

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Deputy Clerk: — Mr. Petersen, chairman of the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills, presents the fourth report of the said committee, which is as follows:

Your committee has considered the following Bills and has agreed to report the same without amendment:

Bill No. 01 — An Act to incorporate the Stephen and Michelene Worobetz Foundation

Bill No. 02 — An Act to amend An Act to incorporate Full Gospel Bible Institute

Your committee has considered the following Bill and, pursuant to a request received from the petitioner, your committee recommends that the Bill be not proceeded with:

Bill No. 03 — An Act to incorporate the Circle Drive Alliance Church

Your committee recommends under the provision of Rule 58 that fees be remitted, less the cost of printing, with respect to Bill Nos. 01, 02, and 03.

Mr. Petersen: — Mr. Speaker, I now move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon South:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills be now concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Muller: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure today to introduce to you,, and through you to this Assembly, 28 students from Christopher Lake School in Christopher Lake. They're grade 6 students, their teacher Kim Heinrichs, chaperons Evelyn Hagely, Susi Miller, Ray Viney, Darrell Roth and Thomas Mirasty.

I hope that they'll certainly enjoy their visit to the legislature today, and I'll be meeting with them for pictures and drinks at 2:30.

I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that this is one of the most beautiful spots in the province with all its lakes and rivers and I want to, again, ask all members to welcome this group to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Pickering: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Assembly, a group of 12

students, grades 7 and 8, from the Spring Valley School which is on the west side of my constituency.

I had the pleasure of meeting with them just prior to 2 o'clock for a few minutes, and I have agreed to go back and meet with them after they view question period here this afternoon, about three.

I hope they find the Assembly informative, perhaps educational, and maybe more so, entertaining, because question period sometimes is very entertaining and sometimes a joke, like my colleague says.

I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming the people from Spring Valley to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Petersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct your attention to your gallery where I have a class of 33 grade 4 students in from the town of Wadena, with their teacher Reg Glennie, chaperons Norman Sabit, Bob Cannon, Iner Scherbatuik, Grace Griffiths, Sandra Johnson, Diane Leitch, and Pat Kalenchuk, with their bus driver Garry Peckham.

I will be joining you for pictures and refreshments later, and I'll be able to answer any question you may have.

Please join me in welcoming these people.

Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I'd just like to take a moment, Mr. Speaker, to welcome back to the Assembly — I'm sure some hon. members certainly recall Don MacDonald, who represented the city of Moose Jaw, who is back as a visitor to the Assembly, behind the bar. And I'd like all hon. members, Mr. Speaker, to join with me in welcoming Mr. MacDonald back to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to the House, through you, members of the coalition against open Sunday shopping who are seated in your gallery in the back row. They have met earlier today with the Minister of Urban Affairs to express concern on behalf of a lot of people throughout the province who they represent, and they have met with the New Democratic Party caucus as well, which we appreciated very much.

I want to draw to your attention that present are Mark Thompson from Saskatoon, Mr. Lawrence Lanovaz from Duck Lake, Harvey Wessner from Saskatoon as well, and the Rev. Canon William G. Portman from Regina. We want to welcome them to the House, encourage them in their cause, and I ask the members of the House to join us in greeting them to this Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the member who has just spoken in extending particular

greetings and welcome to the committee who are visiting the legislature today with respect to the Sunday shopping issue. I too had the opportunity to meet with them earlier today and to hear from them a tremendous amount of useful and good advice, which I hope will impress itself upon the minister as well.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I would also want to join in a welcome to a very good friend and colleague who has already been introduced, but of course former member from Moose Jaw, who is a very distinguished member of the party which I have the pleasure to represent, and I certainly want to welcome Mr. MacDonald to this Chamber as well.

Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure today of introducing two groups visiting the Assembly. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, after I introduce the first group I'd like to remain standing to introduce the second group.

It is with great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to introduce to you and all members of the Assembly, 23 students, grade 8 students sitting in the west gallery. They are from the Hanley High School from Hanley. They are here with their teachers Don Lockhart and Bill Oehler, and also their bus driver Hank Patkau.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be meeting with them at 3 o'clock for pictures and drinks and questions, and as always I enjoy questions from students. I'll be looking forward to this, and I ask all members to join with me in welcoming the students from Hanley. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — It is also with great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to introduce to you 16 students sitting in your gallery, in the Speaker's gallery, grade 11 and 12 students from Craik High School. They are accompanied here by their teachers Audrey Sieben and Debbie Wildfong, and bus driver Myrna Meshka.

This is especially a pleasure for me today, being the Craik School, where I attended this school from 1937 to 1949. Mr. Speaker, I have many memories of that school. I've tried to forget about the black strap. But other than that, I have many memories, and many wonderful memories of the Craik School.

I'll be meeting with them, I believe it's 2:30 for drinks and questions. And I ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming the students from Craik.

And I like to also add, a week from now my grandson in grade 5 is coming here, but it won't be he'll be introduced here; and also I have a granddaughter in grade 1 at this school. So it is really a pleasure for me today to have this here school represented. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of all the members of the government, we'd like to

welcome the committee, the coalition that I met with this morning regarding their concern on the store hours issue. I explained to them that this very day I would be introducing the amendment into this House.

We had a very enjoyable and informative meeting for about an hour or thereabout. And it was an interesting discussion and I think very enlightening to us, and certainly to the coalition. And I welcome them to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you a group of grade 7 and 8 students from Deshayes School who are sitting in the east gallery and who are here to witness the proceedings today. I will be meeting with them after for refreshments and drinks and to answer any questions that they might have.

I should also point out that they are accompanied by their teachers Mr. Al Jurzyniec and Ms. Muriel Drew. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Federal Aid for Drought Relief

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence in the Minister of Agriculture I would direct my question to the Acting Minister of Agriculture, or possibly the Minister of the Environment.

And it has to do with yesterday's announcement from Calgary concerning drought. Everyone in this province, Mr. Speaker, knows that \$12 million for the four western prairie provinces is not going to go very far in terms of dampening the drought.

And I note from the media that there will be an announcement about the program to take cattle to feed or feed to cattle. And I was wondering if the minister could tell us today when the program will be implemented, and what actually will the program be, so that livestock producers know what their options are.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, Mr. Speaker, relative to further assistance provincially and federally for cattlemen, yesterday there was a meeting in Calgary with the four provincial ministers and the federal minister. As we heard yesterday, there was an announcement relative to everyone's first priority, I think, and that is water.

There was also a commitment coming out of that meeting yesterday to help with the feed and pasture situation. I think everyone's agreed that there is more to be done there, and what they've set about now is the task of looking at what method pay-outs should be made on.

I think it's useful to note that our province, I think, has led the way — whether it be with announcements relative to water supply, helping list available feed and pasture, or

changes to crop insurance, which my colleague the Hon. Minister of Rural Development announced.

The commitment is there, and I think it was one of the producers from Saskatchewan who I thought put it best when he said, I'd much rather they take their time and have a fair and equitable program rather than one brought out early that isn't fair.

So what that tells me, Mr. Speaker, is the ministers are in a hurry to do it right.

Mr. Anguish: — Well in 1985 livestock producers and those affected by drought said that this situation would never happen again because there'd be a long-term plan in place, and obviously that commitment has not been honoured.

I have a new question to the same minister, Mr. Speaker. In this House on May 25 the Premier and Minister of Agriculture said, and I quote:

... so that in fact if they needed to move feed or move water or move cattle, they should be doing it as they see fit because it (the money) will be retroactive.

So I ask you, Mr. Minister: what money, what money is there? On the one hand you've told Saskatchewan livestock producers to take action, saying that the money will be retroactive. On the other, your federal counterpart in Ottawa says there might not be any more money. And we want to know, Mr. Speaker, if there is no federal money, will the province stand good for the commitment you made to the livestock producers to pay for any actions they would have taken up until this point and in the future?

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — First of all, because all of the producers who were at the meeting yesterday, as well as all the ministers, recognize that some farmers and ranchers may have already taken steps — certainly I know some in my area who have made arrangements to cut hay crops in north-east Saskatchewan; others have made arrangements to buy hay — because of that, and because they recognize how the system works and that cattlemen aren't people to sit on their hands and wait for government aid as the only determiner as to what they will do, the program will be retroactive, and that was pointed out yesterday in the press release that came out. And as well, the statement was made and the commitment is there to provide assistance. And as I understand it, the committee has been put to work to determine the best method. And we welcome the federal announcement relative to twelve and a half million dollars yesterday, and we look forward to their continued involvement.

I must say, in the droughts that we've had previously — not that one wants to have to deal with this kind of problem — but in the droughts that we've had previously, we've always had good co-operation with the federal government, and particularly John Wise. I would have to say that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have a brief supplementary question to the Acting Minister of Agriculture. I have in front of me a copy of the communiqué coming out of the Calgary conference, and I would just simply draw to the minister's attention that the words of the communiqué say, on the question of retroactivity, that the initiatives, "should be retroactive." The words do not say that the provisions will be retroactive. Is the minister telling the House that the Premier and the Government of Saskatchewan are confirming that any measures announced subsequently will be retroactive?

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Our position has always been that it should be retroactive, and I think of the announcements that were made earlier by the minister in charge of Sask Water, that these initiatives were retroactive. I think that speaks directly to the question of fairness, and that's as it should be, so those who started early on the problem, if you like, won't be penalized.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have a further question to the minister, and this is a new question to the minister. The minister's answer I might have misunderstood, but in effect said that the provincial government here at home says that subsequent, future announcements should be retroactive.

I appreciate that, but that's not my question. My question to you, sir, is ... either you or the Deputy Premier to answer. Was one of the decisions that was taken — had and taken as a firm decision in Calgary yesterday — was one of those decisions that any future programs will be retroactive?

Because if they are not retroactive in subsequent decisions, then the question put forward by my colleague from The Battlefords is very pertinent: will the provincial government make good for retroactivity for subsequent announcements? Please answer those two question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Our view is the retroactivity, if you like, is key. If you're asking me what the ultimate program design will look like, I can't. That's why they have struck the committee.

But I don't think any of the ministers would have put the fact that they believe these measures should be retroactive in the news release if they weren't all of the same mind, and I suppose actions speak louder than words. Our commitment to the measures we've announced to date has been retroactive, and I suspect any future commitments will have the same kind of retroactivity.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, one more question with your permission, sir, to the Acting Minister of Agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture will understand this — the importance of the livestock people and the farming people to know with some certainty what kind of

commitments they're embarking upon, and what payments are likely to be accepted by the provincial government in the absence of the federal government paying retroactively.

Will the minister please be very definitive on this for us, to answer the question from the member of The Battlefords specifically. Will he undertake, on behalf of the Premier and his government in the eventuality that future announcements aren't retroactive, that this government will clearly, equivocally stand good for those commitments undertaken by the livestock people and other farmers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, I work very much from the view that the program will be retroactive. And I wouldn't even want to suggest to the federal treasury that I wouldn't let them off the hook by saying, if it wasn't, that we would pick it up, because I think the collective will and the collective view, not only amongst government but amongst industry, is that it should be retroactive.

I think the important thing to remember here is that there is a commitment to act. As is so often the term is so often used by the industry to describe the cow herd, it's the red meat factory. Everyone recognizes the importance of maintaining that red meat factory, whether it be the consumer in Regina of the rancher at Maple Creek or at Meadow Lake.

Our government's commitment has been clear to the red meat industry, whether it be stabilization programs, cash advances, or drought programs in the past. That red meat industry is important to every one in this province. We want to see it stay around and not have to be sold off because of a drought, and we're committed to that end, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Lay-offs in Various Industries

Mr. Shillington: — In the absence of the Minister of Trade and commerce, in the absence of the Premier, I refer my question to the Deputy Premier.

Mr. Minister, your peculiar style of building Saskatchewan continues apace. I refer in particular to 13 people who were laid off at Gainers — 13 families added to the hundreds of others who have lost their pay cheque in the last couple of weeks.

Mr. Minister, these lay-offs are particularly galling because we, the taxpayer, paid millions of dollars for those jobs. I ask you, Mr. Minister, whether or not you think the many millions we paid shouldn't have given you some leverage to intervene on behalf of these families. Don't you think the many millions that these jobs cost us gave us some say in whether or not they were abolished?

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I find it somewhat surprising to hear from the New Democratic Party that

now they're concerned about Gainers. They didn't want them in the province in the first place, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we did not pay for the 13 positions . . . employees in the Yorkton and Regina sales office. They were here prior to, Mr. Speaker, the Gainers plant being established in the city of North Battleford by this government.

Mr. Speaker, it is a part of the reorganization by Gainers, and yes, certainly we do regret any lay-offs, Mr. Speaker. But let me tell the hon. member — he may not want to listen to this, Mr. Speaker — that there are still 145 more people employed in Gainers in the province of Saskatchewan today as a result of the actions of this government assisting Gainers getting started in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Science and Technology, I address my question to the Deputy Premier. Mr. Minister, yesterday Develcon announced that it was laying off 26 people in Saskatoon. And in less than six months there have been over 100 people losing their jobs in the Saskatoon high-tech industry.

Mr. Minister, my question to you is: when are you and your government going to do something substantive to protect Saskatchewan and Saskatoon workers in the high-tech industry and their families?

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, where were the NDP when we just injected \$7 million into Develcon to assist them in both research, development, and to protect jobs in Develcon, Mr. Speaker? They criticize us for putting the money in two months ago, putting in an additional \$7 million of taxpayers' money. Again, Mr. Speaker, it's kept a lot more jobs going, Mr. Speaker, in a highly volatile industry.

I'm a little surprised as well at the hon. member, and surprised at the *Star-Phoenix*, having read an article today, of the lack of the anti-business approach of that paper. Because I don't hear, Mr. Speaker, when they talk about some of the lay-offs, Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear the *Star-Phoenix* talk about the additional 200 jobs of Intercontinental Packers, Mr. Speaker, that we were instrumental in getting. And I can take another 100-and-some jobs at Flexi-Coil, and I could go on and on and on, Mr. Speaker, and the new City Hospital and several others.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest the hon. members pay attention to those.

Mr. Mitchell: — My question is to the same minister in his capacity as the minister responsible for the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, perhaps the greatest betrayal of all was the lay-off of the 200 workers at the Cory potash plant. Now last year we passed legislation in this House which you said would ensure that this wouldn't happen. Now this legislation has not

even been proclaimed.

My question is: what are you going to do for these 200 miners and their families? What's going to happen to them, and how are they supposed to make a living under your government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I've now repeated it, I believe, three different days, that we have in the potash industry in Saskatchewan a tremendous ... and in the potash corporation, a tremendous over-capacity. That over-capacity in general came about because of a decision made in 1979 to have a massive expansion at Lanigan. That surplus capacity is still in existence.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, the initiatives being taken by the potash corporation, they do have outside people in, both on the counselling side, but secondly, looking for alternative employment for these employees. I am advised that they have made arrangements for some work for some of the employees.

Secondly, I believe in terms of corporate security functions, that they are looking for opportunities to hire some of those employees for that and that they do have, Mr. Speaker, an active effort to try and find employment for these 200 workers.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, I had intended to direct my question to the Minister of Trade and Investment, but in his absence it may be answered by the minister who has been fielding the questions today about massive unemployment in Saskatchewan and job loss.

Mr. Minister, we have also heard that on Monday Domtar Incorporated announced pending closure of its gypsum-board plant in Saskatoon which put 88 more people out of work and put their families in jeopardy.

The plant can't continue to operate because it won't have a large enough market in Saskatchewan. There isn't a large enough market because nobody can afford major purchases any more in this province where inflation is running at 6 per cent, the highest in the nation. Instead of battling inflation, Mr. Speaker, this government continues to raise hundreds of fees in taxes to Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Minister, will your government take responsibility for these 88 unemployed people and their families. What are you going to do for these people, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — First of all, Mr. Speaker, they are not unemployed. Secondly, that there have been negotiations between the Government of Saskatchewan and Domtar to continue those jobs, and looking for new opportunities in conjunction with Domtar. And I do believe that the hon. member will find out in the not too distant future that he has been too anxious to announce unemployment numbers and lay-offs, Mr. Speaker, much to the detriment of the workers.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I direct

my question to the Acting Minister of Sask Forest Products. Mr. Minister, on Monday you closed the post treatment plant in Prince Albert, finally letting the corporation's employees know their fate.

Mr. Minister, some 30 employees have been laid off for about a year while you hesitated to make your plans known. Surely you have known for some time you were closing the plant. Why did you keep these employees on a string, letting them use up their UIC claims while waiting for a possible recall to work? Could you answer that question, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I will take notice, but advise the hon. member that I gather there has been some discussions with the employees.

Mr. Speaker: — The minister has taken notice, and while one or two briefs words can be allowed relating specifically to that notice, an answer of any lengthy nature can't be allowed.

Employment Policies of Government

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I thank you for recognizing me. I had not intended to get into question period today, but I must frankly tell you that I am surprised at the nature of the answers given by the government spokesman opposite, the Minister of Finance, perhaps to be renamed the minister in charge of unemployment.

In the last week there have been 375 people, by these various lay-offs identified by my colleagues, who have lost their jobs. That's just not statistics; they're not faceless numbers. These are people, human beings, families.

Will the minister admit in the face of these startling and depressing statistics in one week, will he admit that his government's policies have gone awry; that they're not working; that the programs of privatization, deregulation, and Americanization simply need to be abandoned? Why don't you admit that possibility?

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — With all respect to the Leader of the Opposition, like potash and like agriculture, I frankly suggest that he doesn't know what he's talking about, Mr. Speaker.

Where is the NDP when they complain about public participation when WESTBRIDGE is out hiring an additional 200 people and advertising now for an additional 25? Where were they, Mr. Speaker?

Where were they when we're getting a new paper mill in Prince Albert and hiring 700 people out working on that now? Where were they?

Where were they, Mr. Speaker, where in the city of Saskatoon I believe the work-force has increased 18,000 since we've taken office, Mr. Speaker? Where were they when we were talking about not only the health care facility of the new City Hospital and the several hundred jobs that will be there, Mr. Speaker? Where were they?

Where were the NDP when we announced a new agricultural building which will see several hundred people working over the next couple of years, Mr. Speaker?

Where were they when we announced our expansion to Intercontinental Packers and the assistance for another nearly 200 people, Mr. Speaker? Where were they when there is job creation, Mr. Speaker?

They're still negative on this province when there's job creation. They're still negative on this province when there is new opportunities being created, Mr. Speaker. There's dead silence when there's a new job created. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think they're being realistic when the Leader of the Opposition makes a suggestion the other day that the potash, a 50-50 management and employees; I think it was silly, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Minister of Finance. I think it's to be noted to all the members of the Assembly and by those who watch on television the proceedings, that not a word was said by the Minister of Finance about the families and the people involved, but instead, basically a political, rhetorical answer.

The facts are, Mr. Minister of Finance — and you know them to be the case — that there are 15,000 more unemployed today than in 1982. There are 64,000 kids in poverty in Saskatchewan, the second highest in Canada. Five thousand people have left this province in search of new jobs in four months. There are 14,000 more people on welfare today than in 1982. Those are the facts.

Where is the NDP? The NDP is continuing to oppose your policies of privatization and Americanization which produced those shocking statistics. Why don't you admit you made a mistake and start something new?

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, they obviously — and the people in TV will know this — the NDP obviously don't want to hear the answer, Mr. Speaker.

But let's remind the Leader of the Opposition that when net farm income can be below zero, farm families will be below the poverty line, Mr. Speaker, and that's bound to increase our numbers. And yet every single program that we have brought in to help the farmers of this province, the New Democratic Party, its leadership, and its members have opposed those farm programs to help farmers, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — And, Mr. Speaker, when we try and give the opportunities for welfare recipients to work, jobs, they condemn welfare reform. Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party doesn't want jobs for people on welfare and have opposed every program, Mr. Speaker.

They talk about families, Mr. Speaker. They don't care,

Mr. Speaker, about families, because they don't understand the initiatives being taken to try and create jobs to diversify this economy, Mr. Speaker, for the young people, for the families of this province, Mr. Speaker. They have opposed every new initiative that this government has brought in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Minister of Finance. I think it would be useful to the debate if the Minister of Finance lowered the tone of his voice and tried to argue with a little bit of reason and rationality.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Does not the Minister of Finance admit that the government has an ideological commitment to privatization and people like Oliver Letwin, for example, from the United Kingdom who absolutely know nothing about the Saskatchewan experience of building jobs and keeping families. You won't listen to us. You won't listen to the Eastview by-election result. You won't listen to the Elphinstone by-election result. Are you not at least embarrassed by the fact that wives, wives of men who have lost their jobs are out there picketing and urging that their families be protected? So you not at least have any shame or self-respect to consider those concerns of the families instead of giving us some political rhetoric. Stand up, admit you've made a mistake . . . (inaudible) . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member tries to say that privatization is ideological. I wonder why, Mr. Speaker, that trade union representatives have come out in favour, Mr. Speaker, of WESTBRIDGE and public participation. Why, Mr. Speaker, if it's ideological, are the union representatives supporting and accepting what this government is doing to get the people of this province and the employees to having a direct interest in the economic development of this province.

Let me tell you what is not the Saskatchewan way, Mr. Speaker; the Saskatchewan way is not the nationalization of the potash industry that that hon. member led and talked about and pushed and forced upon the people of this province. And the Saskatchewan way, Mr. Speaker, is not government ownership of pulp mills and every industry around. And the Saskatchewan way, Mr. Speaker, which has been so rejected by the people of this province on two election is not government ownership of farm land.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 55 — An Act to establish the Public Participation Program

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to establish the Public Participation Program.

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

Bill No. 56 — An Act respecting the Reorganization of the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting the Reorganization of the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation.

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

Bill No. 57 — An Act to amend The Attachment of Debts Act

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Attachment of Debts Act.

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

Bill No. 58 — An Act respecting Certain Adults Requiring Guardianship

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting Certain Adults Requiring Guardianship.

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

Bill No. 59 — An Act to amend The Public Trustee Act

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Public Trustee Act.

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

Bill No. 60 — An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984.

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

Bill No. 61 — An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Local Government Election Act.

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

Bill No. 62 — An Act respecting Securities in Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting Securities in Saskatchewan.

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

Bill No. 63 — An Act to amend The Student Assistance and Student Aid Fund Act, 1985

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Student Assistance and Student Aid Fund Act, 1985.

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

Bill No. 64 — An Act to amend The Tax Enforcement Act

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Tax Enforcement Act.

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

(1445)

Bill No. 65 — An Act to amend The Provincial Court Act

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Provincial Court Act.

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

Bill No. 66 — An Act respecting Justices of the Peace

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting Justices of the Peace.

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

Bill No. 67 — An Act respecting a Traffic Safety Court for Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting a Traffic Safety Court for Saskatchewan.

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

Bill No. 68 — An Act respecting Small Claims in the Provincial Court in Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting Small Claims in the Provincial Court in Saskatchewan.

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

Bill No. 69 — An Act to amend The Workers' Compensation Act

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Workers' Compensation Act.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time

at the next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Berntson that Bill No. 33 — **An Act respecting the Registration of Leafcutter Beekeepers** be now read a second time.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, on Bill No. 33, I am informed by our critic, Mr. Upshall . . . or the member from Humboldt, sorry, that we are prepared to let that Bill go into committee.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Berntson that Bill No. 36 — **An Act to amend The Meewasin Valley Authority Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the members on both sides of the House for allowing the adjournment of this particular discussion of this particular Bill previously, so that I could have an opportunity to say a few words about it.

The Bill that is before us, Bill No 36, An Act to amend the Meewasin Valley Authority, is an important Bill in that it deals with an important public institution, the Meewasin Valley Authority. But before I deal directly with the Bill, Mr. Speaker, I do want to say a few words about the origin of the authority and its achievements to date, which have been notable.

In the beginning, Mr. Speaker, the climate of Saskatchewan at certain times in the year can be described as outright hostile. The geography of Saskatchewan, at least in the southern settled section, is quite often described as plain. And as a consequence the people of Saskatchewan, the pioneers of Saskatchewan, have grown to appreciate any diversion which would detract from these two geographical observations and climate observations.

Some number of years ago the province of Saskatchewan enacted legislation with regard to Wascana Centre Authority. At the time this legislation was enacted, Mr. Speaker, it was legislation of a very innovative style, and unique in the province of Saskatchewan at that time.

One of the original movers of that legislation, who piloted the Bill, was the Hon. Allan Blakeney, former leader of the government and former leader of the opposition, recently retired from the legislature. And he and his advisers must be congratulated for their foresight, and all the people that supported that Bill in this legislature, because that was the creation of the Wascana Centre Authority which entailed a partnership among the university, the city, and province; was innovative, was co-operative, and was

designed to relieve what I referred to earlier as some of the monotonous and harsh circumstances of Saskatchewan.

The Wascana Centre Authority had been recognized throughout the world for its foresight, and the development here has made the Wascana Centre Authority a jewel in the city of Regina. And I think no one would deny that, and I think it has a wide public support.

Thereafter, on September 4, 1979, the Meewasin Valley Authority was created. Some preliminary work was done by the city of Saskatoon and those in the city of Saskatoon that were concerned about this. And I must give credit for their leadership, in part, to the city of Saskatoon, its representatives, and people of Saskatoon, who saw a similar development to the Wascana Centre Authority as a distinct possibility, if not even greater than Wascana Centre Authority in its full and final development in the Meewasin Valley Authority.

And I was present in the legislature at the time the legislation was brought forward, Mr. Speaker, to create the Meewasin Valley Authority, and it was a proud day for the people of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan. The member for Riversdale, who's the present Leader of the Opposition, was instrumental in piloting that legislation through the Assembly, and it was adopted unanimously by this Assembly.

I have here the first report of the Meewasin Valley Authority, 1979-1980 annual report of the authority, and it deals with the significant time intervals with regard to the establishment of Meewasin Valley Authority.

What has happened with regard to recognition of this authority, outside the boundaries of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan? Well it has been much similar, Mr. Speaker, to the recognition that has come to Wascana Centre Authority.

The architect, Raymond Moriyama, who designed a hundred-year program for Meewasin Valley Authority, was recognized for that architectural achievement. The Meewasin Valley, in its full scope, will be several times the size of Wascana Centre Authority, so there is a long term of development ahead of us. And all of the people that were involved in that project deserve to be congratulated for their foresight.

The Meewasin Valley Authority has been recognized outside our borders, as I said. I see . . . here's an award that was given to them in 1984. Meewasin Valley Authority has been awarded the Tourism Industry Association of Canada Governor General's conservation award. And this is recognition from a very high level in Canada with regard to Meewasin Valley.

These two authorities, and other authorities in Saskatchewan which have subsequently been created, have been important not only for the relief of our landscape and the beautifying of our province in the major urban areas, but have been significant because they've provided an attraction for tourism and they've provided employment.

And there's been recognition of the fact that they've

provided employment because, as within all our knowledge, that at the time the authorities begin their major beautifying programs on an annual basis, it coincides nicely with the availability of students who wish summer employment. So these authorities, including the Meewasin Valley Authority, provide important employment opportunities for Saskatchewan people.

The interesting part dealing more directly with the Bill which is before us is the section 18 of the Bill. And this deals with the financial participation of the three partners.

In May 1983, Mr. Speaker, this government who sits to your right passed a very brief Bill in this Assembly. It was Bill No. 32 in 1983, and it was subsequently assented to on May 20, 1983. And, leaving aside the formalities, the operative part of this particular Bill was:

Subsection 56(1) of the Meewasin Valley Authority Act is amended by striking out "five mills" and substituting "four mills".

And this was the commitment of the province of Saskatchewan, an equivalent of four mills to the Meewasin Valley Authority. And I'll say nothing of the other authorities and their financing now, because I'm dealing directly with the Bill and the actions of the government of the day in 1983. And that particular amendment to The Meewasin Valley Authority Act came into force on April 1, 1983.

Subsequent to that, Mr. Speaker, the city council in Saskatoon passed a motion. And the motion of the city council, which is recorded on May 24, 1983, which would be very shortly after the map was amended here in this Assembly, the motion was as follows:

That the city of Saskatoon inform the provincial government that we appreciate their financial support for MVA and encourage the provincial government to re-establish the funding level at five mills for the year 1984-85.

Now what the government had done by their legislation they'd passed is give a 20 per cent cut to the amount of funding that they would put into the partnership. This partnership in Meewasin Valley Authority, which is recognized across Canada and elsewhere, which beautifies the city, which provides employment, had its budget cut 20 per cent by this Bill. The city of Saskatoon was alarmed at this and passed the resolution. And I know, because I was in council in the city of Saskatoon at that time.

When the minister who was responsible for Meewasin Valley Authority was approached by the press at that time, it is reported in the Star-Phoenix on June 3, 1983 that the minister had said — and this is Mr. Paul Schoenhals, minister of Urban Affairs — and the news item relates:

(1500)

Saskatoon city council passed this week a resolution seeking reinstatement of the previous

funding formula for MVA which was reduced in this year's budget. Schoenhals said, it's too late to change that now, even if he wanted to, but it could be a budgetary consideration next year — next year being '84-85, budget year.

So the minister in charge of the authority held out the possibility that there might be a change in the government's position in '83-84 fiscal year, however . . . or '84-85 fiscal year. However, nothing's been done.

Now we come up to the current situation, Mr. Speaker. The legality of the 1987-88 funding of four mills from the province is now open to question. Had the province adhered to the law of the land, they should have paid an equivalent of five mills to the Meewasin Valley Authority in 1987-88. However, this government's initial interference in the Meewasin Valley Authority in 1983 has now been compounded by their neglect, and that's quite clear by this Bill.

This Bill, Bill No. 36, aside from the housekeeping amendments and minor technical amendments, seeks to amend this government's sloppiness, indifference, or disdain — take your choice — for the authorities. And I include all the authorities. That includes Meewasin Valley Authority.

If it would make any difference, Mr. Speaker, or I could change this government's attitude about the authorities and the level of funding that they should be awarded, I would debate this Bill even longer. However, it would appear, Mr. Speaker, that it's all, as you might say, water under Broadway bridge in Saskatoon. We're not going to change this government's attitude.

They took this position the earliest opportunity they could, to cut the funding of the authorities. They took the earliest opportunity that was available to them in the budget and cut it back in '83, and they've never increased since then. And they don't even have good housekeeping with regard to the Bill.

They missed a year, neglected to bring the proper Bill to amend the law. As a consequence the Bill this year has to go back and retroactively take that money away, retroactively take that money away. I don't believe that's good enough. That's not good enough for the Meewasin Valley Authority; it's certainly not good enough for this government. And because of the consequences of this, because of this high unemployment period we are in, and recent announcements about job lay-offs, I cannot support this kind of legislation.

Here is something that's going to be done eventually. It creates jobs. The government itself says it wants to create tourist attractions. These are tourist attractions, yet the government has cut this budget of this authority and other authorities by 20 per cent at the first available opportunity they could. I cannot support that, Mr. Speaker, and I am therefore against this principle of this Bill.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Berntson that Bill No. 17 — **An Act respecting the Inspection of Gas Installations and Gas Equipment for Consumers** be now read a second time.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, since we adjourned debate on this Bill some days ago, I've taken that opportunity to reread the minister's comments; the Deputy Premier, who introduced this Bill in second reading on behalf of the Minister of the Environment, I've reread his comments. And I've had an opportunity to consult with a number of people in the industry, to consult with consumers who are certainly affected by this legislation, and to consult with people who are currently involved in the inspection process, Mr. Speaker. And universally, universally those individuals and people share the same concern with this Bill that I have.

As I reread the minister's comments in introducing Bill 17, I noted how he very carefully avoided making mention of what is arguably the most significant change brought about by this piece of legislation, in terms of the inspection of gas installations in our province. And in essence, Mr. Speaker, what this Bill provides for is the privatization of the inspection process. This Bill will provide the opportunity for SaskPower now to contract out the inspection process, in the case of Bill 17, in terms of gas installations.

Bill 18, Mr. Speaker, is a very similar Bill. In that case, the contracting out will be provided for the inspection of electrical installations. And then when we look at Bill 9, we see also in that Bill that the — in terms of The Fire Prevention Act, that the fire commissioner will be able to designate persons employed, pursuant to this Bill 17, as inspectors.

So what we are seeing in each of these three Bills is a privatization of the inspection process in our province. It means that a radical change from the current and existing practice, which has served this province for many years and served the public of Saskatchewan very well.

Mr. Speaker, let me just describe for you the system as it currently exists. Under the present system, all inspectors in this province, be they of gas installations or electrical installations or in terms of fire inspection, all inspectors in this province are public servants. And what that means, Mr. Speaker, is that they have but one single goal, and that is to protect public safety. Their only interest is the public interest. They are servants of the people of Saskatchewan. They have no vested interests. They have no particular friends within any industry. They have but one concern, and that's public safety.

Now if there is any problem with the current system, it's that there are simply not enough of them; that the whole inspection process, be it gas or electrical, is understaffed. If there is a problem, it's the current understanding levels.

But clearly the inspectors of gas installations in this province, as they exist now and as they serve the people now, have but one interest and that's to protect consumers and to protect the safety of the general public.

They have no other vested interest.

Now in terms of the inspection of gas installations and gas equipment, I would just refer you, Mr. Speaker, to the current legislation, section 5 of The Gas Inspection and Licensing Act, which reads:

No person shall be appointed to the office of chief inspector or inspector who is interested either directly or indirectly in the sale or installation of gas equipment.

That's the current legislation, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, if I may say what this legislation had done and what the practice of having public servants doing the inspections has done, is to instil, I think, a great deal of confidence in the public mind in the inspection process. Inspectors, I think, have earned both the regard of consumers and of contractors in the work that they've done in our province. They've earned the regard and respect of being fair and objective, and again I say, acting with only one interest in mind and that's the protection of the public. And I think that the confidence of the public, the credibility of the inspection process is extremely important because, Mr. Speaker, we're not dealing here with what is simply a harmless substance, we're dealing here with natural gas and propane which, as you and I both know, as all members know, can be very lethal substances. It's not an area where there's room for error.

Human lives are at stake, and so I believe it to be essential not only that the inspection process be objective and fair, but that it be seen by Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan consumers to be objective and fair. This Bill puts all of that at stake, in my judgement, Mr. Speaker.

For some unexplained reason the minister did not provide a reason for this change. For some unexplained reason this government now wants to begin to privatize the process of inspection. And so if this Bill gets passed as it stands, the government, through SaskPower now, will be able to appoint private contractors to be out inspecting the installations and the work of other private contractors. This Bill will allow the government to, through SaskPower, to appoint contractors to go out and inspect installations across our province.

Very obviously, I think, Mr. Speaker, and those with whom I have consulted, very obviously we think that this presents a number of dangers.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, this kind of privatization opens the possibility — I do not say the certainty — but it opens the possibility of less than objective inspections. In any given community in our province, the number of contracting firms in gas installation will be a limited number. Even in our largest cities it's a limited number of contractors who will be in the field. These firms therefore are not known to each other. The contractors are not unknown to each other; they're not strangers.

And so by having one contractor inspecting the work of another contractor who on the one hand may be a professional friend, or on the other hand who may be a professional enemy, we clearly, Mr. Speaker, run the risk,

we open the door to the possibility of less than objective inspections. Mr. Speaker, personal friendships or personal antagonisms, competition in the market-place, could all lead to a good deal of patting on the back — you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours.

We could, Mr. Speaker, have a situation of an inspector who is a contractor, inspecting an installation and declaring it to be unsafe and demanding that it be replaced, which of course will ultimately benefit another contractor. Mr. Speaker, I'm not singling out contractors as being any different than any other human being. We're all liable to temptation and to influence.

So what we could have with this Bill if we contract out the inspection of gas installations, we may not simply have those inspections being done on the basis of what is correct and what is objective, but we may see other factors beginning to creep in, and, Mr. Speaker, I submit, in the field of inspection of gas installations, or in the case of Bill 18, of electrical installations, that's simply not acceptable. Even the possibility of less than objective inspections is just not acceptable.

In my judgement, those who are out there inspecting must be absolutely free of outside influences or pressures. They must be absolutely unencumbered by anything but a concern for public safety.

This concern that I bring to the House, Mr. Speaker, is shared. It's shared by consumer organizations, it's shared by people in the contracting field, and it's shared by the general public.

We open the door to the possibility, with this legislation, of less than objective inspections if we've got one contractor inspecting the work of another contractor who may be a personal friend or who may be a personal enemy.

(1515)

Another possibility, Mr. Speaker, that arises through this legislation, that arises through the privatization of the inspection process, is the possibility of patronage. The situation now, if this Bill passes, is that this government through SaskPower will be naming certain contractors to become inspectors — certain contractors. What that does of course, Mr. Speaker, is to just open another door for patronage. And I ask, who are the contractors who will be accepted to act as inspectors? Who will they be? Will they be contractors who perhaps carry a blue card?

An Hon. Member: George Hill.

Mr. Calvert: — Or will they be related to Mr. George Hill, as the Deputy Premier just indicated. Or will they happen to be the contractors who make donations to the Progressive Conservative Party?

Mr. Speaker, again it's not a certainty, but in this case, and we know the record of this government, it's perhaps more than a possibility that patronage can become involved all of a sudden in the inspection of gas installations in this case.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan don't want patronage involved in their safety.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I don't want this government to have that option. But, Mr. Speaker, neither would I want the government that we form in 1990 or 1991 to have that option.

Mr. Speaker, I want the inspections that go on in this province for public safety to be beyond reproach, to be above questioning. What this change does then, Mr. Speaker, it opens the door to less than objective inspections and it opens the door, yet another door, to patronage for this government, and the result is, Mr. Speaker, the credibility of the inspection process is going to be hurt. The confidence, the public confidence in the inspection process is going to be lowered.

Mr. Speaker, we didn't hear from the minister a reason, we didn't hear from the minister a reason for this change. We can only speculate on that reason. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, perhaps it's because there is such a backlog of inspections that has built up because of the understaffing of inspectors. Perhaps it is an attempt to catch up on a backlog.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we can appoint contractors to catch up on that backlog and then, I suppose, withdraw the contracts when the backlog is dealt with. That's not going to solve the long-term problem. We'll just again have another backlog being built up in the future. In the future, the long-term solution, if the backlog is the problem, the long-term solution is to hire more inspectors, more qualified inspectors, public servants who can do the work. That's a simple solution if that's the problem we're trying to address.

We could speculate that this government perhaps may feel it's cheaper to do it this way; it's cheaper to contract it out. I'm not convinced it would be. That may be their thinking. But even if it is cheaper, Mr. Speaker, we have to balance that against the value of the human life. I mean, the memory of Polly Redhot is not lost to the people of Saskatchewan. And if it is the will of this government to sacrifice public safety for a few dollars, then I think it's a government that again shows us that it's got its priorities all wrong.

Mr. Speaker, what do the people of this province pay taxes for? Is it not an essential task of government to protect the interests of consumers and to protect public safety? And, Mr. Speaker, just frankly, I'd much sooner see my tax dollars going into the protection of consumers and the Saskatchewan public, into the protection of my home and family as into a variety of other things that this government now does with our tax dollar. So, Mr. Speaker, if the reason is to save money, then I find that to be a very poor excuse.

Or perhaps, Mr. Speaker, it — and perhaps this is a reason — perhaps it's just another example of this government's headlong plunge into privatization; just another example of the blind ideology that says, privatize everything in government. We've seen the privatization of so many of

our provincial assets. We've seen the privatization, the sell-off of those things which have made money for the people of Saskatchewan. We've seen the privatization of the school-based dental plan. Now we've got some liquor legislation coming into this House; it looks like it contains privatization.

And here we are again, another example of the privatization of a public service that's not going to benefit Saskatchewan people. It may benefit a number of contractors. I'm afraid, Mr. Speaker, that that's what's involved here — just another bit of the blind ideology, another bit of this headlong plunge into privatization.

Mr. Speaker, all of those with whom I have spoken since this Bill was introduced, be they involved currently in the inspection process, be they involved in a consumers' association, be they members of the general public, be they contractors that I've spoken with, all universally are opposed. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I too will be opposing this Bill if it continues in its present form.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Berntson that Bill No. 18 — **An Act respecting the Inspection of Electrical Equipment, Installation and Material** be now read a second time.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I will limit some of the remarks I wish to make again on this Bill. It follows in the pattern of Bill 17. With Bill 18 we are enabling the privatization of electrical inspection in this case.

Mr. Speaker, let me just refer to the section of this Bill which permits this to be. In section 6 which reads in part:

The corporation:

Referring to SaskPower, since these responsibilities are being transferred out of the Department of the Environment and Public Safety over to SaskPower. The Bill reads:

The corporation:

may appoint any inspectors, in addition to the chief inspector, that it considers appropriate.

Then further down in paragraph 4 it reads:

No contractor who is an inspector shall inspect any work of electrical installation that he has performed or in which he has any interest.

Obviously, the provision of this Bill will enable contractors to be named inspectors, in this case electrical contractors, to be named inspectors of electrical installation. And again, Mr. Speaker, those with whom I have consulted, be they in the industry, be they currently involved in inspection, be they involved with consumer associations, be they members of the

general public, have universally raised a concern with the practice of inspectors inspecting the work of other inspectors.

Again we risk the possibility of losing objectivity in the inspection process, again we open a door to the possibility of patronage and the appointment of these inspectors. And again we run the real risk of lowering the credibility which is so important in the inspection process.

Mr. Speaker, not many days ago we awoke one Saturday morning to hear that College Mathieu in Gravelbourg was burning. And those of us who have lived in Gravelbourg, those of us who have had some association with College Mathieu were sorrowed to hear that.

We were sorrowed to hear of the loss of the school and its facility and that historic old building, but we were relieved to hear that there was not a loss of human life. Some days later we read through the press and hear through the media that likely the cause of the College Mathieu fire, the cause of that fire was a poor electrical installation, some bad wiring.

Mr. Speaker, we could have been talking about the tragic deaths of a number of young people. We are not again here dealing with a harmless substance. We are dealing with electricity which can be, as we well know, a lethal and destructive substance. It is so crucial that the inspection process in our province be credible, be objective, and be done well, as it has been over the years, by inspectors who have been public servants.

Again I say, Mr. Speaker, with this kind of change, with the privatization of the inspections, we are going to lose that credibility. And so again I say, I cannot support this legislation for those reasons, and will not be, unless it be amended.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Berntson that Bill No 9 — **An Act to amend The Fire Prevention Act, 1980** be now read a second time.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the amendment to The Fire Prevention Act has the hook in it in the proposed section 4 of this Bill, paragraph (2), which reads:

Notwithstanding subsection (1), the Fire Commissioner may designate persons employed pursuant to The Gas Inspection Act (which we've discussed moments ago, to act) as inspectors for the purposes of this Act (The Fire Prevention Act).

I read that to say, Mr. Speaker, that those private individuals and contractors who are now named through The Gas Inspection Act, or may be named if that Bill passes, may also be appointed now to act as inspectors for fire prevention. All of the same arguments, I think, Mr. Speaker, do apply, and therefore I will be opposing this Bill.

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

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 40 — An Act to amend The League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents Act

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents, commonly known as LEADS, came into being in its present form in 1984 when the LEADS Act was first passed. Since that time the league has been administering its affairs in accordance with a view to maintaining high standards of competence and conduct among its members.

In this respect, the league has identified what it considers to be some shortcomings relating to disciplinary provisions in the Act. The proposed amendments are designed to eliminate these weaknesses, Mr. Speaker, and the key points to note are as follows.

The establishment of a professional relations committee and a discipline committee will now be mandatory rather than optional. The name, professional relations committee, will replace professional standards committee to better reflect this committee's role in counselling and dispute resolution. To better ensure consistent and equitable handling of complaints, all complaints to either of the committees will now be channelled through the league executive which will prescribe rules governing the business and proceedings of the committees. Finally, both committees will report their findings and recommendations directly to the executive.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments have been prepared in full consultation with LEADS officials who have indicated their agreement. The amendments reflect the league's desire to serve the public interest by operating in a highly professional way.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, and members of this legislature, that this is a laudable goal worthy of support by all members of this Assembly, and I therefore move that Bill No. 40, An Act to amend the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents Act be now read a second time.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I would concur with the minister that the request of the LEADS for these changes be proceeded with. We know that the LEADS is a fairly young organization in education, but it has made a tremendous impact. The organization of directors and superintendents in Saskatchewan have performed a very valuable role in leadership in education. I'm pleased to see that they are evolving their self-governing procedures with respect to discipline and competence. We will allow this to go at this time to committee.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred

to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

(1530)

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

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 39, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 1988.

As many members will know, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act establishes the level of provincial funding assistance to be allocated to both urban and rural municipalities. Accordingly, the amendment gives legal effect to decisions reflected in the government's 1988-89 budget.

In 1988-89 funds available to rural municipalities will be maintained at the levels established in 1987-88. The same will apply in urban municipalities, except for the injection of an additional \$585,000. These additional moneys will fund a minus 3 per cent safety net. This safety net will ensure that through the revenue-sharing distribution formula no community will receive a funding reduction greater than 3 per cent.

This form of protection will benefit 229 communities, Mr. Speaker, in 1988, many of whom would have been experiencing population decline. Together, revenue-sharing allocations to urban and rural municipalities will total over \$115 million in 1988-89 — evidence of the provincial government's continued support to municipalities right across Saskatchewan.

I urge all members to support this Bill so that payments to municipalities can be undertaken in a prompt manner. Accordingly, I move second reading of Bill No. 39, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 1988.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have listened to the minister in the introduction to this Bill, who spoke, I noted, very briefly. And I want to make few comments and then adjourn.

This is not your usual standard, non-controversial legislation. This is legislation, Mr. Speaker, that reinforces the neglect that has been displayed by this government towards our urban municipalities and I think that the result of that neglect are beginning to show up in many, many ways throughout all of Saskatchewan.

This attack on urban municipalities and urban people continues, not only in the funding that this government has been providing, or lack of funding that it has been providing, but it continues in the total disregard for the interests of people who live in those communities, interests of the small-business people who try to make a living in those communities as is exemplified by the notice the minister has given today with his store hours legislation — once again, an example of where nobody seems to agree with him but himself and maybe some of his people on the front benches.

There are no members of his back benches who represent rural constituencies who will support that Bill unless they

are whipped into line by the cabinet, because they know how devastating it will be for rural business and rural communities.

Now in the same way, Mr. Speaker, the cut-backs that we have seen in revenue sharing have affected those communities in a drastic way. And I want to spend just a few minutes to give you some examples. And I will elaborate at great length when I resume the debate when it comes forward again.

Now this Bill is solely a means of instituting the funding levels announced in the '88-89 budget — that's true. But, Mr. Speaker, the one thing that the minister did not mention and the government fails to point out is that it is freezing the funding after it was cut back by 1 per cent last year. So we've had urban municipalities throughout the province who have had major cut in their revenue-sharing funding. And that has resulted in tax increases unprecedented in Saskatchewan over that same period of time.

Now I'll just give you an example of what has happened. In 1987 the funding for urban municipalities on the revenue sharing was \$67.126 million. In 1989, two years later which is this budget and this Bill which the minister talks about, '88-89, the funding is \$67,040. Two years later it is less than it was in 1987. Now what in Heaven's name can the minister and the government expect other than tax increases on property?

This is a deliberate attempt by the government, which has unnecessarily created a deficit as massive as it is, to pass on this deficit to property owners; tell them that they have got to handle it. They did the mismanagement. They are the ones . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the Minister of Urban Affairs say they don't believe me. Well he obviously has been living in a cocoon for the last little while and has not talked to very many people. Because I happen . . . the people I go and see throughout Saskatchewan in the places that I go, are saying very clearly that they are getting a tax load which they can no longer stand.

In the last four years . . . I'll give you a little comparison just so that for the record it is known the difference between that Conservative government and the government that was a New Democratic government before, unfortunately, they took the reins of office.

Mr. Speaker, I read to you the following. In the last four years of the NDP government, which was '78 to '81 — I'm going to use four-year comparisons — the revenue sharing grants increased by 109.5 per cent, and at the same time inflation increased by 45.2 per cent. A net increase of 64.3 per cent in real dollars was seen in that period of time.

How does that compare with this government's operation? Well I'll tell you. In the last four years of this government, '86-89, revenue sharing has increased by 2.9 per cent. Inflation during that same period was roughly 18.5 per cent, and this means a net decline in real dollars of 15.6 per cent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what's the result of that? Well the

result of that is very traumatic. And I'll give you some . . .

An Hon. Member: Wind it up. Let's get . . . (inaudible) . . .

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well I know the minister would like us to wind it up, because he doesn't like to hear this, but I don't intend to wind it up until I'm ready.

The result of this neglect and this choosing of the wrong priorities, the result of saying to the municipalities, we're cutting back your revenue sharing because we've got to have this money for the oil royalty holidays for our oil company friends, is the following.

If you take a home in Regina, an average home of 1,000 square feet, three-bedroom bungalow, the taxes on that home in 1981 were \$1,102. In 1987 they were \$1,531, and they're going up in 1988. Now if you add to that the removal of the property improvement grant, as I said the other night, that has been an increase in the term of this government, on that home, of \$659 on property tax.

Now these are the size of homes that working people live in, who in many cases have not had an increase in their pay during that period of time. Some of them have been unemployed from time to time during that period of time. And this government is saying, you've got to pay for this deficit which the PCS created. That's Regina.

Saskatoon people haven't fare any better. In 1981 their tax was \$867 on the similar kind of home. In 1987 it was \$1,272 — \$1,272. And if you calculate the property improvement grant into that, their property taxes increased on that 1,000 square foot home by \$635.

I'll give you a rural community. Now here is a government that talks about rural Saskatchewan, but that's all it does is talks about it. Legislation on store hours that the minister introduced today is going to be devastating for rural Saskatchewan. It's going to be the domino effect. And if the city of Saskatoon decides to have seven-day opening and if the city of Prince Albert does, then the town of Duck Lake and the town of Rosthern don't have a choice.

Now that is now on top of what the minister has done and this government has done in property taxes to towns in rural Saskatchewan.

Here's Balgonie — not a big town, but a pretty good place to live. People have raised their families there. But it's not so easy to raise their families there any more, because the property taxes in 1981 in Balgonie, if you do it based on a computation of mill rate on a home with an assessment of \$4,000 prior to reassessment in 1985 and an assessment of \$8,500 after 1985, is as follows. In 1981, \$656 was the property tax; in 1987 it was \$1,062. And if you consider the property improvement grant, the increase on that home for that family has been \$633 since this government took office.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is unacceptable. That is unacceptable from a government that says it's got \$2 billion to give to Imperial Esso, and all corporations which have made handsome profits in that period of time,

handsome profits. Says, we got to give them \$2 billion, but we got to cut back revenue sharing, and municipalities, you go get it out of the property owner.

Now I could spend a lot of time giving you examples, Mr. Speaker. I could talk about my city, the city of Regina, and I could point out, and I will in my estimates later and also in the second reading speech in the Committee of the Whole of this Bill, that in the one year alone of 1986-87 in the city of Regina, this government cut back a total of \$8 million — \$8 million. Now that is a lot of money to cut back on a city of the size of Regina or Saskatoon in one year.

And having done that, then the minister went out and publicly was condemning the city council, saying, oh they are inefficient; oh they are raising property taxes. But I say to him they were not inefficient. They have not in recent years raised property taxes in a massive way. But they had to do something because you cannot sit on your hands and do nothing when the provincial government says we're going to take \$8 million away from your funding from the province and we're going to give it to the oil companies.

Ordinarily, Mr. Speaker, this Bill would go by without any comment at all because it's regular annual legislation. But because of the history that comes with it and because of the neglect that it exemplifies, I don't think we can do that. Because I think we need to consider carefully those brief remarks that the minister made, and we need to talk at some greater length about the neglect of this government in funding, so at this time, I adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1545)

Bill No. 42 — An Act to amend The Controverted Municipal Elections Act

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to move second reading of The Controverted Municipal Elections Amendment Act, 1987.

Mr. Speaker, let me say at the outset that this Bill is intended to put an end to voting irregularities that apparently occurred in the 1985 local election in Ferland.

As many members of this House know, this alleged abuse of the election process involved land transactions. A number of names of people living outside the community were added to the titles of land within the village, allegedly to permit them to influence the results if the election.

A judge who looked into the matter said that indeed some manipulation of the rules had taken place but that it was not illegal the problem arises from the right of people who reside outside that municipality to vote in urban municipal elections. Let me add that the right of non-resident landowners to vote is a feature of local government legislation in other provinces as well.

However, the right is open to abuse when competing

groups in a community sell or give inexpensive land to a number of their friends, to relatives who live outside the municipality. These non-residents can, under the rules of land ownership, place a number of names on the title of a single, small parcel or lot. They can then qualify to vote. If we do not change the rules now, Mr. Speaker, the possibility for this to happen in other communities in the 1988 municipal general election continues to exist.

Well we did a great deal of work on this. We looked at the obvious solution of limiting the voters on any one parcel of land to one or two. We discovered that this was both legally and practically very difficult.

First, there is no real fair way to determine which one or two landowners out a number of legal owners of a piece of property should get the vote. Selecting one or two voters from a number of equally qualified people could lead to lawsuits, quarrels, and other things. It would also run the risk of violating equality guarantees under the charter of rights.

Well what's the solution? There are actually two solutions, Mr. Speaker. One of these solutions is contained in the Bill amending The Local Government Election Act, which I will speak to later in this session, and it was introduced earlier in the day. The other solution is contained in this Bill. The amendments in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, will apply some pretty stiff penalties to anyone who buys land in a community to influence the outcome of a municipal election, and I will describe the measures that are in this Bill.

First, it will be an offence for any person, resident or non-resident, to buy or otherwise obtain land for the purpose of influencing the outcome of an election.

Secondly, it will be an offence for any person to counsel or procure another person to buy or otherwise obtain land for the purpose of influencing the outcome of an election.

And thirdly, it will be an offence for anyone to even counsel or procure any person who has knowingly bought land with the intention of influencing the result of an election.

Fourth, anyone who before this Bill was passed bought land for the purpose of influencing the local election, would be in breach of this Act if he were to vote in the upcoming October 1988 local elections. It would be an offence for anyone to counsel or procure any person who bought land before this Bill, with the intent to influence a local vote, and has maintained interest to land since, or indeed votes in the October elections.

And finally, any candidate who is involved in a scheme to get extra names on a land title with the objective of ensuring his election, will face a fine, the loss of his seat, and disqualification from office for a period of four years — pretty stiff penalties.

Mr. Speaker, I know that every member of this House abhors any abuse of voting rights. We take voting matters very seriously, as well we should. I believe we have a fair and practical amendment package here that will prevent any significant abuse of the non-resident franchise in the

future, and I urge all members to support this Bill.

I therefore move second reading of Bill No. 42, An Act to amend The Controverted Municipal Election Act.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, on the face of the Bill and the intent of what the Bill intends to do and what the minister says it intends to do, I would have no reason to oppose the Bill. But I think that there are some implications here that this legislature ought to consider very carefully, and I want to explore some of them before we let this Bill go to the committee.

First of all, it is well known that one of the reasons why the problem was created in the first place was because of some legislation that this government brought in about five years ago which caused the problem to exist, and caused the legislation to become such that it was able to have this kind of a problem.

That's a little bit of . . . I'm not talking about this minister, because he wasn't then the minister. But . . .

An Hon. Member: SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipal Association) wanted it.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — There maybe a lot of people who may have wanted it, Mr. Minister. The point is that the government has to decide, and you should consider that. You should consider all of the implications of any legislation, just like the minister should have considered the implications of doing away with wards legislation, and the implications of the store hours legislation.

The problem is this government. Which pays very little attention to the law, very little attention to this Legislative Assembly, no attention to the process of this Legislative Assembly, has screwed it up, quite frankly. And so the problem is a result of wrong legislation that they had in the first place.

Mr. Minister, I know what the minister says in his Bill, and he says that for the purposes of influencing the election is guilty of an offence; any person who may be involved in buying property for the purposes of influencing the election, it would be an offence.

Well, that's easy to say. What I will be wanting the minister to explain is, how will it be determined that it's an offence? How will the minister know and how will the judge know that citizen X, who bought property in the community six months before an election, did so because that will influence that election?

Now I hope that the minister is able to explain that because I'm sure that he has thought through it carefully. And I just sort of forewarn him that when we get to the Bill we'll be asking those questions. We'll not be asking them in any political, partisan, critical sense. I just simply will be wanting to know, for the purposes of all the public concern, what the answers will be.

I am having some legal interpretation of this Bill provided for me, Mr. Speaker, because I think that is necessary before I can make a final comment on it. And until I get that legal comment, I'm going to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

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

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I intend at the end of my remarks to move second reading of The Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act, 1988.

Changes are being proposed to the Act which will streamline the procedure followed on applications under the Act, make the Act more equitable to both parties, and ensure the constitutionality of the powers granted to the Rentalsman.

Landlords and tenants will be deemed to have agreed to refer disputes to the Rentalsman unless they agree in writing that their disputes will be resolved by the Court of Queen's Bench. By making application to the Rentalsman voluntary, the province is acting within its constitutional authority in assigning adjudicative powers to it.

The Rentalsman currently is required to investigate every complaint, but is not obliged to hold a hearing before making an order. This provision will be amended to require him to hold a hearing in every case, and give him discretion to investigate complicated cases. It is more conducive to the ends of justice to allow parties to present their own evidence and have an order made after each side has had the opportunity to present its case.

As in small claims court, the person making their claim will serve notice of hearing on the person against whom he is making claim. A landlord presently must wait until the rent is past due 15 days before he can service notice of termination of the tenancy. We will reduce that to 10 days.

The Rent Appeal Commission will be abolished, and the appeal to the commission from an order of the Rentalsman will be replaced with an appeal to the Court of Queen's Bench. The Lieutenant Governor in Council will be given authority to make regulations to establish a fee for filing a complaint with the Rentalsman, and to provide for the unsuccessful party to reimburse the successful party for that fee.

The system for resolving disputes with respect to security deposits is simplified. If the landlord has a claim for arrears of rent, it may be set off against the security deposit after giving notice to the tenant, without an order of the Rentalsman.

For other claims the landlord must apply to the Rentalsman for an order resolving this dispute. If the landlord does not comply with the time limitations in this section, this claim will not be absolutely barred. The Rentalsman will have the discretion to make an order in his favour where the landlord has a reasonable excuse for not complying with the time lines and it would be inequitable to pay the security deposit to the tenant.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act to amend The Residential Tenancies Act.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am going to adjourn this in a moment or two. Suffice it to say we don't share the easy assurance voiced by the minister who, I think, did not believe what he said, or perhaps didn't understand what he was saying. But the speech read by the minister voiced an optimism that the procedure with respect to deposits would work out fairly for both sides. Suffice it to say . . .

An Hon. Member: We.

Mr. Shillington: — He's using the royal "we." Yes.

Suffice it to say that we have some concern about that. Prior to the coming into effect of The Residential Tenancies Act, most deposits were lost. Very, very few tenants actually got their deposit back. The system is heavily weighted in favour of the landlord. For one thing, for any individual tenant it's usually too small a sum of money to pursue. This was intended to rectify that, to provide that the landlord was, and had to be, responsible, had to have good reason to keep the damage deposit.

We fear, Mr. Speaker, that this system will take us back to the days prior to The Residential Tenancies Act in the early '70s, when very few tenants could ever get their damage deposit back. So we are concerned about that. We want an opportunity to adjourn it, to consider that. We are also . . . I see the member from . . .

An Hon. Member: Wilkie.

Mr. Shillington: — Wilkie. Thank you very much. I see the member from Wilkie wants me to expand my remarks. He feels I'm not dealing with this item with sufficient clarity and thoroughness. So for the benefit of the member from Wilkie, I shall be a good deal more thorough and I shall make sure that there's all the detail there that he wants.

Mr. Speaker, the other item we have some concern about, is a serious vein, the other item we have some concern about is the abolition of the rental appeal. We think the system worked reasonably well, notwithstanding very stiff resistance by the landlords when it was brought into effect. We think most of them would admit at this point in time that the system has been reasonably fair to both sides. We are not sure the system that this government's bringing in is going to work as well, and as we fear indeed that it may be again weighed in favour of the landlords. It is our concern that this legislation has been written after talking to the landlords and without really having consulted with any particular group of tenants.

(1600)

In the '70s, before this was brought in, there were tenants' associations. This legislation was brought in, met most of their concerns, and most of those associations disappeared. Therefore I think the government has heard the concerns of the landlords who are organized; has not heard the concerns of the tenants who have been organized but reasonably satisfied with things.

With those comments, because I know the member from

Wilkie will want to hear much more on the subject, I'm going to ask for leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 43 — An Act to amend The Tobacco Tax Act

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 43 increases the tax on a package of cigarettes from \$1.17 to \$1.42, one cent per cigarette, effective April 1, 1988. And the tax on one gram of fine cut or pipe tobacco goes from \$1.90 to 2.30. I'm a little disappointed that the New Democratic Party that in Ottawa favoured restrictions on cigarette advertising, is now saying that they're going to oppose this tax increase.

There are minor increases in the tax rates on cigars. The tax increases from 15 cents to 16 cents for cigars retailing for less than 20 cents; the tax on cigars retailing in the 21 to 40 cents category increases from 30 to 32 cents; and the tax on cigars retailing in the 41 cents to 60 cent category increases from 45 to 48 cents per cigar. For those cigars that retail for more than 60 cents, Mr. Speaker, the tax rate increases from 75 per cent of the retail selling price to 80 per cent.

These tax changes, Mr. Speaker, are expected to yield an additional \$18 million in 1988-89.

I move second reading of An Act to amend The Tobacco Tax Act.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Finance is correct about one thing. We will oppose this Bill on second reading, if for no other reason that it's simply another tax grab. We are not opposed on this side of the House, neither, I think, is any political party in this province or throughout this country necessarily opposed to taxes on tobacco or tobacco products, even if we have concerns at times about raising it too far and there being a diminishing rate of return. But in the case of this government, and in this province, we will oppose any tax increase put forward by them because we have serious reservations simply about how they tax the people of Saskatchewan.

We feel that there are perhaps fairer ways to tax people in this province, actions which the government has not provided, and therefore again this particular tax grab we will oppose, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am disappointed to hear the hon. member's comments and I'll be most pleased to pass on to groups like the Saskatchewan Medical Association, the heart-lung association and others, the opposition to this particular Bill by the opposition party.

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

Bill No. 44 — An Act to amend The Department of Finance Act, 1983

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Bill is

being put forward today simply to address a long standing technical difficulty with the Act.

Traditionally when special warrants are raised during the course of a fiscal year, the warrants are submitted to the Legislative Assembly in the form of supplementary estimates and considered in Committee of Finance each year.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, these estimates are then passed at the same time as the main Appropriation Act for the fiscal year. The amendment simply clarifies that special warrants are to be included in the first main Appropriation Act, and not in an Act for the purposes of interim supply.

I'm pleased to move that an Act to amend The Department of Finance Act be now read a second time.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the minister for his explanation, although it is somewhat brief. We will want to take some time to examine his remarks, to study them further, and would beg at this time leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 48 — An Act to amend The Department of Social Services Act

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a short proposed amendment, and I would say it is of a technical nature in that the question has arisen as to the technicalities of the Department of Social Services having the power to make regulations. And for that purpose we have brought in this very brief amendment to clarify that technical point so that the Regulations Committee is satisfied that we are actually within our jurisdiction in making regulations.

I believe that we have that power as it now exists, but the legal experts indicate that it is a little fuzzy and that it should be clear, and so therefore we propose this amendment to clarify the regulation-making power of the Department of Social Services.

Mr. Speaker: — Speaking to the Minister of Social Services, perhaps you would like to move your Bill?

An Hon. Member: Too late.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — The members opposite say it's too late. It's never too late to bring in legislation, and I would move second reading of this Bill, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for the oversight on this small Bill.

Mr. Prebble: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for recognizing me. Mr. Speaker, I found the explanatory note, that went with this Bill of interest because what is in effect a relatively minor amendment, nevertheless gets at a matter that the Minister of Social Services has a real tendency to neglect, and that is acting in a legal manner when conducting the affairs of the Department of Social Services.

I note, Mr. Speaker, that the explanatory note says, and I

quote from it:

There is no authority under The Department of Social Services Act to allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council, i.e. the cabinet, the power to make regulations to carry out the activities authorized under this Act.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Social Services has been acting illegally in bringing forward all the regulations that he has done to cut back benefits to social assistance recipients, including, Mr. Speaker, the elimination of their travel allowance and the cuts that allow them to keep less money when they work on a part-time basis, Mr. Speaker, but are dependent on social assistance nevertheless.

In other words, Mr. Minister, what this amendment does today is reflect the fact that the minister and the cabinet have been making these changes to the welfare system in a manner that's illegal. And they're now having to come before this legislature to correct it. And I say to the minister that this is just one little example, Mr. Speaker, of this minister's tendency to break the law.

I want to give a couple of other examples that I think reflect again the message that's behind this Bill, Mr. Speaker, before I sit down, because the members on this side of the House will be supporting the Bill. The amendment is necessary to clarify the ability of the cabinet to pass regulations in support of The Department of Social Services Act. But before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that the member opposite, the Minister of Social Services, has done exactly the same thing with respect to violating the Canada Assistance Plan Act, Mr. Speaker.

The minister, despite the fact that he gets 50 per cent of his funds for financing the activities of the Department of Social Services, including the social assistance plan, Mr. Speaker, from Ottawa, 50 per cent of the money is from Ottawa, and yet the minister continues to flagrantly violate the federal Act and the federal regulations that are laid down to protect social assistance recipients in this province and throughout this country.

And I make particular reference in this case, Mr. Speaker, to the minister's "work for welfare" program and the fact that despite the federal law making it perfectly clear that that work for welfare program is to be done, is only to operate on a voluntary basis, but the minister opposite has made it an involuntary program.

(1615)

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's just another example of how this minister acts and chooses to implement policies that are in violation of, in this case, the federal statute, but he's been doing exactly the same thing provincially, Mr. Speaker.

This is a minister who doesn't respect the regulations of his own department. And when he brings forward regulations, he has been doing so, Mr. Speaker, ever since he became Minister of Social Services, without the legal authority to do it.

So what that means, Mr. Speaker, is that the cabinet, the cabinet, Mr. Speaker, cut the travel allowance of almost every social assistance recipient in this province without the legal authority to do so. What this means, Mr. Speaker, is that the cabinet has in effect chosen, Mr. Speaker, to dramatically reduce the amount of money that social assistance recipients who are working part time are allowed to keep, Mr. Speaker, when they draw their social assistance cheque.

I just want to give you an example of what the Minister of Social Services has done in this regard, Mr. Speaker. If you take a single mother with two children, the department, the minister, and the cabinet passed a regulation just a few months ago that says that that single mother with two children, if she's earning \$550 a month, Mr. Speaker, can only now keep \$160 instead of \$223 as she was allowed to keep previously, until the regulation change in January.

And now, Mr. Speaker, the minister comes forward today and acknowledges that that change in the regulation was illegal. So, Mr. Minister, not only are you a minister who has shown incredible insensitivity to the less fortunate and the poor in this province, but you've been making all those changes in the regulations illegally. And I say to you, Mr. Minister, shame — shame that you've come before the House today acknowledging this.

That's all I have to say, Mr. Speaker. We accept the fact that this change in the legislation is needed to give the minister the right to act legally. But just because, Mr. Minister, you'll now have the right to act legally doesn't mean that your policies are any less immoral than they were the day before this legislation becomes law.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated earlier in debate, I did not acknowledge that the Department of Social Services had done anything illegally. We're trying to cure some technicalities. And if the member opposite wishes to say to this Assembly that everything the Department of Social Services has done is technically illegal, then we have paid out millions and millions of dollars under the same illegality. And I would say that those millions and millions of dollars have done a lot of good for people. And I do not apologize on a technicality for having spent millions of dollars on some lawyers and some technical people to say that maybe this wasn't quite according to the regulations.

This, Mr. Speaker, is not an amendment that I bring forward to correct any error that this government has ever made. The Social Services Act is not the Act of this government; it is the old long-standing Social Services Act. I would have assumed that if I have done anything illegally, then the minister before me and the minister before him were just as illegal — and they happen to have been Conservatives. And the ministers before them, who happen to have been NDP, did the same thing that I have been doing and that other ministers have been doing.

We have all . . . If I have done anything illegal, then the NDP ministers have done the same things illegally, and I don't question their motives. I say yes, they did it for the good of the people and I have done these things for the good of the people. And I do not apologize for the

questions of technicalities that only batteries of lawyers with much time on their hands could distinguish or be interested in.

So what I'm saying here is, I am not correcting anything that was caused by this government, but a long-standing problem that this government finally has gone to this Assembly and said, listen, members, public — there may be a technical problem here and we are correcting it. And I noticed the member opposite, when he spoke, did not disagree with the principle of having paid millions of dollars to help people over the years.

We are simply here complying to make absolutely certain that the technical requirements of Bills and regulations are followed, but this has absolutely nothing to do with policy. And I submit in closing debate, Mr. Speaker, that this small amendment to cure any technical problems that may exist is above board, up front to the public and to the members of this Assembly. This government has the courage to say that if there's a technical problem we'll correct it.

The former government, Mr. Speaker, operated under the same rules and now says that there is something wrong with rules, there are devious motives. How can the members opposite, the members of the former government, some of them who sit in this very Assembly, have done the same things? If I am guilty of breaking any rules, Mr. Speaker, then the members opposite are guilty of breaking the same rules. And I am pleased that they are now agreeing that we should technically correct these rules so that their guilt is erased along with mine. Thank you.

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

Bill No. 49 — An Act to amend The Residential Services Act

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the Assembly in opening debate on this particular Bill that this is a matter . . . another Bill of technical nature.

The existing Act, had we not brought forth the amendment, only permits the Minister of Social Services to license residential facilities. And we have in Saskatchewan group homes that are under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Social Services, and we have group homes that are under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Health.

This amendment will permit the Minister of Health to license those group homes for which health has the jurisdiction and the responsibility of submitting the tax funds for the operation of those groups homes and the general supervision and operation of those groups homes, and will continue to allow the Minister of Social Services to license those groups homes for which the Minister of Social Services has jurisdiction responsibility.

So by bringing in this Bill, the amendment, what it does is it separates the jurisdiction, and rather than have the Minister of Social Services license group homes that are operated by the Department of Health, the Minister of

Health will license his group homes and the Minister of Social Services will license the Social Services group homes, and there will be coexisting jurisdiction on the licensing of residential facilities which are primarily group homes for either mentally retarded adults, handicapped people or people with mental illnesses.

And that is a simple explanation, maybe a long explanation, of a simple amendment. But I wanted to make it quite clear, Mr. Speaker, that this is turning over to the Department of Health the jurisdiction for those things for which they now have responsibility.

And I would move second reading of this Bill.

Mr. Prebble: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, only to say that we agree with the minister about the need for this amendment, and will be supporting the amendment.

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

Bill No. 50 — An Act respecting the Control of Distribution and the Consumption of Beverage Alcohol in Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to say to move second reading of Bill No. 50, an Act respecting the Control of Distribution and the Consumption of Beverage Alcohol in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this is somewhat of an historic occasion, since the current Liquor Act has been in force since prohibition ended in 1925. There have been some amendments over the years and The Liquor Licensing Act was enacted in 1959. However many of the provisions in both of these Acts are now unenforceable, redundant, or inappropriate in today's environment.

The most obvious reason then to bring forth new legislation was to make it more practical, relevant, and enforceable.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill achieves our objective to a great extent by amalgamating the two Acts, by removing the requirement for local option area votes, simplifying the licensing system to two basic categories, and moving a number of provisions into regulations so that changes can be made more easily as society's demands change; and ensuring all search, seizure, arrest, and other such provisions are consistent with the charter of rights.

Mr. Speaker, we also believe that the current legislation does not adequately address the problems of alcohol abuse and that the penalties are not in line with present personal and corporate incomes.

Consistent with this government's initiatives against alcohol and drug abuse, Bill 50 takes a stronger stance against the sale and service of alcohol to minors, over-service of alcohol, indiscriminate use of special occasion permits, consumption of alcohol in vehicles, and the unlawful sale of alcohol.

The third reason, Mr. Speaker, for bringing forth this new legislation is to create a more positive, responsible

environment surrounding the sale and service of alcohol, and at the same time allow new opportunities for the hospitality industry.

Mr. Speaker, it is the opinion of our government that current liquor laws discourage the hospitality industry from implementing new marketing concepts which would have positive benefits for consumers, rural communities, and the tourism industry.

The new licensing system set out in this Act is simpler, more practical, and allows more creativity in the design of individual licences. A class A licence would apply to all premises which make food the primary source of business. A class B licence would apply to all other licences, licensed facilities, that will require food sufficient for a light meal to be available. By requiring food to be available in all licensed establishments, we hope to discourage over-consumption and impairment.

Mr. Speaker, a variety of endorsements to both classes of licences will be available to meet the needs of specific communities and to allow new concepts such as brew pubs, neighbourhood pubs, bed and breakfast establishments, optional hours of operation, more family dining, and catering to functions off the premises.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, special vendors will be renamed franchises, which more correctly identifies their legal relationship with the Liquor Board. The franchise designation will allow for the creation of privately run wine boutiques and specialty shops which we see in other parts of the country.

Mr. Speaker, this government believes that individual communities should have more input into the types of licences established and the events that take place in their communities. Consequently, Mr. Speaker, the Liquor Board will be developing policies which will more closely involve local governments and require their approval in many cases.

Mr. Speaker, this Act is in an almost identical form to the Act that was introduced during the last session of the legislature and has been in the public domain since last November. The general public and interested groups have had the opportunity to provide their comments and relate any concerns to our government. As we formulate new regulations and policies to accompany the Act, our government will continue its consultation process.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 50 is designed to set the framework for public policy on alcohol distribution and consumption, which will take us into the 21st century. In the provisions of this new Act, Mr. Speaker, every effort has been made to balance the interest of the consumer, the industry, the government, and the society in general. It takes a stronger stance on abuse while encouraging a more positive environment for consumers, and new opportunities in tourism and hospitality for industry.

Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of Bill No. 50, the Alcohol Control Act.

(1630)

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be adjourning the debate on this Bill. It is a very substantial Bill, and although it's been around for some time, I note that there have been some changes made since it was first introduced, if I am correct. And we will want to have a very close look at those changes, as I'm sure will people involved in the hotel industry and the public at large, because this is legislation that is not only of concern or interest and impacts on people who are in the alcohol business, if you want to put it that way, or the selling or the serving of alcohol, alcoholic drinks, but it also is of concern and of interest, I think, to many other people in the public.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

There no doubt are many good provisions in the Bill. It certainly is true what the minister says about the age of some legislation and how long it has existed. And times do change, but there are some provisions in the Bill that I think should cause us all to be extremely concerned.

The provision that, and the minister referred to it, that deals with franchising, clearly is an attempt to put into the legislation what is required by the government in order to do a massive privatization of the liquor store operations and other aspects of the Liquor Licensing Commission and the Liquor Board.

Now I notice that the minister didn't point that out. He explains it in more acceptable language, but the fact is that there may very well be here another example of this government's headlong charge into privatization, ideologically motivated, without any consideration for what is in the public good. And I think that question — if for no other reason; but there are other reasons — but if no other reason was there, that one in itself should be of concern and will be of concern in this debate and, I think, in the public.

Another thing that I note in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is that it will now allow the corporation — and I point out the distinction between the corporation and this legislature — this Bill will allow the corporation to make laws and regulations that regulate the sale and the consumption of alcoholic beverages in the province.

Now I ask the question: is it appropriate for the corporation to make those kinds of laws, or should not that be the prerogative of this Legislative Assembly? Is there not some real danger in turning over almost all of the regulation and the setting of the regulations to the corporation and the minister in charge. That certainly has the potential for unbridled patronage.

Now in the hands of this government, history in six years will show that patronage is a second name, and therefore clearly is some real danger, the real danger in some of the provisions that are here. Now there are other issues as well in this Bill that we need to ask some serious questions about, and our critic, the member from Prince Albert, is spending a considerable amount of time studying it and discussing it with groups and people who are going to be affected. He is going to be speaking on it in second reading debate. But for now, Mr. Speaker, I adjourn the debate on this Bill.

Debate adjourned.