real . . . it's not a family allowance cheque either — \$400. And what does Money Mart charge? Well, up front they have a 2.9 per cent charge on cheque cashing: 2.9 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a \$400 cheque amounts to an \$11.60 grab.

An Hon. Member: — How much?

Mr. Trew: — It's \$11.60. Plus they charge 75 cents per item; plus they charge a \$3 membership fee; plus there's an additional surcharge on some items depending on the cheque and depending on the identification that is presented. An additional 2 per cent amounts to \$8 in my \$400 cheque.

To make a long story a little bit shorter, for me to cash a \$400 cheque at Money Mart could cost me \$23.35. And what has the government members opposite done about it? Absolutely nothing. They have not even wrung their hands or gnashed their teeth. They're allowing operations, cheque discounters like Money Mart to operate, and it is really, really horrendous.

When we're talking about cost of credit . . . I remind the member for Meadow Lake that cashing a cheque — if you were to take this, if you cash a cheque a day early and then transpose this interest rate, then what you would wind up with is an effective interest rate of something about 15,000 per cent.

Money Mart and other operations like that, cheque discounters, need to be regulated. The need is ever so clear when you look at them potentially taking \$23.35 out of a \$400 cheque.

There is, fortunately, no chance of me ever cashing a cheque at Money Mart, because I simply would not pay their users' fees, just simply would not. But the real tragedy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that we have many, many people — unfortunately many of them are my constituents, or else Money Mart would not have opened up in Regina North — we have many people who do pay that users' fee, many people that use it. Because as I understand it, Money Mart will cash, for instance, a Social Service's cheque a day early. Big deal. By the time they've processed it, it's the day that it was cashed anyway.

They cash cheques for people who have no bank accounts. And there's a real tragedy there. But that's a little different story where the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs should be getting into the consumer education of people, to point out that they could get cheques cashed at a nominal charge of perhaps 50 cent at a bank or a credit union — not \$23.35, but 50 cents.

Many, many people would be far better off, if they don't have a bank account or credit union account, they would

be better off to open an account; pay a \$5 one-time opening charge; develop an account there; and then thereafter, cash their cheques there.

But Consumer and Commercial Affairs is doing nothing in terms of protecting the consumers of Saskatchewan. And that is a shame; that is a tragedy; it borders on a crime. The people who can least afford the services of Money Mart, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are the people that repeatedly go back and back and back. And this government is doing nothing about it.

Those are but four of the concerns that I have with this cost of credit disclosure. I feel very bad for the people of Saskatchewan that under your deregulation and your abrogation of consumer protection, the people of Saskatchewan are suffering, and unfortunately, it's the poorest people, the people you care the very least about, that are suffering the most.

So I have obviously got some concerns with this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but for now, that suffices for my comments for now. Thank you.

Motion agreed to on division, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Klein that Bill No. 23 — **An Act to amend The Wascana Centre Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I just have a few brief comments to make on this Bill. And I want to reiterate some of the things that were said by the member from Regina Centre when the Bill was introduced.

And I want to put on the record my opposition to the Bill and my concern about the neglect that has resulted in the Wascana authority because of the freeze in the funding . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I know the Minister of Health opposite frowns and wonders why I say that, except if he were to take a few walks through the park he'd know why I say that.

There may be trees being planted to replace trees which are dying in other cases, but there are certain areas of the Wascana authority which, if you go through it and have been through it for the last number of years, you will find where the weeds have taken over, the grass is dead, and now they have to rework it and dig it up and replant.

Now if that is a saving of money by freezing the funding, it is beyond my comprehension of how that makes any sense.

As a member in Regina, I want to say that I think that this short-sighted freezing of the funding, which started in 1986, is going to cost more money in the end. Because when you let something like this park deteriorate to the extent that this government is allowing it to deteriorate, it's going to cost you more when you have to redo it or when you have to do some work later when inflation has increased your costs by 10 or 15 or 18 per cent, or

whatever the inflation may be.

And so I think it is a bad decision and therefore I oppose the Bill. And it's not just a case of the Wascana Park being something for the people of the city of Regina. I used to be a member for the rural constituency of Humboldt for some 11 years, I remember very distinctly . . .

An Hon. Member: — And what happened then?

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well there was some misfortune in 1982, but I can tell you that there are some of the things that I remember very vividly about some of the experiences, as that member. And I can remember people from my constituency, including many, many students, who used to always include on their tour agenda and their visit to Regina, a visit to Wascana Park, and they still do. And it was a beautiful place and they went away impressed. And it's still a beautiful place. But if the present trend continues, it's going to be less so. And I want to say that that concerns me, as I know it concerns many other people.

(1230)

It's a marvellous thing that's happened here because of the foresight of some people in the past. I'm not saying that foresight does not exist today; I think it exists today. But you have to, even during times of restraint, make an adequate financial commitment. And now what I'm saying to the minister and to the government opposite — please reconsider; make that financial commitment. Not only will it do some good today, but it's going to save money tomorrow and later on.

And so I will be opposing this Bill, as so will my colleagues on this side of the House.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have to get into the closure of this debate for a couple of reasons. And obviously the member from Regina North East, who just admitted that he moved in here from Humboldt, isn't familiar with the working of the urban Act yet. So this will be explained to him in committee. They are totally off base.

I'm rather surprised that the member from Regina Centre, who should be aware of the functions and how the Wascana Centre Authority operates, and the member from Regina Centre didn't study the Bill very closely.

I'll speak first on one matter. Our volunteers at these urban parks need protection — and they're going to oppose the Bill — but members, officers and employees of the authority currently have the protection, and this is simply being extended, similar to the amendments that Meewasin will have, for committee members and advisers.

This protection to members and employees is a standard feature of departmental Acts, and I can't for the life of me understand why he would object to applying a fundamental basic protection to volunteers. It's beyond me, and I'm anxious to get into debate in committee with it. But I think that it's because they lack the understanding of the legislative authority for the Act.

Speaking for a moment about the current standards, I have to say this to everybody that's watching, about our beautiful Wascana Centre. The current landscape maintenance standards have not changed since the centre began — have not changed since the centre began. And obviously again the members opposite have totally no understanding with the funding or how the funding operates or where indeed the funding is spent.

Now this year, for example, there have been some changes. And we have now put lights on this beautiful, magnificent building, the legislature. Now as this work is going on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, certainly it has short-term effect on the irrigation of the lawns in front of the Legislative Building because that system is not operable when these lights are being installed, so that you will notice a difference. But it has nothing to do with funding; it has to do with operation. And so the members opposite are totally off base when they speak in that regard. And I do encourage all the citizens of Regina, and indeed the province, and certainly our school children as they come in and visit the beautiful legislature, to walk around our lawns and our centre.

Turf renovations along . . . some of the recent improvements have been turf renovations along Lakeshore Drive last year. Trafalgar fountain, just east of us, 4,200 square yards of turf that was replaced at substantial cost— replaced because it's common, with the usage that it gets, for grass to die. That's all being replaced. Four hundred and eleven trees were planted in the legislative area last summer at a significant cost — and are you saying that all these trees die? No, those are improvements — Mr. Deputy Speaker, perennial flower-beds replaced on the east side of the building last year — a total area of over 3,300 square feet.

By making such outrageous and unwarranted comments, those members may be adversely impacting the tourism industry that the city is trying to accomplish. And certainly, indeed, the member from Regina Centre is hurting his own constituents, and I'm awful, awful surprised to see him speak that way.

You know, it's just ludicrous to say that the maintenance standards . . . they obviously don't know how the funding works, and the maintenance standards have not changed. So they're really not aware of how it functions. Unfortunately he says that it deteriorates.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Wascana is an independent — Wascana Centre Authority is an independent third-party contractor to the government. They act as an independent. They have unionized staff. So when you're talking deterioration, and it's the same situation that has been maintained for the last 25 years, you're indeed condemning each one of those hard-working people and all the students that are hired every summer. And what they're saying is that these people are not doing their job properly, because it doesn't relate to funding one bit. Funding has nothing to do with it. There has been absolutely no cut-back in the area that the members opposite are talking about.

So I'm really anxious to debate this and the other urban

park Bills in committee, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we'll get into it in more detail. I could talk on and on about it.

But I would ask, I would ask that the critics opposite sit down, review the legislation, understand how the Wascana Centre Authority works, perhaps make a phone call to the former member of Regina Elphinstone who absolutely understood it, who understands how the financing works, who understands that when the three parties agree to a freeze on funding, it has nothing to do with the maintenance. It has to do with capital projects.

And I'm pleased to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Wascana Centre Authority again, for the second year in row, has ended with a surplus of funds. So we're in good shape, and everything is progressing.

And we will debate this more fully. At this time, I'll close debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Motion agreed to on division, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mrs. Smith that Bill No 26 — **An Act to amend The Oil and Gas Conservation Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to pick up on the comments of the minister last, with respect to Bill 26, The Oil and Gas Conservation Act. Just to inform members, I've had a look at the Bill and I've basically divided the Bill into three areas.

One aspect of the Bill is related to conservation and matters that relate to the environment, which I think are fairly well covered in the Bill.

The second area of the Bill that I've found of interest is the amendments which were consequential to the deregulation of natural gas, and there'll be a number of questions in committee with respect to that area.

And finally, some housekeeping amendments which were pretty general in nature, except for one or two areas that I think should have been cleaned up in terms of housekeeping and were not included in the Bill — and they relate to the penalty areas which last amended were in 1965, which is 23 years ago. And perhaps those penalties in 1988 are not sufficient in the event that the individuals or companies involved with breaking the law do so and are found guilty.

We see in the . . . I'll deal with the first section first, Mr. Speaker, with regard to conservation. The Bill clearly defines waste in the Bill with respect to waste-water disposal wells, and other areas. The practice has been indicated . . . has existed for a number of years, but there's never really been a clear delineation of that in the existing legislation, and the amendment clarifies that. I think that's a good amendment.

There's the environmental protection aspect of the Bill. One of the major purposes is to make The Oil and Gas

Conservation Act more environmentally inclined, focused more on protecting the environment with respect to oil wells that either have been drilled or have been abandoned and the leases surrounding them. And I think that that is a move in the right direction for the government. It's something which has not really been a major problem, but it has been a problem for some of the lessors.

The other aspect of the Bill which I found of interest relating to conservation was the attempt through this Bill to provide the power to the minister to make regulations with respect to the construction and operation of the waste oil processing facilities, and the providing of that information to the department from the principals involved in relation to these facilities.

There's no legislative authority at the moment, and the amendments in this Bill clearly provides that the department can regulate same. So the department will in essence have the authority to regulate these practices in a clearer fashion, in a more monitored fashion than has been the case to date, and I think that aspect of the Bill clearly has some positive connotations to it.

The other aspect, I guess, relates to the natural gas deregulation sections of the Bill. The government has basically deregulated the natural gas industry in Saskatchewan. This was done a little over . . . almost a year ago, I believe, and the amendments in this Act are really consequential to their policy of deregulating the gas industry. But I want to just mention, Mr. Speaker, that with regard to deregulation of natural gas and the ideology of deregulation that the Conservative Party has promoted in Canada and in Saskatchewan, coupled with their blind ideology with respect to privatization, we've seen two independent thrusts in the Conservative philosophy, in the Conservative ideology, to in essence take a look at our resources, give our resources at discounted prices to friends of the government and friends of the Conservative Party, for purposes which are quite puzzling to the opposition.

With regard to natural gas deregulation, the government of the day has deregulated the natural gas industry, they are now providing the authority to producers to sell directly to consumers in Saskatchewan and to consumers outside of the province.

Following that decision, which has been widely accepted by the industry, they have sold off a significant portion of resource assets that belong to all the people of this province. They have sold off significant pools of natural gas and reserves of natural gas that have been owned, through the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, by all of the citizens of this province equally.

They have sold those reserves, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I maintain, at discounted prices to Saskoil, which they are bragging has now been privatized and is now in the private sector. The majority of the dividends from Saskoil now go to shareholders living outside this province, and we see that the effects of deregulation go hand in hand with the thrusts and the effects of privatization of this government.

So the amendments in this Bill really deal with that aspect and clean up some of the moves that they've made over the past 12 months in that area.

The interesting item about the Bill that I prefer to comment on today with regard to deregulation, is that the producers, even though they can now sell directly to purchasers outside the province and within the province, now through the amendments have to provide information to the government, to the Department of Energy and Mines, pertaining to the contracts that they signed. And I think that's important information to have, in particular when there are royalties to be paid and a monitoring of the resources is crucial by the government on behalf of the citizens who really own the resource, and that is the taxpayers of this province.

Another article, section 18.4, provides the authority to establish and set up the oil and gas environmental fund. And the fund, according to the minister, will provide a means of last resort to ensure the proper down-hole abandonment of wells and the surface restoration of well site areas when operators default on their normal responsibilities due to financial failure.

I think this is a fund which is an important fund. We in the opposition generally agree with setting up a fund in particular that is not paid for by the taxpayers, but the fund will be created by the producers in the province through a system that is outlined in the Bill. And according to the information, there will be about \$1 million in the fund that will provide for some reserve to go, some last resort fund to go to by the lessors with respect to cleaning up their property and the abandoned wells in the event a company does go bankrupt and can't fulfil its obligations under the lease.

(1245)

The question that I have, and we'll be pursuing this in committee, is the retroactivity nature of the amendment. Whenever there's a fund set up or a piece of legislation that's introduced that has retroactivity in it, it's really important to look very closely at all of the aspects of that. And in particular with this fund, I will be asking some questions in committee, Mr. Deputy Speaker, relating to the fund being set up separately, apart from the Consolidated Fund, and I'd be pursuing questions with the minister on that aspect as well.

Another aspect of the Bill which I've flagged for further questions and discussions is the area concerning the option of the minister to order pooling upon the recommendation of either the oil and gas conservation board or the department. The legislation currently allows the minister to order pooling only after a meeting of the board, and the board has not apparently met for over ten years; we will be looking at some questions concerning this in committee.

Section 55 will allow the department to require gas use permits for all gas contracted and consumed in the province, regardless of the source.

And in my view it's really a codicil to deregulation so the government can monitor the program of deregulation and

program of sale of natural gas by producers directly to purchasers, and that is an area that we will be asking some questions on as well.

An interesting aspect of the Bill, with relation to the deregulation of natural gas, is the authority of the minister to now, through the department, make decisions regarding reserves of natural gas for the purposes of consumption by Saskatchewan people in the province of Saskatchewan.

The minister, under the amendments in the Act, can look at the reserves, make a decision with respect to whether or not there are sufficient reserves for local consumption for purposes of emergency nature as well. And that, in my view, provides some flexibility in the event that there is a shortage, or a shortage that may be coming in the near future. And with that, the minister can then restrict the export and sale of natural gas outside this province. I think that's a good amendment, as well.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will just terminate my comments here by saying that we'll let the Bill go into committee, and we will be asking the minister and her officials some questions relating the areas that I've highlighted for her in advance, and I look forward to getting some answers to those questions. Thank you.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm rather pleased to see that the opposition critic has agreed with so many parts of the Bill. And he has raised some questions, not unexpected on my part, in areas that I would think would be questions such as pooling. Simply the complexity of the issue would raise some questions with it. The environmental fund, as to where it will be run, was another one that we had expected to come up on Committee of the Whole.

Brief remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, particularly as it relates to deregulation and natural gas.

I think the hon. member has taken some liberties in interpretation of what he sees within this Bill as it relates to deregulation and natural gas. It's not selling anything off. In fact, if you take a look at the record and the benefits that have accrued to this province since deregulation was in fact put into place, nothing could be further from the truth than what the member has suggested. And I would ask that he take a good, hard look in fact of what is happening in Saskatchewan and what happens with the consumers on deregulation. Quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has nothing . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . and if the member from Regina Centre would like to get into the debate, he obviously had his chance — missed it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the deregulation has nothing to do with philosophy, as the member from Regina North West has indicated — absolutely nothing to do with philosophy. It has everything to do with a changing economy and changing markets within the world, and Saskatchewan is not in isolation of changing conditions as it relates to economic conditions, and I would ask that he take a look at that when he is considering that part of the Bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of the retroactivity, I will

look forward to some questions from the member on the retroactivity. I think those are fair questions to be raised. And we will also look forward to his questions on the environmental fund and perhaps a pursuing debate at it relates to deregulation on natural gas as contained in the Bill.

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

The Assembly adjourned at 12:51 p.m.