

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Saskatchewan Housing Corporation
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 51**

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Just before the legislature adjourned at 5 o'clock, I was asking the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation to supply me with the costs of advertising during certain years. I wonder if the minister would be prepared, now that he's had two hours to peruse the figures for the . . . provide me with the 1987 and 1986 figures for the total advertising paid out by his department.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm glad to see that he's modified his request a little bit. My officials went back and put in a lot of time trying to struggle with your question. We've discovered, Mr. Chairman, that 1982-1983 is filed away in dead storage some place. We don't even know; it would probably mean going through microfiche files and all the like to get that done.

And as I said at the outset, I'm prepared to supply him with the information that he requires, but whether we could do it in 7 days or 10 days or 14 days, I can't say after my officials looked at it for a couple of hours tonight. It's going to be a horrendous task, and I would ask the member to be a little bit more considerate.

And if you could outline to me, under the circumstances — because I don't know what '82 and '83 is really going to do for you, and we've gone through this year after year after year — but if you could just outline exactly for me what you would really like and break it down, my officials will pay close attention. And if we feel that we can supply you that within seven days or within 10 days, if that's the period that they will require, then I'll respond to you after I hear if you're just prepared to relax a little bit.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Minister, I just asked for the years, now, '86 and '87. I certainly can appreciate there's technical difficulties for the previous years, but do you have available now the total advertising paid out by Sask Housing Corporation in 1986 and in 1987? Do you have those figures available? The total advertising of . . . Certainly those are the only two years that I would expect you to have on hand right now, and if you're able to provide me with that information, that would be fine.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well I specified earlier that we've got the media advertising and that's the only breakdown that we've got at this time. The rest is going to require some research and breakdown. It's all bulked into "other," practically.

So if you would be prepared to just list for me what you want, how you want it broken down and the items that you want us to break down, fine. We'll supply that to you. But I'm not in a position, nor are my officials, and even

after two hours now, to be able to very easily determine what you want.

You know, you say, well is this advertising, or is this stationary, or what is this? And I think that if you're reasonable, we're prepared . . . We have nothing to fear and nothing to hide, and I'm prepared to supply you with the information. Give me an exact list of what you want and we will provide that to you. And I don't have any hesitation in doing that.

But my officials tonight, all we've got with us is few little briefing books and everything. The filing cabinets and everything is back at the shop so that's where we're going to have to go to draw on this. Everybody understands that — even you do.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Minister, perhaps the reason you're stonewalling on the question is because that the portion you paid out in 1986 in advertising for the media, in media advertising alone, totalled over \$200,000 by your own figures, but you haven't included the other advertising that you've done — for example, the money that you paid to Dave Tkachuk and D-Mail, if you paid any, in order to publicize the home program.

What I'm asking you for is a total list of the advertising, including mail-outs by the department, of brochures and of information in regards to the home program as well as the advertising that you paid to print media and, thirdly, to be specific, a list with the amount of how much advertising you paid to the advertising agencies in the province.

Now that doesn't seem to be a very hard list for the years '86 and '87. I suspect that you probably have that information available and you could make that information available within a very short period of time. But I also suspect that you're stonewalling that issue. What I want you to give me is your assurance that you will provide that to the Legislative Assembly within seven days because that doesn't take very much time.

You have . . . You know, and your officials know, how much you paid out to send out the advertising on the home program, an you can't tell me any different. You know how much you put out in media because you've already given me the figures. I want you to just to give me the total and also the breakdown as well.

I don't know what's the big hassle because we could get over these estimates really quickly if you say you're going to give me the total amount that you paid out in that kind of advertising. Because to advertise the home program is advertising through the brochures, the printing costs, and also the distribution costs of that. If you will include that with your print media cost for '86 and '87, then you'll have the total figure that I want.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I want it clearly understood, if after all of your discussion, and I haven't been able to pick out exactly what you want, and I'm sorry — and I'm not stonewalling — but, you know, you've rambled on about quite a few things. But if we can clarify something, if all you want me to supply is the cost of the brochures and the

printing and the distribution costs of the home program in 1986, I'm prepared to supply you with that.

Mr. Lyons: — I want that for 1986, that plus the media costs which you have already read out, the media advertising, and also the costs incurred in 1987. Because the annual report is out; that financial year is over; you should have those costs compiled; and you should be able to provide that. If you will provide me with that, that's all — including the distribution costs — that's all the we're asking for here tonight.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I will undertake to supply for the year 1986 the brochure, the printing, and the distribution of the home program costs and the 1987 advertising cost. Is that clear?

Mr. Lyons: — Yes. Provided that the years are separate, I think that we're on the same wavelength on that; '86 year advertising, including media and the things you related; '87 with the same thing. Okay, if you will provide me that breakdown, that will be fine.

Mr. Minister, before we get into . . . And I'd like you to tell us when you'll supply that information for us. If you can supply that tonight, then just indicate yes or no.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I've already supplied in 1986 and '87 media cost. There won't be any change in that figure; I've already supplied that. So you've got that, but if you want me to include those figures again, I will.

And then the second thing I will supply you with, but I can't supply it tonight, is in 1986 the brochure, the printing and the distribution of the home program, and that will be supplied within seven to 10 days.

Mr. Lyons: — Okay, Mr. Minister. I have your undertaking: seven to 10 days. I'll remind you if that's not able.

Now, Mr. Minister, prior to proceeding with the votes on this estimate, I want to make it very clear to you the meaning and content of the statements that I made earlier on this afternoon in regards to the question of Jenny Wakelam and her hiring. I referred specifically to Mr. Boys in that.

Mr. Boys was one of the officials that I contacted in finding out what happened and why Jenny Wakelam was not hired by your department. I did not mean it imply — and I want Mr. Boys to be assured of this and the Assembly assured of that — that Mr. Boys was the one who told me, who did not tell me the truth because I contacted other officials in your department who I won't name here tonight.

And I understand Mr. Boys obviously was acting under the directions of yourself and of Mr. Little, in regards to Mr. Little being the head of Sask Housing Corporation, and I don't want to in any way leave the impression that it was Mr. Boys who did not tell me the truth.

There were stories, there were explanations given to me by officials in your department which varied one with

each other, which varied one with each other, and I want to make it clear that I stand by my statement that when I talked to officials of your department, I was not given the truth in regards to the Jenny Wakelam story.

I did not, however, mean to imply that it was Mr. Boys, and if Mr. Boys feels aggrieved, I certainly want to take this opportunity to express my regrets and my personal apologies. I did not, sir, mean to imply that you did not tell me the truth.

What I said and what I still, and I think that it was a breach on Mr. Little's conduct, is when I requested from Mr. Boys — and obviously he passed the request along to Mr. Little and, hopefully, to yourself — the resume of the person who was hired in that, I felt that it was a breach of etiquette not to supply that particular document. I want to clear . . . So it's understood, I stand by my earlier statements that I did not receive the story as related to the real facts in the matter when I contacted the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. I also want to make it clear that I did not . . . I do not mean to imply that Mr. Boys was the one who did not give me the truth.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm willing to accept his explanation on behalf of Mr. Boys. Mr. Boys is a long-time civil servant. He began his career with the Government of Saskatchewan in 1978; began his career with Sask Housing in 1981 under the NDP administration and has worked his way diligently up through the ranks to the position that he now holds. But I still am not satisfied with the member from Rosemont and his explanation of officials. It does not go, Mr. Boys, Mr. Little, to the minister. It goes the other way, from Mr. Boys down to the director of personnel and through the management system of Sask Housing.

(1915)

And I would like to point out that the member from Rosemont still, all in all, is slamming long-time professional civil servants inside this legislature. He shouldn't do that; he shouldn't pick on people in here. If he's got a complaint, let him name the people outside of this legislature so that they can indeed offer some explanation and not to be accused of telling a falsehood in this Assembly, but rather be accused of lying — if that's the right word to use, of not telling the truth. Let him say that outside the Assembly and put a name on it, but don't come in here and say that the chain of command works up this way to the minister.

I don't get involved in the daily hiring practices of the corporation, and neither should I. And I don't even know this lady. I'm not aware of anything that occurred in this whole instance, and for him to stand here and take the hierarchy apart for one of his constituency is not fair — is not fair to her, is not fair to other people that applied, is not fair to the hiring practices of the corporation, is not fair to the union that exists at the corporation and, indeed, is not fair to the management of the corporation.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Minister, all I can say in reply to that, I stand by my statements. My beef — my beef, and I'll say it here — is with you and your management of the Sask Housing Corporation. We say we have been backed

by the facts. History will prove us right in that, is that you and your administration has made a mess of the Sask Housing Corporation. You have not carried out its mandate; you have exceeded its mandate. And I will stand by the statements that I made earlier in regards to not getting the full story in relation to the Sask Housing Corporation.

That, however, will get us nowhere arguing that. I think that's all the questions I have regarding item no. 1.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 7 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 51 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates (No. 2)
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Saskatchewan Housing Corporation
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 51**

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 51 agreed to.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I think what is required is that we need to leave to revert to Committee of the Whole. If we do, I will ask for leave to revert to Committee of the Whole. The House can do anything with leave, I think, if the Clerk can advise you.

Mr. Chairman: — The Chair has to report progress to the Speaker; the Speaker will have to ask for leave to revert to Committee of the Whole; and then we have to . . .

The committee reported progress.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for leave to move to Committee of the Whole.

Leave granted.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Bill No. 5 — An Act to declare a Day of Mourning for
Workers Killed or Injured in the Course of their
Employment**

Clause 1

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. First of all, I'd like to say that, on behalf of the government, we think this is a fine Bill, that it's unfortunate that we have to pass a Bill of this nature, because we would like to eliminate death and injury. But from a practical point of view, we know that it may be possible to eliminate work-related deaths but probably not possible to ever eliminate all injuries in the work place.

Although we do work hard to try to eliminate these injuries, if my recollection is correct, the number of deaths in the work place has gone down from about 26 last year to about 13 this year. I know that the number was cut in half over the average. So last year was an

exceptionally good year for the reduction of death in the work place.

In addition, we implemented, through my department, we hired two employees to work in the area of agricultural safety, a particularly dangerous business in Saskatchewan when you consider agriculture is one of our major industries, and yet, it is one of the most dangerous industries in Saskatchewan. We've had these people on the road at agricultural fairs, at Agribition and things of that nature, and it seems that in the last year the number of injuries, and in particular the number of agricultural deaths, has decreased by nearly 50 per cent.

In addition Saskatchewan has a proud tradition, Mr. Deputy Chairman, of having a Workers' Compensation Board that is renowned for its efficiency throughout North America — throughout the world. We had people, a delegation from New Zealand, visiting here studying our workers' compensation system. I was pleased to host them last year. We've had delegations from Wyoming and Colorado and various states in the United States.

Our Workers' Compensation Board . . . and I would say that money cannot compensate for the pain and suffering that workers endure when they're injured on the job. But as much as possible we have a progressive Worker's Compensation Board — progressive to the extent that it concentrates on rehabilitation. It has the most generous benefits in North America, and we do as much as money can accomplish to assist injured workers as a result of the injuries in their work place.

We have also had over the years I might say, under a Liberal government, an NDP government and a Conservative government, a well-managed board. There we over those years allegations of patronage in the appointment of people to the board, but all of those people — whether they were Liberal, CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation), NDP, Conservative — have served well, and therefore the board has a high return on its investments. It has adequate reserves, and I know that the workers of Saskatchewan and the employers appreciate what I will here say and congratulate and boast on behalf of all former governments of Saskatchewan in the type of board they have set up and the way it has operated.

We on this side of the government have tried and, I might say, have been successful in continuing with that successful board. We will be introducing legislation to make that board work even better. And so all in all there is a great recognition of the need for compensation and safety instruction on the prevention of injury in the work place. In addition we are introducing now before this Assembly the work-place hazardous materials system to protect workers from hazardous goods, chemicals in the work place.

And so all in all I would say that, while unfortunately this day is necessary because we can not solve the problem entirely, that all members of the Assembly here agree that we should continue with every effort to prevent death and injury in the work place, and that this particular Bill is proper to give recognition to those people who have been injured, those people who have died in the work place.

And it is also proper to pass a Bill of this nature and have this type of day of recognition so that there's a greater awareness for others to be safe in the work place. And so you have the commitment of this government and I'm sure of all members of the Assembly to try to stop these type of injuries and to go along with the recognition of this particular day. And I would say that I have no difficulty in supporting this Bill.

(1930)

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to support both my colleague and the member from Moose Jaw North, but I wanted to make a few personal comments.

I had had some brief discussion with the hon. member from Moose Jaw and had wanted to put forth a personal point of view and perhaps a point of view for consideration in the future, Mr. Chairman, particularly as it relates to injured workers.

This Bill before us is one that declares a day of mourning for workers killed or injured in the course of their employment. While none of us in this House disagree with this Bill, I had brought to the attention of both my colleague and the hon. member from Moose Jaw that perhaps in the future we would look at the situation of injured workers in different manner.

The reason I say that, Mr. Chairman, several points, and I go from a personal point of view, as I said earlier on it. I know from personal experience what families go through with injured workers. I know that it's not easy, particularly if the injuries are serious, and I know that after the trauma and the shock is over, that, in fact, the last thing that they want is sympathy, mourning, or pity.

It becomes very much a task of learning how to live again, learning how to take your disabilities and put them into abilities. And I think we would all agree that we could probably name at least one person each of us have met that have taken these disabilities and in fact probably have ended up with more abilities than a lot of us in this room.

So the day of mourning was one that bothered me, as it related to injured workers. If there was anything that an injured worker and their family requires after such an event happens, it is empathy and understanding. And while I am not going to put forth any amendments to this Bill, perhaps next year when we are looking at the proclamation, we can address it at that time, and the Assembly will consider the language that they use when they are trying to relate to disabilities as it relates to injured workers.

Having said those few comments, I want to commend the member from Moose Jaw North for bringing it forward.

Mr. Hagel: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, just in very brief response to the member from Swift Current, first of all I'd like to say that I sincerely do appreciate the sentiments that she brings forward and that it's a matter that we've discussed before. And I agree whole-heartedly that, for workers who have been injured, empathy is much more

valuable than sympathy in terms of assisting that process of rehabilitation where possible.

The difficulty in finding the precise wording has to do with the fact that the Bill is providing recognition for workers who are also killed on the job and therefore the conclusion to use the word "mourning." Just by way of clarification as well, and in no way to belittle the sentiments that the hon. member from Swift Current raises, I simply point out that the wording in entitling the Bill is entirely consistent with the proclamations that were declared in both 1987 and 1988 here in the province of Saskatchewan and is also consistent with proclamations declared in municipalities in this province, as well as by municipalities and provincial jurisdictions across the nation as well.

Just finally one item, Mr. Chairman. I checked with Hansard just earlier today and noted that I made a slight error in my concluding remarks on second reading, where I made reference . . . in making reference to the day on which this particular recognition would occur. By a slip of the tongue, I used the phrase "April 27," and I simple want to clarify, Mr. Chairman, on record, that is clearly the intent of the Bill that it would be annually on April 28 that the day would be honoured and that would be consistent with jurisdictions across the country.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3

Mr. Chairman: — There is a House amendment to clause 3:

Section 3 of the English version of the printed Bill be repealed and the following substituted therefor:

This Act shall be deemed to have come into force on April 28, 1988.

There is a subsequent amendment in French to go in on the French side of the Bill.

Clause 3 as amended agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill as amended.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 5 — An Act to declare a Day of Mourning for Workers Killed or Injured in the Course of their Employment.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the amendment now be read the first and second time.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move that Bill No. 5 be now read the third time and passed under its title.

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Urban Affairs
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 24

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to begin to move along on these estimates, and I want to begin by asking the minister some questions on a subject which we addressed yesterday evening at some length, after which the minister indicated that he would make an announcement on his government's intentions and his government's . . . with regard to policy on the electoral system of our urban municipalities. And I want to say at the outset that this afternoon we heard the minister announce a horrendous attack on the electoral system and the democratic process on the cities of Saskatchewan.

I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that that's regrettable. It clearly is a position of the government and the right of the government to implement its policies; they have the majority. And based on that decision and their decision, the public will be the judge.

I just want to remind the minister that the public was a judge in Saskatoon and Prince Albert and in Regina, and the public said to the politicians of legislatures that they appreciated the system of municipal elections which involved the ward system. And for the government to say now, arbitrarily, in spite of what those people said, that they're going to wipe them out, I think is horrendous.

Now I think it's particularly horrendous and shows the confusion which exists on the benches of that government and the acquiescence of the back-benchers to some stronger individuals who obviously are in cabinet, when you see the kind of contradiction that the minister's announcement today showed. And I want to ask the minister about it.

The minister announced today that he's going to be introducing legislation which will abolish the ward system of electing councillors and alderpeople to our city councils. He has said that they will not have an option. Oh, he will say . . . get up to his feet, and he will say: oh, but they have an option. They can either have a two-tiered system, where 50 per cent are elected at large and 50 per cent are elected on the ward basis, which is the worst possible, the worst possible arrangement. That's the one shocking thing, is that having some options before him, the minister decided to take the one that's the worst, the one that used to exist in Ontario, the one that used to exist in Ontario in a lot of cities, and they worked so badly that they have eliminated it.

And the minister knew how bad it was, because he did say . . . As I pointed out to him in question period on March 22, he said the following:

The modified ward system has some

disadvantages because it leads to very confusing municipal ballots and because it would create two classes of alderman.

And he was right. Now, Mr. Minister, since you so firmly believed that to be the case some two months ago, how can you now possibly defend your imposition of exactly that system which you are so critical of as announced by your statement this afternoon? Can you explain that clearly to the public of Saskatchewan and show that it has anything to do with any reasoning other than straight partisan politics?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, straight partisan politics, I suspect, is what the NDP had in mind in 1973 when they imposed the ward system. And let's get the matter of the plebiscites straight; let's understand of that, once and for all. And I would like the member from Regina North East to admit this because it's readily available. And for those people that may be watching on television tonight, if they're not already sick and tired about hearing about this, there were two plebiscites in Regina. Two plebiscites in Regina voted down the ward system. The NDP government of the day arbitrarily imposed it. In 1976, there was a plebiscite in Saskatoon that turned down the ward system. The NDP did nothing to change it, and now they accuse us, Mr. Chairman, of doing that.

(1945)

We conducted a review that results in a new system for this province and yes, we, and particularly myself, gave serious consideration to requiring that the three Saskatchewan cities that currently have wards move completely to at-large elections. However there was concern expressed by the councils of those cities and also by SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association), whom I have a high regard for and consult with very often. We listened, Mr. Speaker, and we are retaining, we are retaining a form of the ward system that the four largest cities may have if they opt for it.

And it's quite a contrast to the previous government, Mr. Chairman. That government, as I mentioned, imposed the ward system, and there was no compromise, there was no middle ground. And, in fact, that regime also introduced a Bill, Mr. Chairman, imposing wards on school systems in the large cities despite virtually unanimous outcry from the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association) and from school boards. And yet they introduced that legislation as well without having any regard for any of these people. We at least had some regard.

Now the question, I suppose, can be asked that, you know, why is this government requiring cities which have wards to adopt a split ward at large? Well, you know, why is the move away from the full ward system not subject to a vote of electors? Well, as I said, we've got to compromise with them.

But, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, let me quote the member from Saskatoon Westmount, who wrote in a letter to the *Leader-Post* on May 3, 1973, and I'll quote what he wrote:

The British North America Act puts the responsibility for creating local government institutions on the provincial government. The provincial government should design and put into effect the best democratic system of local government.

And that's exactly what we have tried to do, but we have done so with a great deal of sensitivity to the expressed wishes of the elected members of the city councils concerned.

Now I'll deal with another specific — some of the concerns raised with the split ward system from time to time in Canada. And I mentioned such two concerns a month or so ago in the press from which he quoted, the concern about the split ward system producing two classes of alderman. I have since discovered that that problem really only exists where a board of control is part of the split system. And that board of control was a very important part of that Ontario model and it gave special powers to those alderman that were elected at large.

Our new model does not do that and, as a result, my fears in that regard have been dispelled as a result of consultations, and in fact my officials have been in touch with academics and city officials in Thunder Bay and in St. John's, Newfoundland where the split system is used. And it seems that all alderman enjoy the same status legally and in the eyes of the voters. I think that that puts to rest his concerns.

And I just want to emphasize one more time that the ward system was imposed by that opposition now, the government of the day in 1973. Despite plebiscites against it, they imposed it.

We now, after extensive consultation, have agreed to a modified ward system that I think, as far as it relates to the taxpayers of the urban centres, will be totally pleasing to them. Because now, Mr. Chairman, they not only have the representation from their ward and their ward alderman to go to, but truly in a big democratic fashion for the first time since 1973, the voters of our major cities will be able to elect the entire council, a membership of six of 10.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, if the minister is so concerned about the voters of the cities of this province, I want to ask him: why will he not give them the right to choose whether they want to elect their alderman under the ward system?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, he's talking, of course, about plebiscites. At this time I would like to quote from *Hansard* what the now Leader of the Opposition, who was part of the government in 1973, when asked the same question of plebiscites. He said this:

Plebiscites are costly and expensive procedures. So I urge those who call for a plebiscite to look at the realities of the situation.

And he goes on to say . . . And as we debate this Bill more fully in committee, I have several quotes that I will attribute to the Leader of the Opposition on this matter

and the matter of plebiscites.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I will let the Leader of the Opposition speak for himself. I only wish the Minister of Urban Affairs would speak for himself and for the government as on the matter of their policy.

Now, Mr. Minister, I ask you this: why will you not allow the voters in the cities of Saskatchewan to choose what system they want to have under which to elect their councillors or alderman?

You are going to tell them that you're going to impose a two-tier system. You're saying to them that they might choose one system, and at large, but you're at the same time saying you're not going to allow them to choose the ward system. Now, Mr. Minister, why?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I've answered that more than several times. You know, they, in spite of two plebiscites against them in 1973, in spite of two plebiscites in Regina saying the ward system was not acceptable, they imposed it. In 1976, in Saskatoon, another plebiscite saying no, and they didn't remove it.

I can't even begin to understand the argument, and neither will the people of the cities be able to understand that argument.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the minister still hasn't answered the question.

Mr. Minister, if you're allowing a choice between two-tier system and an at-large system, I suppose that's fair — and I'm not sure who's going to decide that, the council or the electorate — if you're going to allow that, as you have been quoted in the press, why won't you allow them also to choose the ward system?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — The simple answer, I suppose, is the same way that you imposed the system. I still believe, I guess, in my heart of hearts that that plebiscite — those two plebiscites held in Regina where they didn't want the ward system, that one plebiscite held in Saskatoon where they didn't want the ward system, and you arbitrarily imposed it because you believed that that was your responsibility at the time; and I quoted the member from Saskatoon Westmount — I say the same now.

I believe that it's my responsibility to offer to these municipalities the very best form of municipal government they can have, because it's designed for the taxpayer.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, if you are so deeply concerned about arbitrarily imposing anything, why are you arbitrarily imposing this system and not allowing the municipalities to choose the ward system?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Because the ward system was imposed on them by the NDP.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I ask you, Mr. Minister, did the voters in Regina and Saskatoon choose by vote, by large margins, to have the ward system in 1978 or 1976, I forget which, but in one of those years? Will you concur that

they had a vote and by wide margins agreed that they preferred the ward system?

And will you also agree that the city of Prince Albert, on their own, they voted and chose to have a ward system, something which now you are arbitrarily going to take away from them?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, there has been several votes taken, as we all know, on the ward system and plebiscites. And I still go back to my original argument: after two plebiscites in Regina — two — soundly defeating the imposition of the ward system, the NDP government imposed the ward system, just flat out imposed it. And here we have had some sensitivity and we have come up with a modified system so that those that enjoy the ward system indeed have the ward system; those that prefer to have the free democratic vote to change their council, also have that.

And I believe that this debate that has been going on since 1914, perhaps, maybe in 1973, maybe in 1956, maybe indeed in 1936, the government of the day should have looked at the modified system as being a more appropriate type of government. This could very well be on the leading edge of new municipal government across Canada.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, are you aware . . . And I'll ask you a straight, simple question without a speech so you don't have to make a speech if you feel you've got to defend yourself to everything that the opposition says. Are you aware that in 1978 or 1976 the voters in Saskatoon and the voters in Regina voted and said they wanted the ward system as their electoral system in their cities; and are you aware that in the city of Prince Albert, in 1982, the people voted on their own and said that they wanted the ward system? Are you aware of those facts?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Certainly I'm aware of those, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Tchorzewski: Well if you are aware of them, Mr. Minister, why are you now denying them the right to do that by your action?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I suppose my original response is going back to the imposition of 1973. Against two plebiscites, the NDP still imposed it, and in 1976 after the ward system was in . . .

An Hon. Member: This is how rumours get started.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I'm still on camera. You guys behave like jerks, what do I care? You know . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. Allow the minister to answer.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I suppose that a more sound question is, in 1976 Saskatoon had a plebiscite, three years after the imposition of the ward system by the NDP government, three years after it was imposed on the people of Saskatoon. And was it taken to heart by the NDP government? Not at all. The plebiscite, after three years, still wanted to get rid of the ward system. And did

they listen? No. We listen.

Mr. Chairman, it's fair to say . . . And I've been on record as saying that I prefer the at-large system, but our government listened and we consulted, and we consulted with all of the various councils of the cities. We knew where they stood on the thing. And we talked to SUMA. And as a result of those discussions, Mr. Chairman, we felt that the modified system brings together the best of the two worlds. And as I've mentioned before and as I mention again, it will provide those that enjoy the ward system the opportunity to have their ward alderman, and conversely, those that want to have the democratic right to vote for the majority of their council will also have that right.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister, a few minutes ago, somehow tried to leave the impression that this five-and-five system or this half-and-half system — or as we like to call it, this half-baked system that you have — is somehow going to be at the leading edge of urban thought in Canada. If that's the case, Mr. Chairman, it would be the first time in about six years that the province of Saskatchewan has been a leader in urban thinking in Canada.

This is a government that's characterized not by leading; this is a government that's characterized by following when it comes to urban programs and when it comes to urban services. This is a backwards-looking government. And this is a very backward step, I would submit. There's nothing leading or revolutionary about the minister's idea, except that it's . . . even if it's between a rock and a hard place . . . Overwhelming public opinion, overwhelming public opinion opposed to his imposition of an at-large system, and yet strong, strong calls within his own party caucus to do away with the ward system, especially in Regina, to ensure that there was a system that might not see the re-election of the kinds of councils that we had in Regina. Caught between those competing positions the minister offers this half-baked idea of his — and it is a half-baked idea.

Mr. Minister, and I say it's an old idea too, because no matter what he says about the boards of controls in Ontario, and that those boards of controls did not work and the boards of controls are — and those municipal councils in Ontario allowed for the election of aldermen in wards and allowed for the election of some at large, who were the known as controllers and sat on the board of control. And he says that that system didn't work out in Ontario because those controllers were given special powers and responsibilities and that's what created two classes of alderman or councillors; and that's what created the divisiveness; and that's what created many of the controversies in Ontario cities. And he says: well we're not proposing to give them additional powers at this point, that is to say the five that might be elected at large, so we're going to avoid that and therefore we're going to be on the leading edge, the leading edge of urban thought in Canada.

(2000)

I want to tell you, Mr. Minister that it'll take about two council meetings after the next election for those that were elected at large to say to the rest of the council: we

want some additional powers and responsibilities. We got elected at large. We didn't get elected in a ward like you did. We want some additional powers and responsibilities. We're answerable to everyone in this city as opposed to simply, you know, a person in a ward, and therefore we're going to take that, and we have the power with the mayor to be able to do that.

And I would submit to you, Mr. Minister, that's what is going to happen, that you're not going to be in any different position than the cities are in Ontario, cities that are turning their backs on that kind of system because they found it hasn't worked, that it's created divisiveness within their councils.

It also tended to create some other unique little problems in Ontario cities that you may not be aware of, Mr. Minister — unique little problems where in some cities those elected to the board of controls sometimes tended to come from selected areas of the cities because of their background, their ability to run at-large elections. They tended to come from certain geographic areas in the cities, and tended to get together with the alderman from the wards in those areas and tended to display a great deal of favouritism for certain areas of the city to a much greater extent than has ever been the case under any ward system, and therefore creating even more of the problem that you say that you're trying to get rid of.

So, Mr. Minister, I simply want to point out to you that you have a half-baked idea. It's an old idea. It's an idea that hasn't worked very well where it has been tried, that cities elsewhere in Canada are turning their backs on them. And when you talk about the leading edge, sir, I would submit to you again that you're talking about the rear end of urban thought in Canada because that characterizes your stewardship in that department and that characterizes your government when it comes to urban affairs — very definitely backward looking.

This province hasn't been at the leading edge of urban thought in Canada for some six years now. It hasn't put forward good, solid ideas for how to improve life in our cities and our urban areas and how to improve on local government for some six years. And that's because your party doesn't believe in urban Saskatchewan; your party has no solution for urban Saskatchewan; your party doesn't care to think about urban Saskatchewan except in the meanest, meanest of ways.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you: isn't it possible that the kinds of problems that I outlined to you with respect to Ontario are, in fact, the kinds of problems we're going to have here now?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Chairman, obviously the member from Regina Victoria sets himself up as some leading expert on municipal affairs for this country. And I would like to remind him and the citizens of Regina, his record is quite clear on city council, so they can take it for what it's worth.

He made an interesting statement regarding Regina city council and he referred to "these kinds of councils". I don't have the foggiest idea because I have never referred to these kinds of councils and it's curious to note what

kind of a connotation he puts on these kinds of councils.

And I suppose to keep this short because we're going to debate this when the Bill is brought forward, I have to admit, Mr. Chairman, very humbly, that I don't have the clairvoyant capabilities of the member from Regina Victoria regarding the future problems of boards of control entering into this. It's not included in our legislation.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well, Mr. Minister, if you'd have stopped to think about the system of urban government we have, that we need, you might be able to foresee some of these problems. Also, some experience, sir, in urban government just might help you to sort of identify future problems.

You know, but you don't seem to concern yourselves with the real problems of urban municipalities in Saskatchewan. You seem to concern yourself with your political agenda and how you can ram it down the throats of people in urban Saskatchewan. That's what you're concerned about. And if that's what you're concerned about you're not going to be able to see the kinds of problems and kinds of concerns that your legislation might improve.

And again, Mr. Minister, I want to ask you the kinds of problems that have been experienced in Ontario. Just what kind of reaction do you have? So you not see those as perhaps potential problems as a result of the system that you're now going to impose?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I think I've got the best experience in the world as a municipal expert — I'm a taxpayer. And that's all you have to be to be a municipal expert, is a taxpayer. And all of us are . . .

An Hon. Member: Oh, come on.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Oh, come on, the member from Saskatoon says. You know, if you pay taxes you've got a vested interest and that's exactly why this change has come about because now you're going to have the opportunity. Their argument has many holes in it, Mr. Chairman. Their argument won't hold water. We are retaining a flavour of the ward system, clearly. Half of the alderman will be representing wards. Those concerns will be addressed. The other half will be elected at large so that the taxpayer has the opportunity — as he rightfully should have — to elect his council.

Now as far as it relates to setting up some clandestine type of an operation, some big board of control. They won't have the powers to do that, number one, so I don't fear that. And you laugh. They don't have the powers to do that, number one; number two, if there's five and five, are you telling me that the mayor is always going to side with the members elected at large? If you are saying that, your experience in municipal government relates to zero.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Minister, you have said that the taxpayers are the experts in urban government, and if that's the case, why don't you let the taxpayers sort of vote on this question and decide for themselves what kind of

system it is that they need.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I'll quote the member from Saskatoon Westmount:

The British North America Act puts the responsibility for creating local government institutions on the provincial government. The provincial government should design and put into effect the best democratic system of local government.

And we believe that we are doing that, and we're not imposing it the way you did when you took the at-large system, threw it out, and imposed the ward system.

We have here a modified ward system that retains the best of the two models and as a result of that it's not near the imposition that you put in. How can you ask me that question? The NDP government imposed it. We are bringing in a modified system that retains the flavour of the ward system and that provides the democratic opportunity to elect the entire council.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Minister, I think your ignorance again of urban legislation and how urban municipalities work has been showing. You said in response to my question that the legislation wouldn't provide for any additional powers for those that are elected at large, and certainly the legislation at this point doesn't, and I don't suppose that your legislation will provide for that.

But do you mean to tell me that a group of councillors couldn't decide for themselves that only certain members of council, depending on how they're elected, were going to be the chair people of committees, powerful committees within the council structures; that only certain members of council, say those elected at large, were going to act as deputy mayor; that certain members of council, say those elected at large, couldn't be paid more than, say those who were elected through a ward system. You mean to tell me that none of those things are possible, given your legislation?

Mr. Minister, your legislation is enabling legislation. There's a great deal of scope for councils to make their own decisions as to who they want to favour in those councils and how they want to run their own affairs. And so I suggest to you that there's a great deal of potential there for a group elected at large to take upon themselves additional duties and responsibilities, and if not de jure powers at least de facto powers in the running of an urban municipality. And you stand there and say, well it ain't going to be. Well what proof do you have to say, and what proof do you have and what experience do you have to say that that won't happen?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well you can take a run at me personally. I mean, I've got used to that now; I see it in articles in the paper, and all the rest of it. So, you know, you can call me whatever you want to call me. I will ultimately be judged by the people; so will you. So I don't fear that.

Obviously the councils are going to run by what the majority decides. And are you purporting to tell the

people of our province that the mayor, who has the responsibility of operating the entire city in the event that it's a five-five or a four-four split — whatever — that the mayor is automatically going to side with one group or another? What if the ward people wanted to do some ... You don't trust anybody. I happen to trust my councils. I've always said that they've done a pretty good job under the circumstances, and now I'm providing them with the opportunity to do even a better job. Why don't you trust them?

What you're saying is that you're going to get a fancy group of influential people that are going to control city councils. You say you're for the people — balderdash. You don't care for the people; you don't trust anybody. I happen to trust my alderman and I happen to trust my mayors. And if I can give them better tools with which to operate, it's my responsibility to do that. And ultimately the taxpayer is going to reign supreme on this; and the mayor better pay attention; and he will.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I knew that if we asked this minister long enough, we'd soon get back to the comedy routine that he is so well known for.

Now, Mr. Minister, ultimately you said you were prepared to be judged by the people. I find that rather ironical coming from the mouth of this minister who, when he was ready to get judged by the people in the constituency he got elected in, had to flee because he knew that they were going to pass judgement and had to go somewhere else.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Now coming from anybody else, Mr. Chairman, that maybe would sound credible, but coming from this minister it has no credibility at all.

Now, Mr. Minister, you said that you trust municipal councillors and you trust the mayors of municipalities. Now that's hypocrisy at its worst, because I ask you now, if you trust the mayors and if you trust the municipalities, why won't you trust them to put in place the electoral system that suits them best as they did in the city of Prince Albert in consultation with their electorate? Why are you taking that right away from these people that you pretend to trust?

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I'm not taking any right away from anybody, and I'll go back and I'll quote the member from Saskatoon Westmount again, because it's a pretty good quote and I enjoy it. "The British North America Act puts the responsibility for creating local government institutions on the provincial government." That's clear. And you imposed the ward system against all odds, against all plebiscites. You imposed it; that's clear.

Now I've offered them an alternative that you never did offer them, and I've come up with a compromise — and a good, good, honest compromise, I believe, because it gives the voters the best of both systems.

And you, the member from Regina North East, of all

people, calling me a parachute candidate when you move in from Humboldt to Regina North East, and I simply return to Regina South where in 1971 I sought the nomination for the election for the Liberal Party. My roots go back that far. My family grew up in Regina South, and I pioneered Albert Park. I've lived there that long, for crying out loud. I went back to my natural ground when that seat became open, and you contradict me that way when you go to Regina North East from Humboldt because you didn't want to run there again — boloney.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Isn't this a revealing discussion. Not only did this minister switch constituencies, he switches parties as well. Now this is the decisive minister who talks about giving some choices to the municipalities.

Now, Mr. Minister, will you explain carefully here, without too much rhetoric or great emotion, what choices you've given those municipalities?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Certainly. Everybody knows where I was coming from. I wanted the at-large system. They have the opportunity to join me in that desire if they so wish, or, conversely, I have modified my position, and I have said: fine, we will give you the split model which retains the flavour of the ward and which also allows the taxpayer to vote for the council at large. And that was not an option that was available to the people at the time the NDP imposed the ward system.

Even after three years in Saskatoon, when the people of Saskatoon spoke out against the ward system — a plebiscite saying, no, we don't want it — what did the NDP do? Nothing; they left it in. And you've got the audacity to say that I gave them no choice.

(2015)

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, don't get too excited now. I know you're sensitive because I know that you had an idea that you wanted to implement. You found you had no support, and you're just too bloody stubborn to back off. That's the problem.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Your reactions in this House this evening are proof of that because you refuse to answer some very strict and direct question that are relevant today.

Now I asked you a question which you didn't answer. You said you're giving municipalities a choice. Now obviously you're going to implement dictatorially a two-tiered system, where they elect half by . . . half on the whole, I assume, and the other half on some kind of a different ward — a modified ward system. That's what you're going to impose. What other choice do they have?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I suppose you can say I backed off — stubborn little guy backed off. Fine. I'm proud of the fact that I listen, and I did modify my position, and I did back off. And I backed off to the point that my wishes are still available to them — the at-large system.

And the other option that's available to them is the modified ward system, where — and I answer your question directly, sir — where I indicate that yes, the flavour of the ward system is retained. We are simply cutting them in half and we're putting five at large. And I believe that it will benefit the taxpayer.

And it is the free, democratic right of the taxpayer to be able to vote in his entire controlling aldermanic candidates, if that's what you'd like to say, because he votes for five at large plus his one ward. That's six out of 10, or in the case of eight, five out of eight. So that as a result he has an opportunity, he has the best of two worlds; that is a democracy.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Now you're getting close, Mr. Minister. Now that you've settled down, you're getting a little closer.

You say now that they will have an option: they can have the modified system or they can have an at-large system. Can they have a ward system if they so choose?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Now we're right down to the nitty-gritty, Mr. Deputy Chairman. When the NDP imposed the ward system, that was it. One out of three choices was theirs — one. I have provided the opportunity of twice that many — two of three.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, will you confirm that in the 1970s when that legislation was brought in that the voters were given the choice to choose any system they wanted — and they did in the middle 1970s — will you confirm that?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I will confirm, Mr. Deputy Chairman, that in 1976 Saskatoon voted the ward system out and the NDP didn't listen.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, Mr. Minister, did the Saskatoon people since then vote for the ward system or vote in favour of it?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I have conceded before and I will concede again, after a certain degree of comfort level and perhaps a little bit of apathy in the good times, and the people becoming used to a system . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Mr. Chairman, I don't find this debate humorous at all. I'm discussing taxpayers' dollars here; I'm discussing something very important to the taxpayers, and you haven't seen me laugh or giggle about this thing from day one.

And I find it very interesting that the NDP opposite sit there and find this whole debate on the ward system very, very funny, very, very comical. I don't happen to find it funny one bit. This is a serious, a very, very serious decision that our government has made, and we've made it. And as a result, the taxpayer will clearly benefit from that decision.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, if I was the minister having to pilot this legislation through, I wouldn't laugh

either. I can tell you, Mr. Minister, you know as well as anybody else here, or people in the public and particularly in our urban centres, that what you are doing, you have no support for.

I'm going to get into, later, on asking you some questions about where specifically you are getting your support and where the recommendations are and if you can table them in this House. Because I submit to you, through you, Mr. Chairman, to the minister, that he can't do that. He can't do that. And all that he is saying here this evening is a bunch of rhetoric which he cannot defend because one, in the world of democratic politics, can never defend an act such as this which arbitrarily takes the right of people who vote for whatever level of politics — takes that right away. And that's what this minister is doing.

Now, Mr. Minister, you still didn't answer my question that I asked earlier. Since you're going to allow municipalities through their councils to choose the modified system or choose the at-large system, what's wrong in a democratic world also including then the opportunity to choose the ward system? Give them the three options. Why will you not give them the three options?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, times change and with those changing times we were pleased to provide the two options — twice as many options as was provided by the NDP government in 1973. And in that debate, Mr. Chairman, where the same questions were asked for the same tabling of the evidence and for the same findings and the like to impose the ward system — which was a dramatic move at that time — they were empty.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Can I ask you, Mr. Minister, since you are so well-informed of that debate, did the result of that debated not give municipalities the right to discard the ward system or to keep it if they so chose?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Nine cities had that right and still operate at large.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, the minister is ducking the question again. Mr. Minister, did not that legislation provide the right to municipalities to choose the ward system or to reject it if they so chose? Will you answer that question?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Certainly the legislation included that. But because of a little technicality in Saskatoon, because of the fact that the vote came one year early, it wasn't bound by the legislation. But yet in 1976 when the people of Saskatoon said, Mr. NDP Government, please remove the ward system, please return us to the at-large system, what did the NDP say? No, you got to have another one. Come on.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Now we've confirmed that the voter, until this minister introduces the Bill, have had the right to choose; and they chose. They had the right to choose on whether they have a ward system for electing their council or whether they didn't want to have the ward system. Now, Mr. Minister, since this they have always had this right. How can you now justify taking it away?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, we're going to enter the debate of this Bill at this point in time, there is a provision there for a plebiscite, and we'll debate it at that time.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, will there be a provision . . . Is it policy for your government to provide the right to municipalities to choose a ward system?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, the member knows full well that we cannot debate in anticipation of a Bill.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm not asking about the Bill, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I'm asking about government policy. Government policy is to impose a modified system. Government policy is — and the minister has been beat down on that one to some degree — to have a system at large. Mr. Minister, is it also government policy to allow the municipalities to choose a ward system or any of the other two?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, the provision for them to choose the ward system is not there, the same way the provision for them to choose the ward system in 1973 was not there.

Mr. Solomon: — Mr. Minister, I've got a smashing headache tonight, and I can barely comprehend what some of the things you are doing. And I think I've got a smashing headache because I've been listening to you for a number of hours trying to justify the unjustifiable. I think I've got a smashing headache because I've been listening to you hollering and screaming and trying to defend the defenceless with respect to the ward system and the changes that you are proposing.

From the perspective of the ward system in Regina, in particular the north end of Regina, I want to enlighten you as to what the benefits have been.

For the first time in memory, because of the ward system, people can now call up a councillor who represents their district and ask them questions about issues that relate to the city. People in the wards, in particular in the north end, can now call their councillors and request a specific councillor to provide specific information.

People in these wards, Mr. Minister, can now call their councillors — and have been over the course of the ward system — to provide them with advice and direction with respect to issues which relate to their community. And in every case, Mr. Minister, the councillors in those wards are accountable to a specific neighbourhood.

They, therefore, have been doing a fairly good job in general, responding to those requests of their constituents. They've been doing a fairly good job with respect to responding to advice from their constituents, and they've been doing not a bad job in identifying issues in their community and trying to resolve them in co-operation with the other councillors in the city.

And what I want to know from you, Mr. Minister, is what is wrong, in your view, with these attributes of accountability?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Now we're into something real good, Mr. Chairman, and I'm sorry that the member has a headache. And I won't complain; I feel good. I feel real good because we made a good and proper decision.

And you can stand here and listen to me for months for all I care. I'm prepared to debate this thing until the snow flies next fall. And when . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well, I'm ready, I'm ready. And the people will speak out and they'll speak out against it because I'll tell you why . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Regina North West is exactly right on. And that is why we retained the right to the ward system: they will still be able to call on their ward representatives; they will still be able to discuss their neighbourhoods. And as a matter of fact, the responsibility for that member, that alderman, has been increased because now he will have even more electors to represent and a greater area of the city to be responsible for.

And that's exactly the point I'm trying to tell you is that that flavour, that part of the ward system will still be retained and nothing will change in that regard. And your argument, your argument is worthless because the ward system is still in place.

Mr. Solomon: — Well, Mr. Minister, my headache is getting worse because what you're saying one moment, you defend and say the opposite the next moment. Now which is it? You say the remarks I've made have credibility with respect to accountability, or they don't. Now tell me, which is the proper response? Could you clarify that because you've given us two answers to one question, both on opposite poles.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — You might have a headache, but you're not that stupid. I explained it pretty clearly. The ward system flavour is still retained, they will still be able to call their ward representative. Don't you understand that?

There's going to be five in Regina, five in Saskatoon. There's going to be four in Prince Albert, assuming that the councils decide that that's how they'd like to go, is with the modified system. And that's exactly what I've been saying, is that this new model strikes a balance, a balance between the ward system and the at-large system, and it incorporates the best of both models.

And I can't even begin to understand how you can argue that, because the man on the street, my urban taxpayer, the one that has discharged me or charged me with this obligation, to ensure that I can provide the municipalities with the best form of democratic government that they have, will now have the opportunity to have his ward alderman and still be able to elect the councillors at large. Don't you understand that? Don't you understand how this model will balance itself off?

Go back and talk to your people in Regina North West later on in this week and over the weekend, as I have done, and see what they anticipate with this. And you will find that they will accept this, and you will find that the NDP will back off of this, and that this will not be debated too much once the Bill is introduced. And they will recognize the fairness of this system, and this system will

pass, and it will be accepted.

(2030)

Mr. Solomon: — Well, Mr. Minister, what you are proposing is not too difficult to understand. It's a backwards step. You're saying the ward system created the problems that exist in the city, and that eliminating the ward system will rectify those problems.

You know, that's more garbage than you can even count at the city dump. It's a backwards step, Mr. Minister, because what it basically means is that rather than having accountability to a specific neighbourhood, you're going to have five of the councillors who are not accountable to any specific neighbourhood and will be accountable on the basis of the ability to run for election, which is (a) wealth; (b) the ability to put together a machine, which requires a lot of money — example, wealth; or in other instances with the support of a particular machine which may or may not be of benefit.

But the problem we've got, Mr. Minister, is that with this proposed bastardization of the ward system, we have not an effective, accountable system. We have a system that is backward; it's not accountable. It doesn't make any sense if you're saying we've got to have half elected by constituency and half not elected by constituency, unless you're willing to do that at the provincial level as well. Why don't we elect 33 MLAs on the basis of constituencies and let's elect 33 MLAs on the basis of popular vote? Why don't we try that, Mr. Minister? Think that would be a good way to go? You can't have one thing for the goose and something different for the gander.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, if the member is suggesting that we operate in this House as all independent candidates without a legally elected government, without a legally elected opposition, and without all of the parliamentary system that exists in this tradition — that's what he's saying — I think that his headache is a little bit more severe than he believes, because he's not thinking straight on that one.

There is no way that you can compare the operation of the parliamentary system and this House and these legislatures the same way as you do a municipal government where the voting procedures are entirely different. And the electorate understands that. And that argument is hollow. And . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well if you're suggesting, if the NDP is suggesting some other form of electing the government and coming in here, everybody sitting as independents and no government and no opposition, and see the chaos that would be created, well then let's go ahead and do that. I mean, you know, we'd be prepared to listen to those things.

And, Mr. Chairman, I'm trying to keep a reasonable description in this debate, and hear the member call, you know, this whole debate garbage and junk and the like. I mean, I'm trying to keep this at a serious level. If the NDP — and they're laughing again about the ward system — if the NDP believes that the ward system is junk, and if the NDP believes that the ward system is garbage, and if the NDP believes that the ward system is a joke, then all I can

do on behalf of the government is to apologize to the taxpayers of our urban centres for the NDP behaving in that fashion.

Mr. Solomon: — Well, Mr. Minister, the New Democratic Party opposition does not believe the ward system is a joke, as you say, we believe that the ward system is an accountable system — that it's a system which has provided a new view with respect to urban issues, and a very important view with respect to urban issues and an accountable view.

You may recall, Mr. Minister — you've been around for a few years, perhaps more than some people would like — but you may recall when we had the at-large system, Mr. Minister. Decisions were made at city hall on the basis of a geographic location in the city. If you look at the city, you will note in the northern half of the city, a part of which I represent, has rail yards and rail spurs; it has industrial development; it has Ipsco and it has the city land fill site; and it has a number of other essential elements in a city, but they're all concentrated in one part of the city, which is not the case in other urban centres that have had reasonable representation on a geographic basis over the years. And you will know that, and you know that better than I can tell you.

So my question to you, Minister: why would you want to revert back to a system which does not consider all of the areas of the city from a reasonable point of view, as opposed to a warped point of view — not warped but a slanted point of view — and that one section of the city is developed in a more family-oriented fashion, for example, nice parks and fairly safe back lanes and well lit streets and lots of trees, and very little pollution; whereas the other part of the city which has not had representation over the years in the concentrated ways or even in the fair ways we've got now, has the land fill site, and the rail yards and the industrial development and a lack of trees and a lack of amenities that are important to families.

They would not have had those amenities that we have now in the north end if it wasn't for New Democratic Party MLAs in this city putting forward funds through the provincial government to build them and put them together; and (b) because we've had a ward system in the last 12 or 14 years which as said, well, if we've got 60 per cent of the population living in the north end of the city, then maybe we should have 40 or 50 or 60 per cent of the funds spent up there for the purpose of benefitting families, instead of having 60 per cent of the people living in the north and having 20 per cent of the city revenues spent in the north, on 60 percent of the population. How do you justify that?

How do you think your system is going to make this city, in a balanced view, a better place to live?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Boy, strange conversation from the member of Regina North West. I consider your constituency of Regina North West to be similar to my constituency of Regina South. As a matter of fact, you've got a lot more new homes out there than I do in the south, because I don't have any expansion left in Regina South. And I don't see where all this industrial site and everything relates to you seat.

An Hon. Member: I'm saying the north end.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — If you're talking about the north end of the city, I represented Regina North for four years. I'm very familiar with everything that went on up there. You have to remember, and I've said this on many occasions . . .

An Hon. Member: You should know.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Absolutely, I should know. I've lived in this city for almost 50 years now, and I'm very proud of it. And I didn't leave this city.

And I've seen the at-large system and I've seen the municipal government operate on the at-large system. I've seen the ward system operate. We get down to one basic nitty-gritty here that you mentioned, and that I guess I happen to agree with: you said the NDP believes in the ward system. Fine. Now we know exactly where we start.

Our government doesn't believe in the entire ward system, and that's why we still leave the flavour of the ward . . . And there they go, laughing again; they think that this is really humorous, Mr. Chairman. You think that the ward system is a big joke. I don't, and that's why we retained some of the flavour of the ward system in balance.

And I'm prepared to debate the Bill when it come and when you can have a whole look at it and when you understand it.

Let's return to my estimates. Your member's got a headache. Let's finish the Urban Affairs estimates; the staff has been here for a long time; they're going to be here for a long time when we debate the Bill. Wait till the Bill comes up and debate it then.

Mr. Solomon: — I suppose that's another reason why I have a headache. We have here the Minister of Urban Affairs, formerly the MLA for Regina North — represented that district for about four and a half years and would have learned something from representing that district for four and a half years if he would have talked to some people up there about what their futures and what their hopes and desires were for their families and themselves with respect to their neighbourhood.

You didn't learn a darn thing, Mr. Minister, obviously, because what you're doing now is, rather than, as Minister of Urban Affairs, capturing the opportunity to make this city, the capital city of this province, one of the best places to live in Canada, you're attacking the very nature of the city rather than learning from your experience. You're ripping it asunder by tearing the ward system apart and hoping with all hope that the next council will be elected from a certain district, from a certain perhaps economic position, that they will therefore put forward policies that don't benefit the entire city or are not in tune with the issues of the neighbourhoods, but are in tune with the general more selfish issues, issues that they don't have to respond in terms of accountability.

What did you learn from being an MLA in the north end of the city? Why aren't you capturing the opportunity, as Minister of Urban Affairs, to make this city the kind of city that all of us in this city that represent Regina want Regina to be?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, if that member wants to start talking philosophically about my love and concern for the city of Regina, let's start talking that. Let's pit my experiences against yours, only for a moment.

An Hon. Member: That might take all night, but not on your part.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, then I'll take all night. I don't know how many; I suppose I could count them — 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, I don't know — operated businesses in this city, very successfully, I might add, not like some of the other unfortunate incidents where people have tried business in this city and didn't make it. I did.

This city has been very, very good to me. I raised my five children in this city, all in Regina South. They attended school in this city. I grew up in this city on the east side of Regina, and I learned how to street fight there when I was a kid and that's why maybe I can do a pretty good battle in here. I don't give up very easily against you guys.

And following that, I enjoyed high school at Campion College, lived on the west side — lived on the west side. My mother, a widow that scrubbed walls, that scrubbed walls in this city to give my sister and I a proper living, that lived in a one-room — not a one-bedroom suite, but a one-room suite — and didn't expect the government to build us a house, but rather went out and scrubbed walls, provided me with an education so that maybe one day her little Polish son could come along and do not bad.

Well I won't let you judge as to whether I'm doing any good or not, but I'll let my taxpayers judge as to whether I'm doing any good or not. I'll let the people that supported my businesses let me know if I've done any good or not.

And then at the end of the day when it was all done and I decided to enter politics, I moved, and ran in Regina North and won that seat and represented those people, and I understand them very, very well.

Now that member from Regina North West that's obviously a lot younger than I, if he wants to talk about love of this city and quality of life for Regina, let him dare pit his living standards in this city and his experiences in this city and his love for this city against me. Let him dare do that.

Mr. Solomon: — Well, Mr. Minister, the MLA for Regina North West has conducted himself in a manner in this Assembly and in this city and in this province that his children and his spouse and his party can say with pride that they know John Solomon, or they know the member from Regina North West. And that's more than I can say to the number of people that know the Minister of Urban Affairs with respect to what he's done to the city of Regina.

First of all, Mr. Minister, if had some love for this city, as you should have, having lived here for 50 years and raised your family, you would want to enhance the city of Regina, the capital city of our province to the point where people can be proud to say that they know the member from Regina South, the Minister of Urban Affairs; and they're glad that he's the Minister of Urban Affairs.

Frankly, Mr. Minister, I haven't met a lot of people in this city, or very many people, that say they're very happy to see the member from Regina South as Minister of Urban Affairs.

Rather than punishing the people in this city, rather than punishing the electors of Regina in general, as a government, by cutting back their grants, by cutting back their revenue sharing and others, and now by doing away with the ward system in Saskatoon and Regina, why don't you take the challenge and jump on the opportunity to try and create some kind of an image for yourself that is a positive image, that is an image that will reflect well on your party and that will convey to the people of the city that in effect they are happy that this government and this minister represents them and is involved with urban affairs?

But, frankly, Mr. Minister, you know the answer to those questions. You know that people are not pleased to see you as Minister of Urban Affairs. People are not pleased to see your government in power provincially because of what they've done to punish the voters, not only in the cities but in the entire province of Saskatchewan.

But I want to get back to the issue at hand here, and this is the destruction of the ward system. We have headlines from newspapers saying, time after time, "Keep the ward system businesses tell the member from Regina South," the Star-Phoenix of April 23; "List of cities backing ward system growing," another headline out of the Star-Phoenix, May 25 of '88. And all of these individuals and groups and organizations saying, keep the ward system as it is. And rather than attacking and destroying the urban centres through destruction of the ward system, how about helping and building.

My question, Mr. Minister, to you is, can you tell this House and the people of Saskatchewan who has advised you to do what you're doing. Is it Tim Embury or his firm that's advising you? Is it independents like the former member from Regina Rosemont, Gordon Dirks? Is it Madsen Pirie or who is essence is advising you to all these things?

(2045)

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I answered this before and their research isn't complete. They've mentioned the name Tim Embury. The other member, I believe it might have been the member from Regina North East, he didn't mention him by name, but if indeed Mr. Embury did make some form of a recommendation I understand that it was made to the Regina Chamber of Commerce and I got it from the material. I happen to be a member of the Regina chamber and they had it in their publication. I can't believe the member from Regina North West. The proof is

here. We're government.

An Hon. Member: Is he from Manitoba too?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — We're government. You're not government. You're opposition. So the people have spoken clearly who they want as government. I never questioned your reputation. I didn't take an attack on you, nor will I. So I'll leave it at that. And, you know, reputation . . . I'm proud of my reputation, I hope that you are, and I'm not about to suggest the statements that you brought into this House.

I raised a concern for love and pride of my city, and my accomplishments and love and pride for this city abound, and everybody is aware of that. And I'm very, very proud of that. You bet that this move by our government was done because of the concern for the people of my city.

I will once again quote . . . And there they go, Mr. Chairman, laughing again at this. And I will quote again from *Hansard*, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale. Here's what he said:

Well I consider in Saskatoon the opposition to the ward system comes from the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* and the board of trade, Mr. Speaker. I'm not worried about the editorial comments; I've long ago given up on the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* and their editorial comments.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. Mr. Minister, I want to join my colleagues in discussing a very serious matter, that of the ward system, but I can't resist rising to a bit of the bait when you talk about us on this side of the House treating the ward system as a humorous thing, as though we were some sort of stand-up comics.

There's two reasons, Minister, why you can never be a stand-up comic: one is you have to learn how to stand up; and the second one is that you are . . . I think I'll head back rather than continue in that vein.

Minister, the ward system abolishment is in no way democratic. You're using the elimination of the ward system for your own petty political purposes. You see it as the final solution for Regina, Saskatoon, other cities, other urban settings in Saskatchewan.

I point out to you, Mr. Minister, that rural councillors are elected essentially in a ward system. They have a defined geographic location for which they are elected. That system has served all of Saskatchewan, certainly rural Saskatchewan, incredibly well for decades now. We have got the ward system in the cities now. We have things happening in an exciting way in the north end of the city now, thanks to the councillors that are there now and their immediate predecessors that have been actively working on behalf of north Regina.

I challenge you, Mr. Minister, to do your ex-constituents proud. Do something decent for the more than 12,000 hard-working, honest people of Regina North and the other people of Regina North West and everywhere, literally everywhere in Regina, and particularly north of the creek.

Do those people proud and include in this legislation another option, that option being to maintain the ward system. That would show that you truly do have love and pride in the city of Regina. I'd like to give you credit for having that, but the only way I'll ever believe it is if you accept that amendment when the time comes, and there indeed becomes a third choice.

My question is actually a fairly obvious one, and it ties in with the rural councillor question: why is it that having a ward system will be, and will continue to be, good in rural Saskatchewan and yet is no good, and you want to do away with it, in urban Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I guess if they're all going to get up one at a time and ask the same questions, I'm prepared to stand up and answer them one at a time, give them the same answers.

And I quote the member from Saskatoon Westmount. "The British North America Act puts the responsibility for creating local government institutions on the provincial government." Clearly. Now the difference is between the NDP and us.

The NDP in 1973 gave our urban centres absolutely no choice. They said, here you are, folks, here is the ward system. And that's it.

We are giving our voters, our electors, two choices: we are giving them a choice . . . And so the member from Regina North, that talk about divisions in rural Saskatchewan — those divisions are still going to be here. There will be five in Regina, five in Saskatoon, and four in Prince Albert, assuming that they want to go with the modified division system.

And he spoke about politics. Again I will quote from *Hansard*, and the leader of the New Democratic Party in 1973, or the now Leader of the New Democratic Party. "I want to record . . ."

An Hon. Member: You agree with my comments, do you?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — They were pretty good comments, and I agree with this one, and I believe you, as a matter of fact.

I want to record my personal view in opposition to party politics. I am opposed to the development of New Democratic Party politics at the civil level, and I say so now, publicly, as I have said so in times gone by.

I believe that. And . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member from Riversdale asked what the ward system has to do with that, and that's exactly what I'm trying to say, nothing. I happen to believe that there is no room as well for party politics at the civic level.

So when your member from Regina North stands up and says that we're doing this for political gain . . . You know, the electors are intelligent, they're sophisticated people that pay taxes. You know, if there would be some big political motive behind this, if that's what you're

suggesting, then obviously a Tory that would be attempting to run on city council wouldn't have a chance because in Saskatoon we only have one member now. So if that's the case, your argument again holds no water. And in Prince Albert we have none.

I can't even understand how you can bring party politics into it at the civic level. There are none, and I agree with you. So if that's the case, then all that we are trying to do is bring forward for the taxpayers a good, fair way that we firmly believe will assist the aldermen and mayor to help them operate their municipalities properly. Or I shouldn't say properly, it's the wrong word, but to help them operate more efficiently. If we can provide them with more tools to assist them in that matter, they will be able to do even a better job than they're doing now.

And the ward and the division system is still there, member from Regina North, but instead of 10, there's going to be five. And now, your constituents in Regina North will have the opportunity, along with electing their ward alderman, to elect five alderman at large and therefore have six votes out of 10 on council. What's wrong with that? What is wrong with the taxpayer being able to have six votes for his aldermen out of the 10? That, Mr. Chairman, is democracy in action.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, the minister just concluded his remarks by saying that is democracy in action. And I do want to just take a little bit of time this evening because the minister has been quoting me repeatedly, and I became a bit insecure when he started quoting the member from Riversdale, but I see he came back to me again. I would reiterate the remarks that I made in 1973; they're as valid today as they were in 1973, Mr. Minister. You're not going to create any embarrassment to me by quoting back what I said in 1973. I stand by those remarks.

What we have here and the minister says . . . And I think the problem here is that the minister says he's a street fighter; the problem is he's bantamweight — he's just a bantamweight street fighter.

The situation here is the democratic process. I have lived in Regina and Saskatoon prior to the ward system, and the situation in both those cities was such — and it was even more evident in Saskatoon — that the bulk of the alderman were elected from the Nutana side of the river, invariably. And in Regina, by and large, they were elected from the south part of the city.

Now in order to make the democratic system work and allow all people to have something to do, to exercise their democratic muscles in the democratic system, they have to partake, and they have to see a reason to partake in the democratic system: therefore, the ward system.

What did the system at large grow and perpetuate in our cities? It perpetuated a power bloc, a simple power bloc. The power bloc was insensitive to the needs of the whole population. It was very sensitive to some parts of those larger cities. The power bloc could feel the pulse very easy in some parts of these larger cities.

What we needed in order to make the democratic system

really democratic and to allow all the people to exercise their democratic muscles was a ward system. And therefore you have the ward system.

Now what I detect here is that the minister is the cat's paw. He's the cat's paw for that power bloc that feels it's time to get back into municipal politics. They've been screened out of municipal politics, and it particularly galls the Minister of Urban Affairs as regards to the city of Regina.

Now if we could separate the city of Regina and the city of Prince Albert and leave Prince Albert alone, and leave Saskatoon alone with our systems the way we want them, the minister the could take our his petty, vindictive, twisted priorities on the city of Regina. But we can't do that in the democratic system. There has to be some uniformity. So what the Minister of Urban Affairs is doing, he's focusing all the cities that have ward system into his way of thinking, into the exercising in the future of the power bloc which will be sensitive to that small clique of people that this Minister of Urban Affairs represents in this Chamber.

The minister of Urban Affairs does not have the right to get his way in this legislature on this legislation, because he's taking the responsibility away from all of the people. He is setting up the power bloc in the urban centres; and I tell the people of Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert or any other city in Saskatchewan, they will rue the day that they put the power bloc back in control of the large urban centres.

The minister can do it over our wishes, but he'll have to listen to our complaints; and he has already heard complaints from all over this province, from cities that are not even involved in the ward system. They are saying clearly to the minister, leave the system alone. The cities that are involved in the ward system have said clearly to the minister, leave the system alone.

The minister takes great pleasure in referring to a vote in the city of Saskatoon in 1976, I believe it was. Well, that's true, the city of Saskatoon had a vote on the ward system in '76. But something that is equally as significant and diametrically opposed to the vote in '76 was that the city of Saskatoon chose not to have a vote on the ward system in the proper year, 1977, when the law allowed it. They chose not to voice their opinion on the ward system. The minister ignores that — he ignores that and he keeps peddling this business about votes that took place in Regina and Saskatoon.

What the minister is saying to us is that we were wrong. I don't think we were wrong because I stated the reason why the ward system was brought in: it was because power bloc politics were operating in the big cities. And the minister knows that.

(2100)

If we're wrong . . . Time has shown that in fact we were right; we were right. And I claim no special congratulations for us on that behalf. We saw that there was a job to be done and we did it, but the minister cannot provide the same kind of rationale for the legislation he

intends to bring forward whenever he brings it forward.

And therefore the minister is taking the petty position that we were wrong in '73 when we brought in the legislation, and therefore he reserves for himself the right to be wrong as well. And the old saying is that two wrongs do not make a right. And I would suggest to the minister, he's making a serious mistake if he intends to force this legislation on the urban municipalities of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I suppose if the NDP wants to maintain that they were right, why, I ask have only three cities out of 12 opted for the ward system? It was available to 12 cities. Imposed, but still, all in all, available to all the cities — nine have not taken it.

It'll be interesting to see if the members from Moose Jaw get into this debate, where they have had the opportunity to go to the ward system since 1973, and Moose Jaw has not got the ward system. It'll be interesting to see their debate when they get into it.

And I'm not trying at all to embarrass the member from Saskatoon Westmount with his quote; I agree with him. The British North America Act puts the responsibility for creating local government institutions on the provincial government. I'm prepared to accept that responsibility, the same way that you did in 1973, and I accept that responsibility, but I accept it with a little bit of difference. Here we have democracy, true democracy, in action. I mean you can't argue that, and using Regina and Saskatoon as an example, every taxpayer in Regina and Saskatoon will have the right to vote for six alderman out of the 10. Before they had the right to vote for one out of 10; now six out of 10.

Now how can you even begin to argue that that's not the democratic way to have it? And the fiction of some hypothetical power group that's going to come along and control the at-large system, I can tell you that I saw a headline the other day that may not be fiction that the two cities better be careful with, and that is, where CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) have indicated that they will indeed organize and run their candidates. If that's the case, I'm giving CUPE quite an opportunity to control the cities if that's what you, the NDP, firmly believe will happen, that these at-large groups are going to control the cities. Well then, we all know where CUPE comes from. This is their big opportunity, and let the taxpayers deal with it at the time.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson. Mr. Chairperson, I just want to put on the record some of my concerns with regard to the ward system. As my colleagues have stated throughout this discussion on Urban Affairs estimates, there is a flood of concern in urban Saskatchewan, particularly in Saskatoon, Regina and Prince Albert, that the minister is abolishing the ward system as we now know it.

I just want to talk about the kinds of things that have been done in the community that I represent as a result of the ward system. In the late 1970s, it became apparent to people living in the Nutana area that developers in Saskatoon, because of the zoning by-laws, were moving in very quickly and tearing down many of the older

homes in my neighbourhood and building apartments. As a result of the community association and people getting together, we were able to put together a petition, and we were also able to elect an alderwoman by the name of Kate Waygood to represent our area, who had serious concerns about the zoning provisions in our neighbourhood.

As a result of Ms. Waygood being elected and the concerns being brought to the attention of city council, we were able to have introduced into our area zoning regulations that were planned, and therefore we would no longer have helter-skelter development in terms of apartment construction being interspersed with single-family dwellings. That was a positive advantage of the ward system. We had a person on city council who was there representing the interests of the neighbourhood.

Since that time we've had the closure, temporary closure of the Lathey swimming pool, and people in the neighbourhood have once again been concerned about our community not having access to outdoor swimming pool facilities. Over a period of time, through our city alderwoman, we have been able to convince the city that Lathey swimming pool should not be closed permanently but should be upgraded so that children in our neighbourhood and surrounding area, have access to that kind of community service, a community service that taxpayers have paid for.

And we have another example of how the ward system has assisted the business people on Broadway. The business people on Broadway were the first business group that applied to the city for a BID or a business improvement district. They were able to keep in touch with our city alderwoman, who was able to convey, along with the business people, to city council the need to redevelop the Broadway business district.

Now I'm saying, Mr. Minister, that the ward system has been an appropriate mechanism in our neighbourhood in order that people in our neighbourhood could be represented. There have been times in the past in our city where all of the people on city council have come from a particular side of the river. We've also had that happen when it comes to school board elections. Our present school board, as I understand it, only has two people who are represented from the west side of Saskatoon, even though there are many school board issues confronting the people that live on the west side.

The concern that's been expressed to me by people living in our area is that how will we be able to maintain community representation by someone living in our area if we go to an at-large system. An at-large system means that you have to have money, and you have to have a lot of money in order to communicate the kinds of ideas that you have in terms of becoming a member of city council. The present ward system allows individuals, at not a great deal of expense, to run for city council, to distribute pamphlets, to go door-to-door and talk to the constituents in order to articulate why they want to be our representative on city council.

Now I recognize that you're proposing an at-large system,

a combination of an at-large system and a ward system. But, Mr. Minister, you've even acknowledged yourself that the amount of work in terms of a person who will represent a particular ward will be doubled because the area they represent will be doubled.

I go back to what one of my colleagues from Regina said: if the ward system is okay for rural Saskatchewan, why isn't it okay for urban Saskatchewan? Why can't people in urban Saskatchewan, for instance in the city of Saskatoon, elect a person that represents the concerns of that particular area or that particular neighbourhood in terms of the overall policies of the city of Saskatoon?

I have not noted a great deal of inability on the part of city council to work together. I think that the city council in Saskatoon, with all of the representatives from around the city, have been able to work together quite co-operatively. They've been able to do that because they are interested in representing not only their neighbourhood but the overall planning and development of the city of Saskatoon and issues that affect the city as a whole.

Now I know that the member from Weyburn is suggesting that my speech is the worst speech that he's ever heard. I just want the minister to know that I'm not trying to be eloquent, I'm not trying to deliver a great speech. All I'm trying to do is articulate the kinds of concerns that have been brought to my attention by the people I represent, and I think that those kinds of concerns would be quite widespread in the city of Saskatoon. I have not heard people, very many people, express a pleasure or a desire to have the present system altered.

Mr. Minister, the people I represent do not understand why you want to change the ward system. They think the ward system has functioned quite well in terms of the "our neighbourhood" and it's functioned quite well in terms of the overall programs and services that the city delivers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the member from Saskatoon Nutana is the first one that got it right. Congratulations. And the words are this: that we are abolishing the ward system as we know it. Yes, but we are introducing a new form of the ward system that you don't seem to want to accept, that people will accept.

And indeed the examples that you brought up could still occur, and particularly if it was good for the city as a whole. Now wouldn't those neighbourhood people feel very good and warm about it all knowing that not only was it their own ward alderman that carried through that particular problem, but that they had the entire system behind them when that decision was made?

And, you know, to start talking neighbourhoods and how they understand the neighbourhoods and visit there and how they feel so good, residency is not a part of the existing ward system, so that as a result, all of these little manoeuvres that you're talking about now could very legitimately occur under the existing ward system. You could have everybody from Saskatoon Mayfair, that lives

in Saskatoon Mayfair, representing all wards, or Regina South representing all 10 wards in either Regina or Saskatoon. So how do you balance that off with what you've been talking about? You can't, because that's not a requirement . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You'll get another turn.

So you know, when you're talking that, you've got part of it right, but the ward system is still there, and they're going to be able to still represent their neighbourhoods. Now they're going to have the added capability of having the entire civic system, the alderman that are elected at large, also agreeing with it. And they just feel very warm and good about it.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I believe that the city ward system in the city of Saskatoon had functioned very well. We have had representatives that have come out, neighbourhoods that have come together to represent a ward, and it has functioned quite well.

See when you really think about politics in this province and in this country, those issues that affect the day-to-day lives of the individual citizens most directly are issues that are determined at the local levels. If you really think about it, the people on my block, on my street, in my neighbourhood, have an interest in what is happening at city hall, they have an interest in what is happening in terms of the services that are delivered to their families. I have had no concern, or very little concern expressed to me about the ability of individual alderman or alderwoman who represent the particular ward that they come from in their inability to represent the entire city.

People believe that it's important to have community representation on city council, just as people believe in rural Saskatchewan that it's important to have individual representation on a particular municipal council — someone that comes from your area understands the day-to-day problems of the people who reside in that community. There's nothing very startling about that, Mr. Minister.

I guess I have to go back to my original question: what is it in the ward system that you find so disfavoured, so unbearable that you think it's important to alter the ward system, to have a combination of ward and at-large? What is so wrong with the system as it now exists? Where have you gotten the kinds of concerns that say, do away with the present ward system, introduce a combination of an at-large and ward system?

Who's telling you to do this, Mr. Minister? The people on my street aren't, the people in the constituency that I represent aren't, and, I suspect, Mr. Minister, that it's a few people who represent powerful lobby groups. Those are the people who want to alter the ward system; it's not the average taxpayer.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, Mr. Chairman, that important ward function will still be there. I can't stress that enough. And you know, she talks as though the size of a ward now was three or four blocks long and two or three blocks wide. I mean, it's a lot bigger than that.

You know, you're an MLA and you know a lot of people. I

challenge you in your seat to, you know, name a whole pile of these good, friendly neighbours of yours, house by house by house, that are four or five or six blocks distant from your place. You won't be able to do that.

(2115)

An Hon. Member: I can.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Oh you won't be able to do that — come on. And I challenge anybody that's listening to think about a block of houses or randomly select, at my choice, a block of houses, four or five or six blocks from their home — they won't know their neighbours. A ward is a big place.

But having said that, I do believe that the neighbourhood groups that would come all over from that ward would be fairly representative of that ward. And as a result, that's exactly the flavour that we're maintaining right now in this piece of legislation. And that's why your argument is so hollow.

I suppose that had we gone the total extreme as you did in 1973, and had we imposed the at-large system the way that you took it away in 1973, there would be a little bit of credibility to your argument. But we haven't done that. We have balanced the situation. We have retained the flavour of the ward system, balanced it off with the at-large.

Times change, time change. And with those times, the voters, the taxpayers democratically have every right to elect six members to a council of 10 rather than one. And that's where your whole argument breaks down because the ward system is still there. We just didn't take it away and say, that's it — the way you arbitrarily imposed it. We've given them a modified situation to live with, a balanced approach.

Now I know that you don't want that because when you imposed the ward system, you just did it. You had no regard for the votes; you had no regard for the plebiscites; you had no regard for the input; you had no regard for the editorials; you had no regard for any of the comments. It's all here in Hansard. I've read it and I'm going to continue to read it. You had no regard for any of that, and you imposed the ward system — period. No choice, no nothing, that's it.

We've come rather with a moderate approach, and we have taken what we believe to be the very best qualities that you can garner from the ward system. The people, those community associations will still have their same representation. They will still have a ward alderman. They will now as well be able to democratically select the majority of council, and that right they have never had since 1973. And that is the crux of the whole argument.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, if we wanted to take your argument to the ridiculous we'd have an at-large system across this province and we would have people vote on the basis of an at-large system. And, Mr. Minister, we would be sitting as the government opposite, not you members.

Now, Mr. Minister, you still haven't answered the question. You haven't answered the question. I'm asking you very specifically: who was it that asked for this change to the ward system? Who was it that asked for the change? What is the city of Saskatoon? Was it the city of P.A.? Was it the city of Regina? Who was it? Was it a few people who represent powerful interest groups? Are they the people that asked for the change? Or was it the ordinary taxpayer in the cities that have been affected? Did they ask for the changes? And if they did, Mr. Minister, I would challenge you to table the letters. Table the support that you have for implementing these changes to the ward system.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well we're back to the original argument, Mr. Chairman, and you know it's the same argument and I'll have to go back to it.

Unfortunately, where the member understood the ward system, she still doesn't quite yet understand the parliamentary system, but as time goes by she'll understand certainly the difference between the parliamentary system and the government in opposition role in the parliamentary system and the way we know it in here, and the difference between a municipal council.

Clearly, Mr. Chairman, I made an announcement almost a year and a half ago now that a review of the ward system would be undertaken, and I asked for input and I received all kinds of input. And how do you table a document, as I explained the other day when I was having lunch in the member from Regina Victoria's area, at the Hungarian Club, and right where I ran into a table, fortunately I didn't get hurt.

And you know, I've said a lot of things that have been misconstrued — where I saw the member shopping at Superstore, but I should have said I didn't see the member shopping, I was informed that somebody saw them. Or I could have said I saw the member loading his groceries, and the member knows which one I'm talking about.

But in any event, as I was walking out of the Hungarian Club after lunch, a group of about eight taxpayers — obviously tradesmen because, you know, the way they were dressed, they had their coveralls and they had their boots, work boots, and they had their tool belts and all the rest of it — and called me over and entertained a discussion on the ward system, at their persuasion, not mine. They called me over. And they said when are you going to do something about this ward system, because they wanted the opportunity to elect their council; they wanted the opportunity to elect the council at-large, and to be able to change their council, and not just have the right to vote for one single person out of 10.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I've listened. I've listened with some care to all of what the minister has been saying here and I've had to reach this conclusion: that the arrogance of this government is such that it would cause it to do this kind of thing. It only takes a government of extreme arrogance to say to people, who in large numbers have said that they don't agree with the government, that this government doesn't care and it will do it anyway.

And I think that the arrogance was typified very vividly in some comments that the minister made in response to questions from one of my colleagues, when he essentially said: we're the government. He said we're the government and meaning, we will do whatever we want because we're the government.

Now, Mr. Chairman, that is arrogance at its highest. That is a member of the cabinet who is saying because he happens to be in government that the opinion of the people don't matter.

I don't subscribe to that point of view and neither does the New Democratic Party because in our opinion, the opinions of the people do matter. And everybody who has had anything to say on this issue has said to the minister, don't do it. Don't fix it if it's working and if it's working well, don't tear it down.

Now I suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, that here is the real reason why this minister and this government is proceeding in this direction: this is really an attack on the cities, clearly an attack on the cities. Why? Because in the 1986 provincial election in the cities of this province, this government got wiped out.

And instead of accepting that democratic decision of the population and listening to their concerns and trying to address them, the government is now saying we're going to get even with you: we're going to be vindictive; and we're going to wreak some form of vengeance on the people of the cities because they didn't vote for us. The voters of Elphinstone and the voters of Saskatoon Eastview reinforced that message in the by-elections, and in spite of all that, this minister still proceeds in his arrogant way, which exemplifies the arrogance of the whole government, to bring this legislation which he announced today. They still haven't learned the lesson. They didn't learn it after 1986. The people of two constituencies had an opportunity to send them a message and they have ignored it again. Now it takes a real extreme level of arrogance to do that.

Now the minister said he wants to debate this Bill when it comes up for debate. Well I want to tell him so do we, and we will. And I just want to alert the minister — and this may be useful to him because the basis of his arguments today have been very supportive of his cause — that he's going to have a lot of time to practise because some time in July he's still going to be here debating that Bill. And he should know that, because this is only one example of the kind of other pieces of legislation which this government is bringing forward in this session only a month before the session would normally adjourn in the hope that they might be able to ram it through.

Well I want to say to that minister opposite: be prepared. This is not an issue that's going to go away, and at some time it may eventually pass, but it's not going to pass before every citizen of Saskatchewan knows what this government is up to.

I'm telling you, Mr. Chairman, that the arguments that the minister has had presented . . . that's he's presented to this House today have been absolutely unconvincing to anybody. Now I've heard him say that he's consulted,

and my colleague the member from Nutana asked him some questions about that. And when he was asked the specific questions about where did he get this recommendation from, he doesn't answer it because he knows he didn't get any such recommendation from anybody.

Now the last meeting he has had was with the president of SUMA and the vice-president of SUMA who immediately after seeing, meeting with the minister, talked to the media and said, we advised the minister not to do it; we advised the minister that the people of the cities should have a choice by vote.

Now, Mr. Minister, are you saying in this House that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association which represents the cities, which represents the city of Regina, which represents the city of Melville, and Estevan, and Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw, all of which have written you letters in support of the position of the city of Regina — SUMA which represents those cities — are you saying that SUMA said to you that you should impose the modified system? Is that what SUMA specifically said to you, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, SUMA said the same thing to them in 1973. Please. Please Mr. government don't impose this ward system on us. Please. Did they listen? No. The cities, not only the councils in 1973, Mr. Chairman, not only did the councils say don't impose the ward system, two plebiscites — two votes by the taxpayers of Regina in advance. Not one, two plebiscites said to the NDP, don't impose the ward system. And it's history now. So how they can even present that argument is beyond belief.

To correct or explain something — not that explanation is required but, you know . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I can take a lot of name-calling. Arrogance is one I have a little difficulty with. My comments regarding we're the government. And you know, he tries to fool the people again. Don't try to fool the people. Check *Hansard* and see how that remark was made, Mr. Chairman. It was made in reference to the personal reputation of myself and the member from Regina North West and the attack that he made.

I chose not to get into a personal reputation, nor will I. And it was because of the personal reputation that I simply said that the voters have already decided on our reputation and we're government — not anything to do with arrogance at all, but rather to do with a reputation argument that I'm not prepared to become involved in. I'm not going to get that low. I don't have to resort to name-calling.

And how you transcribe some degree of vengeance, vengeance of, you know, we're doing away with the ward system, how you relate that the ward system has anything to do with our success or failure at the polls is beyond my comprehension. In 1982, Mr. Chairman, when the ward system was still in place in Saskatoon, we won ten out of ten seats; in Prince Albert, we won two out of two seats; in Moose Jaw, we won two out of two seats; in Regina we won eight out of ten seats. How in the world can you argue that the ward system hurts us? I mean, it's crazy to even begin to think

that kind of theory.

Mr. Chairman, I said that I'm prepared to debate this Bill until the snow flies, and I am. And if it takes that long, if it's necessary to debate this Bill until the snow flies to bring fairness to my taxpayers in my urban centres, I will stay here until the snow flies and give them the fairness and the democracy that they are demanding.

(2130)

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, this minister is going to have to be careful that he doesn't run into any more tables; it's obviously affected his performance.

Now, Mr. Minister, I didn't ask you to make a speech, but obviously when you get asked a direct question — and all evening, right from 7 o'clock, every time a direct question has been asked of you, you decide to make a speech and not address the question because you don't have the answers.

Now I'm going to ask you the question without a speech so that you can't use that as an excuse to make one: can you tell this House and the municipalities of and the cities of this province that in your meeting with SUMA, they recommended to you, the president of SUMA recommended to you that you should impose the modified ward system in this legislation? Is that the recommendation you got from SUMA?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I admitted that to the press freely. What kind of a recommendation do you expect they'd bring me? I asked them an explanation that they couldn't give me. I said, look, nine of twelve of your cities — nine of twelve — don't have the ward system. If it's so great, why do you want to keep it? They're bound by their association. Their two largest members indicated that they wanted retention of the ward system. They're an association of elected officials.

Now I care about their opinion to the degree that they are taxpayers. So now when you have elected officials from SUMA — an association — coming forward, what other recommendation do you expect that they would bring forward? For crying out loud, doesn't take very many brains to figure that out.

And you know, I have responded and answered every question that I've been asked in this Assembly tonight. But you've . . . there's an old analogy that I use. That's like me saying you argue everything I say and you say, no, I don't. I mean, you know, right off the stuff you've got it. Mr. Chairman, I believe that I've responded to every single question that has been raised this evening.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Let me get this straight, Mr. Minister, because this is important to get on the record because now you are saying, you are saying, Mr. Minister, that SUMA representatives— two members of SUMA — came to your office, and in spite of the fact that most of the cities of Saskatchewan said to them that you should not do away with the ward system and that you should allow the people of those cities to have the right to decide — in spite of that — that the SUMA president said to you that you should institute the modified system. Is that what

you're saying here today?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Now you're adding something new. Here you go again, trying to fool the people. Mr. Chairman, the member from Regina North East is notorious for that — just absolutely notorious.

You accuse me of making a speech. You change your line every time. Now all of a sudden, now all of a sudden you're not saying that the members from SUMA wanted me to retain the ward system, but now you've got this little hooker in there; you're saying, oh and also the want you to put this to a vote. Now were you at the meeting? No, you weren't at the meeting. You don't know what was discussed at that meeting.

And when you say two lone members of SUMA, I mean, I met, Mr. Chairman, with the president of SUMA, I met with the vice-president of cities. Now that's from their executive board — you can't do better than that. And a week earlier I had met with a whole bunch of people from SUMA — a week earlier.

So don't tell me that the consultative process has not been there. And I'm glad that I said consultative so easy; I had a little trouble with that word on television tonight, so I'll have to practise it. In any event, this consultative process has been occurring regularly with all kinds of groups, with all kinds of people.

And documentation — what can I tell you about documentation? What do you want, a petition? I've had other documentation that we could read out and you can bring forward, but if you're going to bring forward any of that, and if you want me to start digging into my woodpile and start bringing forward the recommendation from various coalition groups and all the rest of it that say that they're doing this for that and that and that — and I would have accepted the first part of their whole situation until they get to the ending paragraphs, and then they destroy everything that they want.

So I think that I've been fair. I've responded to all of it. I would like to conclude with my estimates. Once the Bill is introduced, we're going to have ample time to debate this Bill, line by line, where you can understand what we're doing. You're shooting in the dark right now. You might be awful embarrassed about some of the things that will be in the Bill that you're going to have to backtrack from. Why don't we wait? Give me the opportunity to introduce the Bill, finish these estimates. We'll debate the Bill at the proper time.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, I know you would like that because you'd like to get it out of the way quickly because you're going to get an awful lot of heat on this issue, which you have been getting.

Now I noted some very important comment you made, and I'm glad you clarified it for me. You said that the President of SUMA and the vice-president of cities came to see you and gave you the recommendation that you should institute the modified system — that's what you said.

Well, Mr. Minister, if you didn't say that the president and

the vice-president of cities recommended to you that you should institute the modified system, I'm asking you then: who did? Who, in this consultative process, recommended to you that you should institute the modified system?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, there he goes again. You know, you've just got such a bad habit of doing that, of always trying to misinform the people. And I don't know why you do that. I don't mind sticking to the facts.

But you know, I'd like to challenge you publicly one day, or let's pull out *Hansard* — maybe we will — and look at the *Hansard* and, you know, would you admit that I didn't say that if I trapped you with that? Probably not. You'd say, oh no, I won't.

But in any event, I have always said . . . I have said this this evening, and I'll say it again many, many times — part of the consultative process — and SUMA was part of the consultative process, they indeed got me to back off from my stubborn position of going entirely to the ward system. And by retaining some flavour of the ward system and supplementing it with the good things that occur from the at-large system because nine of SUMA cities had the at-large system — so that's not all bad. Why didn't they go into the ward system? They didn't want it. They didn't want it.

An Hon. Member: What's their position on it?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I haven't had the opportunity yet, nor have SUMA indicated to me what their official position is on this announcement. I haven't heard. So I'm sure that I'll hear the observations that they have to say about this announcement. And all I can do is say that this modified, this more balanced approach, was reached with all due respect to their arguments that they presented to me concerning the retention of the ward system as a whole. But they couldn't convince me of the good of the ward system because only three . . . or nine out of their 11 members didn't have the ward system, had the opportunity to get it, wouldn't implement it. They couldn't respond to me with that. What else would an association of municipalities then say except that recommendation? I mean, that's easy.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, which of those nine cities recommended to you that the people in the cities should not have a choice as to whether they should have the ward system or not? Which of those nine cities gave you that recommendation?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, I can't name offhand the ones that give me written notice that they wanted it retained. And what I have said is this: those nine cities that had the opportunity, I asked the question: if the ward system was so good — and this was SUMA's official position to retain the ward system — if indeed the ward system was so good, why then do nine of the 12 not have it? Why then can you say . . . how can you say that the ward system is so good if nine of them wouldn't accept it?

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, can you then answer this question since you failed to answer the last one? Did any of those nine cities say that the city of Regina, which

sent a resolution to you saying that the right of the city people to choose their electoral system should be preserved, that any of those cities you spoke of, the nine cities, disagree with the city of Regina to your knowledge?

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Chairman, if you were a member of an association and your two largest members wanted your association to help them carry forward a resolution, would it not make eminent sense that that would go — why would the cities . . . if Regina and Saskatoon wanted to retain the ward system, does it make sense at all, any sense at all for the other cities that had the opportunity to have the ward system and not implement it, why would then they say, well, yes, the ward system is good for Regina and Saskatoon but no good for us? I mean, it just doesn't make any sense at all.

I have to go back, Mr. Chairman, to my original position on this entire argument. I respect SUMA for their concern as elected officials, but I respect more — and I have to admit this — my urban taxpayer. After all, they're my boss, and they're also SUMA's boss.

And again, I just have to go back to the quote from the member for Saskatoon Westmount that the British North America Act puts the responsibility for creating local government institutes on the provincial government. And times change. And as a result of that change and as a result of the burden of the taxpayers, I believe that I have to provide the urban municipalities with every possible tool to operate as efficiently as they can.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it's a well-known fact to the people of Saskatchewan that in the 1986 election the people of Saskatchewan elected only two members of the present government from the four largest cities in Saskatchewan; that is to say, they elected two PC members from Regina and two from Saskatoon. That number from Saskatoon has, since the by-elections of course, been reduced to one.

It should be no surprise then to the people of Saskatchewan, as it is no surprise to this Assembly and the members of this Assembly, that given such little representation in our four largest urban areas, that this government would begin to display an incredible insensitivity, and now also an arrogance, towards the people in those four largest cities and to the people in urban areas generally, but especially to the people in the four largest cities where the ward system might begin to make some sense. And it does make some sense, at least in the two largest cities.

The ward system doesn't make a great deal of sense, perhaps, in the smaller cities of this province. It may not make that much sense in an Estevan, in a Weyburn or a Melfort or Melville, because those cities are of a scale where an at-large representation still makes a lot of sense for those people. And that's probably one of the reasons they haven't asked for it.

But it's the people in the four largest cities especially that might tend to benefit from a ward system, and especially in Regina and Saskatoon, where when you talk of scale, a ward system begins to make sense. And I even see some concession now from the minister — given his half-baked

idea to retain part of the ward system — that he agrees that the ward system has some merits for the people in the largest cities.

But again it should be no surprise to people that we see an incredible insensitivity and arrogance. In the proposed changes, the proposed changes to the method of electing alderman in our four largest cities especially, because that's where it has the greatest meaning, it should be no surprise that the proposed changes are simply a continuation of their insensitivity and their lack of understanding for the conditions in our large urban centres.

The changes are a mean-spirited, narrow-minded attack on what they believe to be a system that they blame for visible opposition to their urban policies and programs. Now, that there should be opposition to their urban policies and programs again comes as no surprise to the people in urban Saskatchewan and again in the four largest cities.

(2145)

Now let's review just briefly some of their records. This is a government, this is a government that has cut back drastically on urban revenue sharing it our cities and to all urban municipalities. And we see the effects of that, notwithstanding whatever the minister might say about his formula as to how those urban revenue-sharing grants are distributed, the impact was the greatest on the four largest cities. Let's just make that clear.

This is a government that has eliminated a community capital fund that was of great benefit to urban areas. This is a government that cut back on a system for urban transit. This is a government that has increased the cost of all municipalities through increases in the sales tax, but especially, especially to those urban areas that run a transit system because of the imposition of the gasoline tax. And that's the record of this government.

So in that context, opposition to the government from urban areas should not be surprising. And it should be no surprise that, for example, the people in Regina might say, enough is enough; that we oppose the government for shifting the taxation in this province from a system that . . . from a provincial system where there is a greater potential for fairness in taxation to one of property taxation.

It should be no surprise that the people in Regina, as an example, would say, enough is enough. And it should be no surprise that their council — which has been largely representative because of the kind of system of election that we have, and therefore representative — it should be no surprise that that council will stand up to this government and say, enough is enough; we disagree with what you're doing to Regina; we disagree with what you're doing to large urban areas in this province; we feel that you're discriminating against us.

And it should be no surprise that that kind of opposition should be forthcoming in the face of your cut-backs and in the face of elimination of meaningful, significant grants and moneys to urban areas.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Now what has been the government's response? Does the government say, opposition is healthy; it's a good thing? No.

Does the government say, we'll listen and try to be more sensitive? No.

No, this government says that we really do not appreciate the opposition, can't stand opposition, so we're going to change the system that we hold responsible for this type of opposition. That's what the government is saying.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Now first the minister, first the minister flies up the flag-pole a system of total abolition of the ward system. He flies up the flag-pole a system of an at-large system. And — surprise, surprise! — he finds that no one in Saskatchewan salutes it.

He finds that even people in rural Saskatchewan, who live in the R.M.s and who are used to a division system which makes a lot of sense to them, can't support it either. They see it as a good system, frankly don't understand why in the larger cities, given the massive scale of those cities compared to smaller centres, that those people should also not have a division or a ward system. And he finds little or no support at all in Saskatchewan for his idea of total abolition. So what does the government do? What does the minister do?

Now he comes back and he says: well, we're going to be moderate; we're going to be reasonable; we're going to listen to the people of Saskatchewan; we've consulted with them; we've listened to them. So as opposed to doing away with the ward system, we'll only go half way. We'll now have a system of where you can elect half at large, and you can have half of the ward system.

Now I ask you: is this something that the people of Saskatchewan asked for? Was this the message that the government has received from council after council when their opinions were being asked on the ward system? Was this the message from city councils throughout Saskatchewan? No.

Was this the message from their business friends at the Saskatoon board of trade? Was this the message from the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association that represents all urban municipalities? No, it was not. Was this the message from Saskatoon Eastview and Saskatoon Elphinstone? No, it wasn't.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Because the minister made it clear. He floated this idea some time ago. That issue was debated in those elections, in those by-elections, and the people said, resoundingly, no, to your policies; no, to doing away with the ward system. They want no part of your government. They don't want any part of doing away with the ward system. That was the message. The people made it clear, the people made it clear that they

like the ward system; they want the ward system to stay.

Why do they want the ward system? Because they know it provides for better representation. They know that cities in all . . . they know that the citizens in all areas of a city have a better chance of being adequately represented at their city hall. Under the previous system, as in Regina, most of the aldermen came from one area of the city. Under the ward system they knew that every area had one alderman.

The people knew that the ward system provided direct access to help when they needed it. They know that you can cut through red tape and bureaucracy with the ward system. One phone call can put you in touch with the person that's responsible, the person who is responsible to represent the interests of your area. They know that a ward system provides you with a representative who is accountable. They know that as your representative at city hall, an alderman must pay attention to the problems within the ward, particularly if that person wants to be re-elected, and so it is for government. If you want to be re-elected, you have to pay attention.

They know that under a ward system you have a better chance of knowing who it is that you are voting for. They know that under the at-large system, to be faced with a list of 25 names, half of them who weren't known to them, or more who weren't known to them, that as with the board of education elections in Regina there was a very great chance that you just ended up picking alphabetically, and those that whose names started with the A's and the B's had a better chance of being elected.

And they also know that they're in a better position to judge the record of their representative under the ward system. They knew that under the old system that even if they knew the names of the alderman, they necessarily didn't know what that person's record might be. Those are the reasons that the people of Saskatchewan and in our large urban areas support the ward system. That's why the people in the R.M.s support the ward or division system.

I think my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana spoke eloquently and spoke well about why it's important for the people in an area to have an alderman or a representative that they know that they can contact that has some sensitivity for the problems and concerns in their particular area.

But this government, this government, Mr. Chairman, doesn't listen; it turned its back on the people in our four largest cities. To them, the message that is coming out loud and clear by this action is that whatever else you say, we're the government, we're going to do what we want. Might is right. That's the message that's coming from this government.

And I want to tell you, Mr. Chairman, that there is also another message, there is another message in this action of the government, and it's an equally insidious message. And that message is: do not oppose us; do not oppose this PC government; do not speak against us; do not act against us, because if you oppose us, we will punish you. That is the other message that comes through loud and

clear from your action.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — And I say it's an insidious message. It's not a message that's consistent with democratic traditions in this province and in this country and in the British Commonwealth. That's not what the people in this country believe in. No, this government believes that if you're a Legislative Law Clerk or a Legislative Counsel and you dare to attack the government, we'll speak out against you.

This government says that if you're a non-governmental organization that deals with people in the social services area, and you have criticism, we'll muzzle you. We'll attach conditions to your grants to make sure that you don't speak out, that you don't speak out on behalf of the poor and dispossessed.

This is a government, when it comes to an employee of the water corporation of Saskatchewan who dares to speak the truth about the water situation in Saskatchewan, says, well no more of this truth. We'll suspend you. That's this government. That's their record.

And what they're saying is also, with respect to the system of local government, that if you elect people that dare to oppose us, we blame that system; we dare to change that system; we dare to exercise our might to accomplish our own narrow, partisan political ends.

I guess the question that the people of Saskatchewan must ask themselves on this very grim day is: when will your campaign of recrimination, of retribution, when will that campaign ever end, Mr. Minister, because they fear, they fear for democratic tradition, they fear the actions of your government, they fear your message that might is right.

And having said that, Mr. Speaker, I come to the conclusion that the Legislative Assembly itself should speak out and should speak out loudly with respect to the actions of this government and especially the actions of this minister.

So therefore I would move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Westmount:

That this Assembly expresses its lack of confidence in the Minister of Urban Affairs for his inept handling of the damaging and arrogant change in the method of electing councillors in our cities, and accordingly supports a reduction of his salary to \$1.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Chairman: — I find the amendment not in order.

An Hon. Member: Why?

Mr. Chairman: — It's not . . . Order . . . It's not worded as an amendment, not relevant to the vote under consideration, and substantive motions are out of order.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Well, thank you for your ruling, Mr.

Chairman, and that's why I asked the members opposite tonight to deal with the issue at hand, which was the estimates of Urban Affairs. And clearly they've debated a Bill that has not yet been introduced into this Assembly, and it's unfortunate. And I suppose we can deal with the amendment at an appropriate time.

But I have to point out a few things in response to the member from Regina Victoria. Yes, it's true all rural municipalities have division systems in place — all of them do. And that's the unique difference. In our urban municipalities, out of 511 or -12, only three have — quite a difference. And if you can't understand that, the people out in the real world can.

Every area is still going to have one alderman. One phone call will still be made to get your representative. But the big difference in democracy that the NDP refuses to accept is that you will now have the luxury, the taxpayer will now have the luxury of phoning five additional alderman for support for their problems.

Our taxpayers believe in democratic rights — not like the NDP — and we are giving them back their rights to freely vote and control six of 10 alderman, not one of 10, but to indeed to control who they want to serve on their councils and who they don't, with a majority vote.

And the talked about the A's win and the B's, and if your name happens to be Gerald Zbytnuik, or whatever, you have no choice or no chance. Well that's even a fallacy because the legislation contains provision to scramble the ballot if you so wish. So what's the difference with that? Coupled with the fact that there is no statistics anywhere to indicate that that's true.

The cute saying that the member from Regina Victoria put in that might is right . . . Yes, with the NDP when they put in the ward system with no option, against two plebiscites, against the plebiscite that turned it down, and they said no, we're not going to listen, you're getting the ward system whether you like it or not.

And we are still, Mr. Chairman, retaining the flavour of the ward system with a balanced approach and providing for the election of members at large. And that, Mr. Chairman, is the democracies that the taxpayers want, and that's the relief that they're looking for, and that is the relief that they will receive.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:02 p.m.