

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND  
SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills**

**Ms. Smart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as chairperson of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I present the sixth report of the said committee which is as follows:

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

**Ms. Smart:** — I wish to report Bill No. 19, An Act to amend The Statute Law, as being non-controversial.

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration in Committee of the Whole of the said Bill be waived.

Motion agreed to.

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

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

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

**Ms. Smart:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to report Bill No. 63, An Act to amend The Student Assistance and Student Aid Fund Act of 1985, as being non-controversial.

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration in Committee of the Whole of the said Bill be waived.

Motion agreed to.

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

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

**Bill No. 77 — An Act to amend The Teachers' Federation Act**

**Ms. Smart:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to report Bill No. 77, An Act to amend The Teachers' Federation Act, as being non-controversial.

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration in Committee of the Whole of the said Bill be waived.

Motion agreed to.

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that the said

Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

**Bill No. 53 — An Act to amend The Provincial Mediation  
Board Act**

**Ms. Smart:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to report Bill No. 53, An Act to amend The Provincial Mediation Board Act, as being non-controversial.

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration in Committee of the Whole of the said Bill be waived.

Motion agreed to.

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

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

**Bill No. 87 — An Act to amend The Municipal Employees'  
Superannuation Act**

**Ms. Smart:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to report Bill No. 87, An Act to amend The Municipal Employees' Superannuation, as being non-controversial.

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading of the Bill and consideration of the Bill in Committee of the Whole be waived.

Motion agreed to.

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

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

**Bill No. 91 — An Act respecting the Consequential  
Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the enactment of  
The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act**

**Ms. Smart:** — Mr. Speaker, I wish to report Bill No. 91, An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the enactment of The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act, as being non-controversial.

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration in Committee of the Whole of the said Bill be waived.

Motion agreed to.

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

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

**Bill No. 99 — An Act respecting the Consequential**

**Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the enactment of  
The Small Claims Act**

**Ms. Smart:** — Mr. Speaker, I now report Bill No. 99, An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the enactment of The Small Claims Act, as being non-controversial.

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration in the Committee of the Whole of the said Bill be waived.

Motion agreed to.

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

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

**Bill No. 92 — An Act respecting Provincial Emblems and  
Honours**

**Ms. Smart:** — Mr. Speaker, I report Bill No. 92, An Act respecting Provincial Emblems and Honours, as being non-controversial.

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration of the matter in the Committee of the Whole be waived.

Motion agreed to.

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

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

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

**Ms. Smart:** — Mr. Speaker, I now want to report Bill No. 65, An Act to amend The Provincial Court Act, with amendment, as being non-controversial.

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration in the Committee of the Whole of the said Bill be waived.

Motion agreed to.

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

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

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

**Ms. Smart:** — And finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to report Bill No. 68, An Act respecting Small Claims in the Provincial court of Saskatchewan, with amendment, as being non-controversial.

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that second

reading and consideration in Committee of the Whole of the said Bill be waived.

Motion agreed to.

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that the said bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**SECOND READINGS**

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Klein that Bill No. 60 — **An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to add my words of condemnation to everything that has been said, both inside and outside this House, with respect to this Bill. I think all of us have seen examples of this government's insensitivity, its arrogance, and its willingness to thumb its nose at public opinion, but this Bill must set some sort of a high-water mark in that regard.

I want to mention two items. I have no strong feelings on the mad dog legislation, as it's been called. There seems to be some inside the Assembly. I'm not sure whether or not this Bill will deal with them or not. There may be some need for it.

It may be, Mr. Speaker, that guard dogs and dogs that are capable of being vicious are being acquired by people who do not understand the responsibility that goes with owning such an animal. And it may be that if that's the case, some legislation is necessary. And if the minister were prepared to proceed with that Bill and adopt our suggestions, which I will make at the end of my remarks, I think we wouldn't oppose that very strongly; indeed, we might support it.

Unfortunately, that rather innocuous piece of legislation is coupled with two other provisions which have been universally condemned. Outside the Tory caucus — and I have no idea what goes on inside the Tory caucus; I suspect many members opposite aren't sure what's going on inside that caucus — but apart from that there is just no other institution or body in this province which supports what this government's doing. It has been universally condemned.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I was told that . . . About a week ago I was talking to a senior official in the Department of Human Resources. He told me that the Minister of Social Services had set up an award, some medal for insensitivity, arrogance, and not listening. I said, I'm surprised to hear that; it's a strange award. I'm also surprised I haven't heard it, because I follow the comings and goings of the Minister of Social Services with

rapt attention. He told me that the reason why I hadn't heard about it was because the minister had awarded it to himself for the last three years since he's been minister. I think that's unfair.

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

**Mr. Shillington:** — I think that's most unfair. I think this year the Minister of Urban Affairs has clearly earned the right to that medal.

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

**Mr. Shillington:** — And I do not think you ought to have hogged it all to yourself.

With respect to the ward system, I may say, Mr. Speaker, that when I first came to this city in 1968 — there was a municipal election then — I noted at that time something strange about the municipal elections. One was that the councillors, as I think they were then called, all lived with in a couple of square miles of each other in the southern part of the city.

(1015)

I also noted that with one or two exceptions . . . the Minister of Urban Affairs shakes his head. The exception proved the rule. I also noted the turn-out was much heavier in the southern part of the city than it was in the balance of the city. And I may say I spent some time wondering why that was so. I think it had to do with the nature of a city-wide election. It's virtually impossible, it is unlikely, that there will be any contact between the aldermen and the voters in a community of this size when they're running city-wide. That means that the only thing that voters will ever know about the people they're voting for is what they read.

In our society, Mr. Speaker, whether or not it should be, it is the case that those who are better educated generally enjoy a higher income, and in this city the southern part of the city has a higher income than the average from the north. I think, therefore, outside of the southern part of the city, where there existed a lower level of education I think people simply did not know what was going on, felt themselves unable to cast a vote, and often didn't go out and vote. And that's why I think the better educated, more literate people who lived in the southern part of the city were more likely to vote. They were the ones who — and probably the ones — who could really understand what was going on.

That has changed. If you look at the last two or three elections, the turn-out has actually been heavier in the northern part of the city than it has in the southern part of the city. I think the main reason for that is that people in the northern part of the city are able to follow what's going on in a much smaller area, they know the candidates, and for some reason or other the campaigns have been more hotly contested in the northern part of the city.

So the ward system, as I have observed it over a period of 15 to 20 years, I guess, is a much more democratic system. It enables everybody in a city to be represented in

a way that the at-large system simply did not.

The second reason why I think the ward system, and why I think members on this side of the House believe the ward system operates better is, it allows virtually anyone to run. One of my colleagues made this point the other day.

Mr. Speaker, if you take a federal election up until this next election, this city was divided into two ridings. Each of the candidates for the three major parties on the average spent about \$50,000 for a campaign in half the city. I think it is therefore reasonable to suppose that a campaign which covers the whole city is going to cost about twice that, or \$100,000. That makes it virtually impossible for someone to run who isn't either well-heeled or well-connected. And in an at-large system the councillors in a city of this size will be either well-heeled or well-connected, one of the two.

And what is every bit as bad is that once they're elected, they tend to owe an allegiance often to property owners and developers in the city who used to be the major contributors to campaigns. They were the major contributors to aldermen who campaigned, and by the way the aldermen voted in the ensuing years, it always seemed to me in those days, 20 years ago, that the property developers were the major benefactors of the activities in city council as well.

That sort of pork barrel politics at the municipal level virtually disappeared with the ward system. It was possible to finance a much smaller campaign in a tenth of the city, possible to raise the 10, \$15,000 you needed to campaign with 4 and \$10 donations from your neighbours, your friends, people who took an interest. And we saw people getting elected to city council who patently had no resources and no connections, and we could all name them.

Some of them have been among the most energetic members of council, and certainly those people have been among the most representative of their districts. I think we can all think of Regina city councillors — we might not agree with them on all occasions; some of them we disagree with on most occasions, but there can be no doubt they represent the people who elect them. And the anger and the frustration which we see coming from those people truly represents the anger and frustration of those people who are often disadvantaged.

I guess the real argument, Mr. Speaker, for the ward system is as everyone has said: it works. It has worked well to everybody. It was brought in amid considerable controversy, and I recall a number of individuals who thought it would "bring politics into municipal government." And that was the overwhelming criticism of the ward system — it's going to bring politics into government, whatever that might mean. Well it didn't. Political parties have not ever got established at the municipal level. Aldermen will be known to be of some persuasion, and every city council has a mixture.

**An Hon. Member:** — Like the mayor was.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Yes, we noted the mayor who was . . . we suspected he might be of Conservative persuasion.

Just another scintilla of evidence that he was of Conservative persuasion appeared yesterday.

The system has worked and worked well. Politics has not been involved in municipal government. None of the fears of those who opposed introduction of the ward system ever materialized, and most of them were honest enough to admit it. I don't think Lorne Harasen will object if I use him as an example, because he's a very public figure. He was then, as he is now, a broadcaster on the radio; was vehemently opposed to the introduction of the ward system because he said it would . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . the member from Wascana is taking objection to some part of my description of Lorne Harasen. He was and is a broadcaster, a very effective one, and has quite a following. He vehemently opposed the introduction of the ward system and was honest enough to admit, a year after we introduced it, that he was wrong; it worked well. And that was true of most of the people who opposed it. They admitted their fears had not been realized.

So it has worked and worked well, and as the editorial in the Star-Phoenix — now I know you folks think the Star-Phoenix doesn't represent Conservative faith, and doesn't always represent your views as you would have them expressed, but it is a major newspaper — and they said in their editorial, if it isn't broken, don't fix it.

Perhaps what is most . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Adjourn it. Just adjourn it.

**Mr. Shillington:** — At the end of my comments, Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the member from Meadow Lake who is so concerned about this issue — he's coaching me and helping me along to make sure that my comments have a smooth flow, and that his constituents and all others understand it — and I appreciate the assistance from the member from Meadow Lake, but I know he's getting tired with these long sittings.

And I can tell him that there's no need for him to tell me to adjourn it because at the end of my comments I'm going to move a motion which I think makes a great deal of sense, and I don't see how members opposite can argue with it. It is that Bill 60 be referred to the Standing Committee on Municipal Law, as I think both city councils — and by both, I mean Regina and Saskatoon — have asked. So at the end of my remarks I will be making those comments.

What is most galling though about this whole dispute is that only the barest . . . there's only the barest pretence that there is any good reason to change the ward system, and it is patently obvious to everyone that it's being done for the pettiest of reasons. It's being done because the Regina city council has been at odds with some of the policies of this government.

And this government takes the same approach to the Regina city council that it takes to the public servants who have tried to tell this government that some of its policies won't work. They've taken the same approach to the Regina city council as they have to the NGOs (non-governmental organizations) who have done their

job and spoken up on behalf of the disadvantaged people they represent. This government's approach is not to listen, but to eliminate. If someone opposes you, you don't honestly ask, is there an honest point of view; can this opinion be accommodated? Not this government. They seek to eliminate the problem, as they have with the public servants who have tried to talk sense to them, as they have with the NGOs who have spoken out against them.

This is being . . . this whole affairs comes to this legislature for no other reason than because the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden and the member from Regina South are angry at city council. Because of that anger, this province is losing a system of governing large municipalities which works, and works well. That's the only reason we're into this.

I have difficulty believing that members opposite are so totally devoid of any kind of integrity or sense of responsibility for public office that they would allow the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden and the member from Regina South to foist this on this government and on this province. It's clearly damaging to the government, and it is clearly damaging to the province. It's being done for the pettiest of reasons, and I am disappointed that there isn't a bit more integrity on the other side, because I know that you recognize the reasons for this. It's one of the things we object to.

Something else that we object to, with almost equal vehemence, is the provisions with respect to Sunday closing. This government has, in this legislation, left the matter to be determined by the municipalities, and as everyone including the municipalities have stated, that amounts to no rules at all. It is almost inevitable that within a very short period of time after this is passed there'll be no rules with respect to Sunday closing. That isn't in anybody's best interests.

The reasons given by members opposite for this is that the consumers want it. I say that that's not the basis upon which we make decisions with respect to Sunday closing. About a month ago, a little more than that perhaps, I was doing some legal research, came upon something that was quite interesting, came upon a . . . what we would describe as the by-laws, the by-laws of a 17th century English city — Glenthams Meadow, I think it was called, if I remember correctly. And it was interesting to note the sort of things that concerned the city fathers in 17th century England.

One of the things I noted they did was regulate closing hours. And because this was topical, I thought to myself, why in 17th century England in a community of that size? I think it was for the same reason — to protect the business community. So that if there were four grocers in the community, one of them couldn't keep all the grocers open till 10 o'clock at night by opening.

I believe, while the member from Lloydminster is shaking his head . . . yes, I saw that. I won't blame this one on the member from Shaunavon. I clearly saw it was the member from Lloydminster who was adding to this debate in the usual fashion that he does, by groaning. And one of these days the member from Lloydminster is going

to learn to speak a language. I don't care whether it's Latin, ancient Greek, or English, but I honestly believe that if he's here long enough, he'll learn to speak a language; he won't just sit and grunt in his seat as he has been doing for the last six years.

(1030)

The regulation of store closing hours is and always has been done for the benefit of the business community. This represents one of the limitations of the market-place that has been recognized throughout time — 100-and-some years, I might say, before the birth of Adam Smith. The business community recognized that there were some limits to the market-place, and one of those limits to the market-place is that if you have unregulated opening, all businesses will be forced to stay open for very lengthy hours.

The members opposite might be interested in a survey which I did in my riding. In my riding there are about 800 businesses. The names of the businesses are available through the business licence. If you want to send them a letter, for a price you can get all the names, and I did. I got all the names of the businesses, sent them a survey. Did this last week — nothing very fancy. I told my constituency secretary I wanted his best effort in the mail by 5 o'clock; I didn't want his polished effort ready by the end of the month, and so it got out.

I have got about 10 per cent of those back, about 80 of them I think. I actually do not have a precise count because they come in and each day they go over to the constituency office to be processed. But I think I've got about 10 per cent of them back.

Those replies, all sent to the business community, are overwhelmingly in favour of provincially regulated laws... provincial laws which require Sunday closing. If you want the precise ratio, the last count I got it was 89 per cent of those who replied wanted store hours regulated by the provincial government and wanted the stores closed on Sunday. Now that's the business community.

I would frankly admit to members opposite that that is not the core of my supporters, that business community. Very few of them live in my riding, just for openers. They almost all live in the suburbs. I don't think they normally regard me as their spokesman, and that's not the relationship I've had with them.

But unlike members opposite, I try to listen to them. I recognize they pay a portion of my salary. I represent them, and I have a responsibility to listen, and I try to do that. And that's why we sent the survey out. And I say to members opposite that this constituency, which has often formed the core of the Conservative organization, are adamantly opposed to what you're doing.

Quite frankly, I didn't, and I wished I had... I left the place on the survey for them to put in their name, but in the haste in getting this out I didn't add a place for them to check, "May we use your comments publicly?" So these people didn't know that I was going to use their comments publicly and I've decided not to. I wished I'd have done that, and if I had have, I would have tabled the

responses.

Some of them were very interesting. Almost all of them who put comments on — and I'd say one out of two has a comment — almost all of them who put comments on talked about their families; the desire to spend time with their families; their employees who likewise have families. A large number... An increasing number of women are getting into businesses, and they own them, manage them. The large number of those replied, said they wanted to spend time with their husbands and children. It was an interesting group of replies. They're adamantly opposed to what you're doing.

The members opposite say, but the consumers would prefer to shop whenever the spirit moves them. I say that's not relevant to the discussion. Regulation of store hours is, and always has been, done for the benefit of small businesses so that the hours which small businesses stay open will be reasonable.

I know that there is a core of businesses which want unregulated hours; those are, in almost all cases, the national chains. It's easy for Eaton's and The Bay and Simpsons to stay open for 24 hours a day. They can stagger their staff, stagger their managers by providing a differential, slightly higher pay for those who work evenings. They have no difficulty, I think, getting people who will work evenings, and they don't have a problem.

The difficulty is with the small-business people. I could name any number of them. Typically it's a mother and father operation. One of the two of them, often the woman, has some bookkeeping ability; she keeps the books. She handles the back end of it, so to speak. Often as not, it's the father who is out in front, does the selling, and often the buying. They often have a few employees, two to five employees, most of whom are in the store most of the time. Obviously they can't stagger the managers because they're the managers; they've got to be there all the time. They can't stagger the staff without a fair increase in cost.

With respect to that size of business, this will mean additional costs. I think, in the end result it will mean a loss of small businesses in the communities. I think some of these people will decide it's not worth the effort, or with the increase in costs from the increase in staff they're not making a dollar, and I think it's going to mean a loss of small shops, small businesses in this community.

I have had so many people say to me, in so many of those replies, if we have to stay open, I think the government offices ought to be open seven days a week as well. And I say to members opposite, if you think the small businesses, the owners who are often husband and wife, if you think they ought to stay open seven days a week, then I think the ministers should be in their offices seven days a week. And I think it should be advertised.

I fully agree that I think all we'd need to do to knock some of those nonsense out of members opposite is to keep government offices open seven days a week and this nonsense about unregulated store hours would soon come to an end. The problem is, as much as members opposite claim to be the party of business, the members

opposite are simply not in touch with the small-business community.

Mr. Speaker, the Regina City Council and, I believe, the Saskatoon City Council have suggested that this matter deserves further hearing. That is clearly the case. Clearly with this much controversy, even this government would want to try and find some solution which doesn't leave everybody irritated and their nerves jangled.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to move, seconded by the member from Regina Victoria:

That Bill 60, the proposed motion of the member from Regina South, have all the words deleted after "That" and the following substituted:

That Bill 60 not be read a second time, but that the subject matter of the said Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Municipal Law.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I fully support the amendment. I think that there is a great deal of room in this present legislation for further study, thought, before proceeding further. There are aspects of the legislation that are before us that are frankly questionable, and certainly very objectionable to the people of Saskatchewan.

There is some parts of the legislation that I think can be supported. The legislation with respect to dogs, I think, is supportable. I think, of course, we'll have to wait and see how effective it will be. It's been touted as being potentially effective, but I think we will have to stand the tests of challenges to local by-laws to see, over time, how effective it will be. But nevertheless we can support that.

And that is not the reason though that we want to see this legislation referred to the municipal law committee. The reason we want to see the legislation referred is because of the very grave concerns that have been expressed by Saskatchewan people about two aspects of this Bill. One is the changes to the ward system in our cities; secondly, is the question of shopping hours, and more particularly the provision that would, in effect — would, in effect, Mr. Speaker — do away with a common day of rest when it comes to shopping in Saskatchewan.

I want to briefly deal with the question of the ward system. I've spoken on this matter before in this Chamber and I don't want to dwell on it in great length, but I want to just briefly again go over the reasons why this government is making this change. That may not be clear to all the people in Saskatchewan, but let's be clear on this.

There has been a ward system in our major cities for some 15 years. That decision has been supported by referendum by people in both those cities. No matter what the Minister of Urban Affairs might say about a vote that was taken in Saskatoon, that vote was so confusing it would have taken a lawyer to figure out what to vote in order to get your message out. But again that was superseded by a vote by people in Saskatoon that made it clear, and there was a vote in Regina that made it clear,

the people of those cities supported the ward system as it stood.

But the government wants to change that. They don't like the ward system. Why don't they like the ward system? The reason they don't like the ward system, because they see the ward system as being a form of government that frankly provides the opportunity for opposition to come forward to this government and its harmful urban policies.

And that has been the experience. That has been the experience. We have seen city councils, especially in Regina, criticize this government, criticize this government for its harmful policies. Now other councils also criticize the government, but none have been councils in major media centres like Regina. And let's recognize that Regina is the media centre for a good portion of this province. And when Regina council decides to criticize the government for its harmful policies, that is sure to get media attention and is sure to be reported to people beyond the boundaries of Regina. That is a matter of some concern to this government.

Their record in this respect is consistent that if you choose to criticize the Conservative government, if you choose to criticize the Conservative government, watch out, because your job may be in jeopardy. Watch out, because your position may be in jeopardy. Watch out, your whole system of government may be in jeopardy, because we don't like opposition; we don't want to see anybody challenge our power in this province; and if you dare to do that, we will get you.

And that's the message that comes out loud and clear from this government. And that is the reason that the ward system is now being changed, that the government is bringing forward this legislation. They say, no more criticism from Regina City Council; we've got to put a stop to that. Our best chance of making sure that we get no more criticism is to change the way in which people are elected, because in an at-large system, or some version of an at-large system, the chances are greater that we will elect the wealthy, we will elect those who support that particular PC government. So that's the reason for the change, Mr. Speaker.

Now the minister gives all this nonsense about, well, the NDP brought in the ward system and imposed it, and all those kinds of things, even though people were given an opportunity to vote on it. But I say, Mr. Speaker, that really doesn't answer the question of Prince Albert where the people on their own volition, through a democratic vote, decided that they wanted to have the ward system because they perceived that to be the best system for their city.

The ward system was not imposed on the city of Prince Albert. It was a case of the people in the city of Prince Albert wanting that system. And I just think that it's disgusting, I think that it's sickening that this government would now say to the people of Prince Albert, it doesn't matter what you want; or for that matter, it doesn't matter what you people in Regina want; it doesn't matter what you people in Saskatoon want; we're going to decide for you what the best form of democratic government is

going to be; we won't give you the choice.

(1045)

And this is the government that talks about freedom of choice. This is the government of Stanfield's who always talked about the freedom of choice. But here they won't give you the freedom of choice. No, it's because they want to protect their power base; they want to protect their position in this province. They don't want to have any kind of system that might create the potential for opposition, so therefore change the system.

I just want to end my comments on the ward system by saying a couple of things. First it was rumoured that the minister was going to do away with the ward system and that the only alternative . . . or no alternative, but the only form of government that would be allowed in local municipal government was an at-large election. Then there was a great deal of debate and criticism of the minister's proposals that he'd been flouting.

So finally when the legislation came forward the minister said, well, we're going to give you the best of both worlds — in his view; we're going to give you an at-large, and half the members of a council will be elected at large and the other half will be elected in a ward system. And he says, so we've got the best of both systems. I think that he's got the worst, he's got the worst possible solution that can be devised.

And I say that, Mr. Speaker, on the basis of some experience in a city council, because I predict a number of things will happen. If the city councils decide to go with this system, one, those elected under a ward system will be so swamped, will be so swamped with constituent complaints that, in effect, the system becomes unworkable.

And if the intent of the wards, and under this system, is to allow for some capacity for a council to have local councillors who will be able to respond to constituent complaints and concerns in geographic areas, I don't think it does the job because the sizes of wards in the city of Regina will be in the area of 25 to 30,000 people. Provincial constituent in this province will have an average of about 12 to 15,000 people, and local wards in the cities will be twice that size. And somehow it's suggested that those people, that those people will be able to respond to the myriad of concerns and problems that local people have.

I predict, I predict that the very first thing that will happen to any city council who adopts the system, is that they will seek an increase in assistance and research and staff for councillors to help them to be able to deal with constituent problems and concerns. That's the first thing that will happen. There will be a demand for an increase in staff for city councillors elected under that particular ward system so that they can deal adequately with constituent concerns. That's number one.

The second thing that will happen, Mr. Speaker, is that there will be internal division, that there will be internal division and fights over jurisdiction within the city councils, any council that decides to go with this system.

Because those elected at large will say, well I got elected by all the people in this city, and I spent 50, \$60,000 in a campaign to get elected, and you got elected on a ward and only in a portion of the city, and you spent 20,000 to get elected. So therefore we demand that we should get all the power and responsibility within the council; we demand that we be the chairman of all the various committees; we demand that we be the finance committee; we demand that we have the positions of power and responsibility in terms of being able to give the overall direction as to how the city should be run.

And the people elected on the ward basis will say, well no, we're elected as councillors, we're elected to be equal. And the fight will be on in our cities if they choose to adopt this system, just as much as the fight was on in Ontario in those cities where you had a hybrid system where people were elected at large and where people were elected on a ward basis.

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

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — The fight will be on in our cities. We will see greater division, we will see more problems with our city councils if they choose to go with this particular system. Make no doubt about that. And even if the Minister of Urban Affairs in his great inexperience in these matters refuses to recognize that, I make those predictions.

And I would venture to make a further prediction, I would venture to make a further prediction that both the city councils in Regina and Saskatoon will reject the hybrid system; will reject the five and five because they will see it as unworkable. They will see it as not being in the best interests of their people, and they will go with the at-large system because at least it makes some kind of sense as opposed to this hybrid system. They will still demand to have the right for the option for their people to choose the ward system.

Mr. Speaker, I really wanted to talk about shopping hours, and I just want to briefly review the reasons that we have had legislation in the province which provided for a common day of rest which provided for store closures on Sunday. Historically, that legislation has been there so that there would be uniformity across the province so that rural stores especially would be protected, because recognizing that if stores in urban centres, larger urban centres opened, it would have an impact on the rural centres.

Therefore this shouldn't be a matter of local choice, but is a matter that needed a uniform approach across the province and therefore required provincial legislation. That is the reason that that legislation has been there. That's the primary reason.

Also, it is felt that the government, the provincial government as opposed to municipalities were best equipped to deal with the concept that there should be a common day of rest; that families should have the Sunday; that there should be that common day of rest; and that the province was best able to provide the legislation to ensure that within Saskatchewan. There is many, many years of experience; many, many years of

experience; many years that we have had the legislation which provided for a common day of rest, and there are good reasons for that.

Now that legislation has been challenged, coincided with the opening of the superstores in Saskatchewan. Their challenge is followed by the challenges of others who sought to protect their market share. First it was the other grocery stores, then it was the department stores or those stores that sold department store type merchandise. And the government's response in the last few years since these challenges came about has been to try to improve legislation to effectively meet the challenges. And that has happened on a couple of occasions.

But suddenly this government gave up. Last December this government gave up; they quit. Now their reasons are that, well we finally decided that we want to listen to consumer demand. The consumers are saying that we want to have wide open shopping. Well, Mr. Speaker, it may well be that the polls at any given moment . . . at this point in time might suggest that people support the concept of Sunday shopping and that it should be wide open.

But I think that once all the ramifications are understood, including the effect on small business — and the small businesses are in fact the ones that support the local communities — once they understand the effect on consumer prices, once they understand the effect it'll have on their friends and neighbours who will now might be forced to work on Sundays where they didn't have to before, once they understand the effect on some of our rural communities, I think that opinion will shift away from that kind of support.

And I might say also, begin to understand the effect on consumer prices, because the government seems to have some silly notion that because the stores are open on Sunday that somehow more people will go shopping, somehow Saskatchewan people will have more money to go out shopping.

Well it ain't the case, Mr. Speaker. What you've done is you've extended the number of hours that a store will be open. That increases the overhead costs for that store, but it doesn't necessarily mean Saskatchewan people are going to have more money to spend in those stores. No, you've increased the cost to the stores; you haven't increased the amount of money that's going into those stores.

It's going to have a little effect on consumer prices in this province. It's going to have an effect. It's going to make groceries and other items more expensive over time. And I think that's something that consumers will begin to understand once those things are clearly laid out, as they were laid out in Ontario where also the polls seemed to show that people were massively in support of Sunday shopping and in type of the kind of response or the legislation that the Ontario legislature was bringing forward, which is similar to this legislation.

There was a case of a by-election just a short while ago in Ontario where a Liberal was elected with a massive, massive majority, massive majority. And the Liberal

member resigned or whatever, and there was a need for a by-election. And one would have thought, given the popularity of the Liberal government, that the Liberals would stand a chance to be elected. Well they weren't.

The major issue in that by-election was the government's proposals with respect to Sunday shopping, the businesses in that community, the churches in that community, and all concerned, made that the major issue in the by-election. And the government was defeated in that by-election on that particular issue because the people of that area began to understand all of the implications of the government's legislation, as will the people of Saskatchewan begin to understand all of the implications of this legislation and turn against you on those grounds.

The government also says, well it's freedom of choice, you know. We want to make sure that everybody has the freedom of choice, want to give municipalities the freedom to decide whether or not there will be Sunday shopping. Let them determine whether there should be Sunday shopping.

I think that's the biggest laugh of all, Mr. Speaker, because I tell you that if one community decides, if one community decides to open the stores on Sunday, the community next door will also make that decision relatively shortly because of pressure and demand from their businesses to ensure that their resident stores don't lose any market share.

And I would say that there's another good reason — that's the question of legislative effectiveness. There's simply . . . You know, this is a government that says, or supposedly says, well we tried legislation to deal with this business and we keep getting challenges, we keep getting challenges, so we're going to turn it over to the municipalities. And do you think that the city of Moose Jaw, the city of Prince Albert, or for that matter the city of Regina or Saskatoon, is better able, better able than the provincial government to fight the superstores, to fight the large corporate interests than the provincial government? They have greater resources to be able to do that? That's just simple nonsense. If the province can't do it, how can the cities and the towns be expected to do it?

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's what they say: freedom of choice, freedom of choice, legislative effectiveness. That's what they say: consumer demand. That's their apparent reasons. That's their apparent reasons, but I would say those are their transparent reasons; those are not the real reasons.

The real reason is that that Minister of Urban Affairs and that government, that cabinet, buckled under to the superstores, because the government was beginning to become effective, the government was putting forward legislation that seemed to be getting to the point where we needed to be at, and that was to effectively shut down the superstores and others from operating on a Sunday. And the superstores went to that minister, went to that government and said, well you're getting a little bit close to the mark here, I think that you should pull back now. Besides which, all these legal expenses of getting into these fights is frankly a little bit too much. We want you to



pull back, we want you to pull back. And after all, we came to this province and opened up and created jobs and all those kinds of wonderful things and we're a model of economic development; we're the kind of things that you wanted when you said, oh, we're open for business, and boy, you better play ball with us. And this government buckled under; that cabinet buckled under; that was their response.

Was their response to stand up for the people of Saskatchewan? No. Was it to say, we need to protect rural businesses? No. Did they say to the Superstore, we need to protect the concept of a common day of rest so that working men and people can have a common day of rest — did they say that? No. Did they say, we need to support small, locally owned businesses? No. Mr. Speaker, they said none of those things. And that government and that minister said no to Saskatchewan, said no to Saskatchewan people, said no to Saskatchewan small business, and said no to many rural businesses that stand to be affected by this legislated. And frankly, Mr. Speaker, they said no to common sense. They said yes to their corporate friends. They didn't have the guts to say no to Superstore.

Mr. Speaker, I submit that this legislation before us is the action of a cowardly . . . are the actions of a cowardly government. This is a minister who, when Superstore says jump, he says: how high, and where and when would you like me to jump? This is a minister who has wimped out — wimped out — wimped out in favour of Superstore, afraid to stand up for the people of Saskatchewan. And I say, when people see the yellow paint on the Superstore, they will be reminded of the yellow stripe that is now so evident on the backs of this government and that minister.

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

(1100)

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — I might say, I'm frankly surprised that the Premier has allowed it to get this far. This is the Premier that talks about the family; this is the Premier that talks about the importance of religion. One would have thought, one would have surmised, Mr. Speaker, that this is a Premier then who would favour a common day of rest for Saskatchewan families.

But it doesn't appear that way. No, this is a Premier that could have said no; this is a Premier that could have stopped it in cabinet; this is a Premier that could have said to his Minister of Urban Affairs; this is nonsense — which it is — I want you to stop this business. This is a cabinet that could have said that; this is a Premier that could have said that. It's clear that it was the Premier's choice; it still is the Premier's choice, but this Premier is supporting to choose his Minister of Urban Affairs. This minister is choosing to support throwing the stores wide open on Sundays, because that's what the legislation will ultimately result in.

No, this is not a Premier that stands up for families; this is not a Premier who's motivated by what he says; that he says that I'm a religious person; that I believe in the family and the importance of religion and the observance of religions and so on. If he was really serious, if he really

meant that, he would stop this legislation now. He would stop it today. He would say no to his Minister of Urban Affairs. He would say no to a cabinet that's gotten out of control.

But I suppose that it is hard for the Premier . . . for a Premier who's rarely in this province to be able to do that. Because this is a Premier that's lost touch with Saskatchewan. This is a Premier that's so in touch with all of the world's problems; so in touch with all the needs of the federal government; so in touch with what's happening in Washington that he's out of touch with what's happening here in Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, all of the reasons that were there in the very beginning when legislation was brought forward to provide for a common day of rest; all of the reasons that were there many years ago are as valid today as they were then, are as valid today.

There is a need to protect rural businesses. There is a need to protect those businesses in rural communities that will lose their market share because of Sunday opening. Let's not make any doubts about that. There is a need to protect them. And we say they need to be protected, even if you on that side and that Minister of Urban Affairs says, well, I'm going to turn my back on them.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that there is a need for a common day of rest for Saskatchewan families and working people so that there is an opportunity for them to all be together on at least one day; so that they can all go to their churches or do whatever it is that they want to do as a family on that common day.

I think there is a need for that. That is not a need that can be adequately responded to by the municipalities by giving them the option to decide whether or not the stores will be open on Sunday. That is clearly something that the provincial government needs to do.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that there are additional reasons, that there's a reason to protect this family-owned small businesses who will increasingly get out of business in this province. And that is to the detriment of Saskatchewan people, who will increasingly get out of business in this province because, frankly, no family, no business man can stand behind his till and operate in his store seven days a week.

That is simply not the way . . . and I've seen evidence of people just simply getting out of the business, family-owned businesses, getting out of it. And in this case a hardware store says, we can see the writing on the wall; there's going to be seven days a week; we are not in a position to provide that kind of investment in terms of time and commitment to a store to be able to compete with the superstores. We're getting out of the business. And that business has folded. And I say that's a direct result of the legislation that's before us. There is a need to protect that.

All the reasons that were there then are there now. I think that it's high time we referred this matter to the municipal

law committee, because perhaps the voice of Saskatchewan people might just have some bearing on the Premier and just might cause him to just back up and say, whoa, we have to stop here.

We need to protect rural businesses, we need to protect small businesses. We need to ensure that there's a common day of rest so that people can attend their churches and do whatever it is that they want to do on that common day; and we need to say no to this legislation. And that is why I support the amendment that's before us. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

(1112)

Amendment negated on the following recorded division.

#### Yeas — 20

Romanow	Goulet
Rolfes	Hagel
Lingenfelter	Pringle
Shillington	Lyons
Tchorzewski	Calvert
Thompson	Trew
Mitchell	Smart
Simard	Van Mulligen
Kowalsky	Koenker
Atkinson	Goodale

#### Nays — 28

Devine	Toth
Muller	Sauder
Duncan	Johnson
McLeod	McLaren
Andrew	Hopfner
Taylor	Petersen
Smith	Swenson
Swan	Martens
Maxwell	Baker
Schmidt	Gleim
Gerich	Gardner
Hepworth	Kopelchuk
Klein	Saxinger
Meiklejohn	Britton

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I see that the Government of Saskatchewan has just voted against rural Saskatchewan and small business, and they won't forget that.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — I would like to join my colleague, Mr. Speaker, to oppose the minister's Bill to amend The Urban Municipality Act, for all the reasons that have been put forward this morning and in previous days. I would like to talk to, or to address my comments and to make specific reference to two aspects of this Bill, that is the changes to the ward system and the store hours question.

Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the minister now for over two weeks as he talked about the need for these changes

and his consulting extensively with groups around the province. While the minister may have met with groups, he obviously did not listen or hear what they had to say. The minister cannot stand here and list those who support him on either the ward system or the store hours changes.

(1115)

Regarding the ward system changes, Mr. Speaker, the minister has not provided any sane rationale for his new scheme, his half-baked scheme, which he calls the best of both worlds. People I talk to in my riding, Mr. Speaker, those my colleagues talked to in their ridings say it's just the opposite. It's the worst of both worlds.

The minister would have us believe that he listened and this is the magic compromise. And he was quite proud of himself when he made that discovery. In his own small mind, in his own convoluted logical thought process, it may seem like a compromise. But it isn't logical, Mr. Speaker. It's a half-baked scheme, a half-baked scheme of half the councillors at large and half in the larger ward system.

The reasons why this scheme doesn't make sense, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are obvious to everyone, it seems but the minister. His main defence, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that in 1973 the NDP imposed the ward system; therefore, he has the right to impose a dismantling of the ward system. It's the sort of logic that I can't quite come to grips with. It doesn't matter to the minister that the cities want the ward system. His view is so reflective of this government — that we know best what's for you; we'll make decisions around here because we aren't accountable.

As a newcomer to this legislature, this is what I've seen every day since I've been here. It's no wonder the public is somewhat sceptical of politicians today. Voters in the two by-elections, the two recent by-elections, have made it crystal clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they reject this kind of arrogance and bullying in Saskatchewan. The minister says he's not interested in the views of council members or municipalities or the views they represent in their official capacities. He paints alderpersons as self-serving and selfish in their opposition to his scheme. Just because he does not consult with the constituents he represents, he assumes that councillors do not either.

As a resident of Saskatoon, I resent the minister's reference to the ward system as being inefficient. Our city council has managed the minister's funding cuts very well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They have had to be innovative and creative to manage and stretch his very limited funds. For this minister or for any minister of this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to talk about another level of government's inefficiency, is the height of hypocrisy. What a double standard — a government that has mismanaged like no other in the history of Canada, to preach about efficiency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this government would have managed effectively, like the provincial municipalities, we wouldn't be paying \$1 million a day of interest alone, and we wouldn't be wasting \$34,000 a day on wasted, vacant office space. Now that's inefficiency, Mr. Deputy

Speaker. That's Conservative philosophy, Conservatives in practice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, given that the minister has provided no rationale, no reasonable rationale for this legislation for doing away with the ward system, given that the cities don't want this half-baked scheme of his, it leads to only one conclusion. This minister, this government, has an axe to grind with the cities, or it wishes to place its friends on city councils, or both, so that those councillors will not be critical of this government for its funding cuts. This government are the master muzzlers of free speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The minister knows only well-to-do people will be able to stand for elected office. Ordinary citizens, as has been pointed out this morning, cannot afford to run. Even he can figure this out. The fact is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he knows that. That's exactly why he's doing it, why he's introducing this legislation.

Prospective city-wide candidates cannot meet residents, cannot meet their constituents, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It isn't practical, it isn't feasible, it isn't realistic. How does the minister expect councillors in the larger ward systems to handle the complaints on a part-time basis? It just isn't possible.

Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about the ability of voters to vote for six councillors now, that this represents a greater degree of democracy. What it does represent is more confusion about who to go to for assistance.

And a potential problem that I see, Mr. Speaker, or another potential problem, is a concentration of councillors in certain parts of the city, and that was made clear this morning by my hon. member. And in Saskatoon, as an example, the school board, up until a recent election in '85, had six of the seven school board representatives from one side of the city — very concentrated from one side of the city — and that was not a healthy situation for many obvious reasons.

Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand why this minister is so afraid of grass roots democracy in our cities, or democracy of any kind for that matter. In democracy people speak out, and again I guess it's only that he's trying to muzzle freedom of speech in the province.

Did it ever occur to this minister, Mr. Speaker, that the reason that this proposal is generating so much opposition in the province is because it doesn't make any sense? Why are the cities of Saskatoon and Regina and P.A. and Melfort, Melville, and Weyburn, and SUMA, and many others wrong, and the Minister of Urban Affairs is right? What special insights or superior intellectual ability does the minister have that nobody else possesses?

If the minister's concept is so good, if his rationale is so sound, why doesn't he give the cities a third option, Mr. Speaker, that of the current ward system? I think the reason is clear, Mr. Speaker. Cities would choose to accept the system that's in place now because they see it as working.

This government's political agenda once again takes

precedence over all else. But this time, Mr. Speaker, it's gone too far. Opposition will continue to mount on this question, there's no doubt about it.

Mr. Speaker, the minister can't admit that he made a mistake, which will be a sign of leadership, a sign of mortality on this very issue alone. And I'm sure if this is the way that he acts on every issue, that he's already alienated a good part of his constituency.

With regard, for a moment, to the store hours question, Mr. Speaker, I must strongly speak against this change.

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

**Mr. Koskie:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave, I would like to introduce a group of students.

Leave granted.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Koskie:** — Thank you to the member and the House. I have a great deal of pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to introduce, sitting in the Speaker's gallery, some 22 grade 6 students from the Wynyard Elementary School. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Coderre, their bus driver Pat Morrison. Pat Morrison, the bus driver, and a business woman from Wynyard, was the Liberal candidate in the last election. I'm not sure that she's in the gallery, but I want to make that note.

I want to take this opportunity of extending a welcome to the students to the legislature, many of which indicated that would be the first attendance in the Chamber, and I hope they enjoy the proceedings. What we're doing now, as I indicated to you, debating a rather important Bill, Bill 60, which is An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act. So that's what we're doing this morning. And the other thing that we will be doing is getting into some of the estimates, as I explained, is also in respect to examining the expenditures of the government in a particular department.

So I welcome you. I ask other members to join and welcome the students.

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

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 60 (continued)

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to take the opportunity to welcome the students here and to join with my colleague and let them just know that I'm talking about the proposed store hour changes that have been introduced. What we're trying to argue towards is preserving a common day of rest for the people of the province, preserving rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as I say, I would like to speak out strongly on this issue. Again this minister is marching along, oblivious

to the concerns of church groups and small business, rural towns, rural Saskatchewan generally, federated co-ops and many other groups, about the need to preserve in Saskatchewan a common day of rest.

This government talks about supporting small business in rural Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, this minister and this government talk about a lot of things, but they don't listen. They break promises and there is an inconsistency between what they say and what they do. I concur with my colleague from Regina North East that this government is out of touch with the realities of Saskatchewan. They spend \$48,000 a week on travelling around the world. This isn't New York. This isn't New York. New York makes different decisions. We have a different heritage here; we have a different way of life. We want to preserve, in Saskatchewan, that common day of rest in support of families, Mr. Speaker.

We don't want to become a dog-eat-dog society where anything goes. That's what this government is promoting through this legislation, through its free trade support, through its privatization and deregulation, dog-eat-dog society where anything goes. This is not the kind of Saskatchewan that we're supporting, Mr. Speaker.

The minister doesn't recognize the contradictions in this legislation. We aren't mature enough to decide the best form of local government for ourselves, but we can best determine our shopping hours. Does this make any sense, Mr. Speaker?

The minister says that New Democrats aren't aware of the changing realities in society in Saskatchewan and that seven shopping days is quite appropriate. I would say that it's the minister and his government who aren't aware of the realities in small towns and of small businesses, in that they are opposing extended store hours. Their very survival is at stake, Mr. Speaker; that is, the survival of small towns and the survival of small business. It's the minister who's out of step with the people of Saskatchewan. It's his government who's out of step with rural Saskatchewan.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this government's rhetoric about supporting small business in rural Saskatchewan doesn't mean a thing. This minister's notion of consultation goes like this: he meets with the coalition against open Sunday shopping and says, let's meet the day I introduce the Bill and I'll tell you it's good for you. That's what he did, Mr. Speaker. That's his view of consultation with people.

Because the minister isn't listening to the citizens regarding store hours and the survival of small businesses, small towns in rural Saskatchewan, and the preservation of family life, his government's political agenda again on this issue becomes very clear. These decisions will be made in corporate board rooms by the minister's buddies. There's no question about that. Many chains have already made this clear, Mr. Speaker, by breaking the law to open on Sunday. That's their self-serving interests come first. This will not change.

(1130)

Does Supervalu really care about small-business people,

families, or rural Saskatchewan? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. Nor, Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Urban Affairs or this government really care. Again, I urge the minister to show some leadership, have public hearings on the issue of store hours. How could the minister possibly lose by doing that?

Mr. Minister, please listen to small business, to small towns, to church groups. Invite one and all to participate in these public hearings. New Brunswick tried your approach and it didn't work. Let's not make the same mistakes. Let's learn from each other, Mr. Speaker.

There's only so much money to go around. It's only the chains that will get richer, but the price, Mr. Speaker, is too high. The price of losing small businesses through bankruptcies which are already at record levels in this province, that price is too high. The price of eroding life in rural Saskatchewan and family life generally is too high, Mr. Speaker.

Let's preserve the common day of rest in Saskatchewan and let's be serious about supporting Saskatchewan families.

Mr. Speaker, the minister likes to say that the NDP does not understand rural Saskatchewan and small business. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to put on record a letter just received. This is a letter, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Urban Affairs from small business, small . . . rural Saskatchewan, small town rural Saskatchewan. It's a letter from Hague, Mr. Speaker, dated March 31, and the minister has a copy of this. It's directed to the Minister of Urban Affairs. Sir, it just says sir, not even dear sir. This person is very angry about this legislation. It says, and I quote:

It has taken considerable effort on your part, plus much natural ability, to enable you to become undoubtedly the most insensitive Minister of Urban Affairs in Saskatchewan's history. Your version of fair play in the business world is tantamount to the Edmonton Oilers coming to play our local pee wees without any referees or officials, with no intermissions, no time periods, no limit to the number of players allowed on the ice, no offsides, no penalties, no suspensions.

Is it really possible that you have no idea of who gets clobbered?

As another merchant down the street has stated, there isn't a self-respecting storekeeper in Saskatchewan who will ever vote PC again. He could be right. Yours truly.

That, Mr. Speaker, from rural Saskatchewan, from Small Town, Saskatchewan, from small business in Saskatchewan. This member . . . from Hague in Saskatchewan. This small-business man, he refers to his counterpart down the street, and the minister refuses to listen. So much for the minister's support in rural Saskatchewan and for small business, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this letter is addressed to the man who professes to support and understand business and rural

life in Saskatchewan. How much clearer do the people of the province have to be? No wonder, as the letter indicates, PC popularity in this province is on a free fall, will continue to fall until it crashes.

Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues, I cannot support a Bill which, except for some of the provisions in the mad dog amendments, makes no sense, that does not have public support. There has been a lack of consultation in a serious way, as evidenced by this letter and many other letters and articles that my colleagues have introduced. And I urge the minister to please reconsider this ill-conceived legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to have further consultation with my colleagues if I could. I would ask that we adjourn debate on this Bill at this time.

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

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Berntson that Bill No. 93 — **An Act to amend The Ambulance Act** be now read a second time.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the debate on An Act to amend The Ambulance Act, Bill No. 93.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that the New Democratic Party opposition recognizes the need to invoke stability in the pre-hospital system or the ambulance system, and that we believe that quality services must be developed in our province.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have had the opportunity to consult with some of the ambulance associations across the province, and it appears to us that this government, these members opposite, and this minister, have no consulted on this Bill. It's definitely a Bill that appeals to the industry, or the ambulance industry.

When we examine this Bill, Mr. Speaker, we observe that it takes away rights that the ambulance boards now have. This Bill, Mr. Speaker, will undoubtedly lead to a situation where an ambulance board cannot refuse to renew a contract. This Bill, Mr. Speaker, interferes with general contract law, that's what it does. Under general contract law now in Saskatchewan and Canada, when you enter into a contract, you have the right to end that contract. Well with this Bill that no longer will be the case.

The decision as to what is reasonable and the reason to refuse to renew a contract is no longer the board's decision. It is now a decision of the mediator; it's now a decision of the arbitrator; and it's now a decision of the Queen's Bench judge. This Bill prevents boards from deciding to set up their own ambulance service in this province until the operator decides to sell.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that this Bill is a poor solution to some of the concerns that ambulance operators now

have. And the concern basically is that they may outlay a great deal of capital in the establishment of their ambulance service, but a board, upon the termination of a contract or up on the conclusion of a contract, can refuse to renew that contract. We're of the opinion that the government could have extended the length of contract from three years to probably five years. We think that the three-year period may not be enough.

But the real problem that the government is not addressing in this legislation, and has not addressed in the Department of Health estimate and in funding to our health care system, is the problem of underfunding to ambulance boards. We hear from ambulance operators and boards that it's very difficult, and I say difficult, to run a quality ambulance service in view of the kind of funds that are being made available from the provincial government. We see the real problem of underfunding, and this Bill certainly does not resolve the problem of underfunding.

Mr. Speaker, we have some other comments that we will want to make on this Bill in Committee of the Whole, and therefore we would be prepared to have this Bill go to Committee of the Whole at this stage.

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

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Urban Affairs Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 24

#### Item 1 (continued)

**Mr. Chairman:** — Is item 1 agreed?

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Soon, Mr. Chairman, but not just now. I want to ask a few questions on the Department of Urban Affairs. We have already spent a couple of evenings on these estimates, concentrated mainly on some of the issues like the ward system and store hours, so I do not intend to pursue that at length in these estimates because I am quite confident that I will do so when we consider the Bill, and that will be adequate.

But now that the minister and I have had an evening's rest, I think maybe we can get to business here and get it done this morning. And I know that the Acting House Leader has indicated that we could even stop the clock for a while if we need to. And I apologize to the officials for keeping them away from their dinner, but it's good for the constitution to do that once in a while.

Mr. Minister, I want to begin by asking you some questions on revenue sharing, and I want to remind you first of all some of the things that happened in the past year. I don't know that you need reminding, but I think, for the purposes of the record and the public who is very concerned, that it's incumbent on me to bring some of this information forward.

Last year there was a very dramatic cut in revenue sharing for urban municipalities, and although there was the 1 per

cent cut on the revenue sharing component as such, when all of the program funding which the Department of Urban Affairs and the provincial government provided to urban municipalities was taken into consideration, the cut was in fact something like 20 per cent; a very dramatic cut. Now that clearly can only be described as one simple thing: a transfer of the tax load from the provincial government to the property tax owners.

Now, SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association), at that time, being co-operative and believing that the government was going to be understanding, said that they would accept the 1 per cent cut on the revenue sharing. As a matter of fact, SUMA did say that the board does not accept the subtle message from the Minister of Urban Affairs attempting to unload provincial fiscal management on the shoulders of local governments to suggest that urban municipalities should issue more debt to replace traditional provincial funding is not a responsible recommendation. And that was a submission made to the cabinet by the board of directors of SUMA on behalf of urban municipalities.

It went on to say, in this submission, that the board cautions the government to recognize that urban municipalities cannot further shoulder the cost for programs which properly belong with the provincial jurisdiction, and it indicated that although it would reluctantly, in the spirit of trying to address the fiscal situation in Saskatchewan, accept the 1 per cent cut, was sending a clear message that that could only be done for one year.

Very regrettable that the minister decided, and the government and it's . . . the government as a whole, decided that that advice was not worth heeding, and this year provided no increase in funding at all for urban municipalities in revenue sharing. Two years in a row — one year there's a 1 per cent cut in revenue sharing alone; the second year no increase. If you take inflation into consideration that's, over a two-year period, about a 4 or 5 per cent cut in revenue sharing.

Now before I go on further, I know that the member from Wascana has some students he will be introducing and I'm wondering if the students who are up here are his students. If they are then I'll give the floor.

(1145)

**Mr. Martin:** — Mr. Chairman, I'd ask leave of the House to introduce some guests in the Speaker's gallery.

Leave granted.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Martin:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to introduce some grade 6 students from Wilfrid Walker School in my constituency, a number of students. There are 21 students and three adults, all in grade 6. The teacher is Mr. Frolic — he was here last year; and the chaperons are Mrs. Marg Daku and Mrs. Kaisler. Some of these students have been in the House before, but they're enjoying the day off.

I would just like to tell them that what they have witnessed so far is the member from Regina East, who is the critic for Urban Affairs among other things, he is questioning the Minister of Urban Affairs, the member from Regina South, who will get up and answer the question . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I beg your pardon . . . who will get up and answer the question when he gets an opportunity, I suppose as soon as I sit down; maybe that'll speed that up. At any rate, this is just all Committee of the Whole, I mentioned to you earlier — two people going back and forth discussing the business of the government.

So I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming out students and the teachers and the chaperons from Wilfrid Walker School.

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

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Let me join in the welcome to the students from Wilfrid Walker School, and also hope that they will have an enjoyable stay here, and since school is pretty well completed, that they also have a very good summer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

#### Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Urban Affairs Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 24

#### Item 1 (continued)

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — I want to go back then to some concluding comments on what I was saying. I just want to give some examples of what has happened, Mr. Chairman. Revenue sharing has changed this way. In 1987 the amount of dollars in revenue sharing was \$67,126,000; in 1989, two years later, that amount is \$67,040,000. Now that is a very significant cut in funding to urban municipalities.

That means that the towns of Melfort, the cities of Estevan, Melfort, the city of Melfort, rural, urban municipalities, the city of Regina, have had no choice but to do some very drastic cutting in the programs that they provide and in some of the services that they provide, and also, to increase property taxes which already are among the highest in Canada. Now that, in my opinion, Mr. Chairman, is not a responsible action by the government.

We have said throughout this session time and time again and so I won't repeat it all, but if you take into consideration all of the increases of taxes and fees that people have had imposed on them since this government took power, there has been an increase on the average family, of \$1,424 in taxes and service charges. Families that can barely afford that kind of an increase, and out there who are struggling to make a living and provide those essentials which their family so desperately need to have in today's society.

Now if you add to that, Mr. Chairman, the fact that there was in 1985 a cancellation of \$83 million, almost \$84 million in the property improvement grant, which is a rebate of taxes, we see that this has been the largest and

the greatest tax increase in the history of Saskatchewan on property. Is it any wonder that we have in Saskatchewan today the second highest level of poverty and hungry children in all of Canada? It's not a wonder.

**An Hon. Member:** — That is not true.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Well the member from Cut Knife-Lloyd says it's not true. Well he'd like to believe it's not true; that he lives in this cocoon of his and he thinks that the world revolves around himself. The world does not revolve around itself; it revolves around a million people in Saskatchewan. And those 64,000 people living at or below the poverty line in Saskatchewan are part of that world, and they deserve just as much consideration as the member from Cut Knife-Lloyd.

**An Hon. Member:** — That's your numbers.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — The numbers that I use are numbers of the federal government, which is a Conservative Government of Canada funded agency, which has done the research and provided them.

Now, Mr. Minister, I would like to ask you, in light of the difficulty that urban municipalities face, and in light of the requirements that they must address, how can you possibly justify a cut-back of revenue sharing from 67,126,000 — 1 per cent last year — and no increase this year? Would you provide a justification for that and explain how you can do that, Mr. Minister, while you continue to give oil corporations a tax royalty holiday which has netted them something in excess of \$2 billion since your government took office?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all I'd like to get one thing straight, and I'll start with his last observation first. And this year in revenue sharing there was an increase. So for him to say that there wasn't, is not right. He knows that.

With regard to a comment regarding the property improvement grant that was removed by this government, it's fair to say that that was replaced by the home program, a very successful program that has created employment, that has kept our business community alive in a time of weak economic conditions, conditions that Saskatchewan as a province really has no control over, Mr. Chairman, and that is the low prices of grain and oil and potash and uranium.

We found ourself, as government, with our revenues dropping, and dropping dramatically, to exercise restraint. And we asked and needed the co-operation of the municipalities to exercise the same constraint. And by and large they have been able to do that and do that quite well, I notice.

And I'll speak for a moment about my home city, of course which I am most familiar with, and an article in the Leader-Post that says, once again the coffers holding city operating funds were overflowing by about \$233,000 when the year drew to a close. And it goes on to say that they have been able to accomplish that over the years. So that in spite of what the member opposite's saying regarding the total cut-back to the municipalities, they

have been able to manage. They too have been able to share part of this restraint program with us.

And regarding the revenue sharing, Mr. Chairman, the revenue sharing pool was increased by \$585,000. And that was new money that was put in, that SUMA, after consultations, knew nothing about, that were extremely pleased to receive because what that was able to do, we . . . they were very — how can I put it? They really wanted to see the new revenue-sharing distribution program changed, and using the new population figures and all the rest of it, rather than changing it every five years as had been done in the past.

So as we were working out a new formula with SUMA it was obvious, painfully obvious, that some communities were going to suffer dramatic reductions as a result of that new formula — some as much as 20 per cent. So when our government was able to put in an additional \$585,000 as a total surprise, what this effectively accomplished, Mr. Chairman, was a 3 per cent safety net to those communities that were going to suffer losses. It protected almost half of SUMA's membership, an awful lot of small rural towns and villages. Over some 200 municipalities were saved as a result of that new money and we were pleased that in spite of the restraint program, we were able to help them to that degree.

**Mr. Goodale:** — Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I might have the leave of the Assembly to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Goodale:** — Mr. Chairman, it's my pleasure to introduce to the Assembly today 28 students from grade 4 at Assiniboia Elementary School in Assiniboia, Saskatchewan. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery, the eager young faces just above the railing behind me. They are accompanied today by Mrs. Debbie Hysuik, Mrs. Vetrei, Mrs. Fettes, and Mrs. Kirby, and their bus driver, Mr. Adams.

I've had the opportunity to meet and visit with them. They've enjoyed a tour of the legislature. And I would ask all members present at the moment to join me in welcoming these young students from Assiniboia to the Assembly today.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to introduce some guests and I'd like to ask leave for that.

Leave granted.

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Chairman, seated in the west gallery are some friends of mine who've returned home from Germany. They are house parents in a private school in the Black Forest Academy in Germany, and they're visiting here in Regina and some other friends of mine. Their names are Jon and Sharon Thiessen with their family in the front row, and they're visiting with other friends of mine in Regina here, Mel and Jan Peters. And I'd like the Assembly to join me in welcoming them here

today.

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

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Urban Affairs Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 24

#### Item 1 (continued)

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Chairman, I was listening to the minister's comments as he desperately tried to pretend that there was an increase in the revenue-sharing pool, and then after a while finally got around to explaining that it wasn't really an increase, it was simply the \$585,000 to make sure that no municipalities would suffer a greater reduction than 3 per cent.

So what he is really saying, it's all right, they can have a reduction of 3 per cent, Mr. Chairman, and we're going to make \$585 available to make sure that others don't have a greater reduction than 3 per cent.

Now if that is an argument for an increase in funding, Mr. Chairman, it's beyond me to comprehend. And I'm sure beyond the municipalities who, as the minister stated, were surprised about the \$585. I'm sure they weren't half as surprised as they were when the minister announced last year a 1 per cent cut in total revenue-sharing funding, after saying to them earlier before that that there would be no cut and they should be expecting to stay at the same level. Mr. Chairman, I find that kind of ministerial commitment and then breaking of promises, really quite despicable.

I want to point out to the minister why the cities are in a position they are. I'll give you one real example, Mr. Minister, and I have here — it's documented in a letter from a confectionery in the city of Regina, one of those little stores that is going to be hurt even more by your store hours legislation, because they are going to have to compete with businesses that are chain stores and huge corporate conglomerates. And so, whereas their family is running them now, you're going to see them likely disappear.

But here is what's happened to this business person between 1978 and 1987, most of the time during which your government was in power. The business tax on this . . . And I'll give you the name of the business; it's Parkdale Confectionery in the city of Regina — the business tax in 1978 was \$1,114.15. In 1987, because of the policies of your government, that tax is now \$2,121.79, an increase of 90 per cent.

And all you can do is say, ah, we might have a \$10 million program in which we're going to share with the municipalities if they relieve some of this burden.

But that's not all, because there's also the property tax on this business. In 1978 it was \$1,118; in 1987 it was \$2,927, an increase of 161 per cent. Now this is what your reduction in revenue sharing and your cutting totally and doing away with the capital grants program is doing

to people who own property, and people who are trying to run legitimate and honest businesses in the urban centres of Saskatchewan and all of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, how can you justify those kinds of tax increases because of your government policy?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned earlier regarding the revenue-sharing distribution, that formula was worked out with SUMA. The new dollars were more than welcome. It's unfortunate that the member doesn't recognize that that safety net was very important to those small rural communities. We believe it was.

I look forward to the debate on the store hours, and we'll leave that for another time, because we will then truly discover, Mr. Chairman, how little the NDP know about business. Their new thrust of becoming the champions of small business is simply unacceptable; not unacceptable to me, Mr. Chairman, but unacceptable to the business community. The business community fully understands who the NDP are, who they represent. They will never forgive the NDP nor accept them as their allies.

Regarding the business tax and the example that he uses, the business tax is a long-standing tax that, all the years that the NDP were in power and I was in the private sector, went by unaddressed, escalated rapidly. It is a municipal tax. Everybody understands that it's a municipal tax, not a government tax.

(1200)

but yet the government is not standing idly by, Mr. Chairman. We have set aside in our next budget \$10 million to help the municipalities resolve this problem. We will be beginning an extensive consultation process that has already indeed begun. The letters have gone out inviting for input and all the rest of it. We will try to solve, in the next six months, a problem that has been unsolvable, at least it appears, for the last 12 years.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Well, Mr. Minister, the concern over the business tax for some reason did not become a serious problem until the last two years when your government began to make all the massive cut-backs in revenue sharing with municipalities, and municipalities had no choice but increase taxes, and you seem to miss that point, Mr. Minister. Therefore, ultimately it is your responsibility, and you're responsible for the level of the business tax and don't try to dump it on the shoulders of the municipalities.

Now you may have the mayor of Regina defending you as he tries to proceed to get a Tory nomination. It tells us a great deal about why the city of Regina received an \$8 million cut in its funding from provincial government in the last budget with hardly a whimper from this proposed new Tory candidate. But I'm telling you, Mr. Minister, in the end, in the end, selling off Regina to get a Tory candidate nomination is not going to help the citizens of Regina. And it's really a waste of an effort because with the polls the way they are, and the Mulroney government being in the kind of disrepute it is, it may just be an exercise that will end up in defeat in the end anyway.



Now, Mr. Minister, you see to think you have a great deal of support in the business community. Well you have a letter on your desk, dated May 31, from a business man in Hague, Saskatchewan, in which he says, and I'll only read two paragraphs. First one, it says:

It has taken considerable effort on your part, plus some natural ability, to enable you to become undoubtedly the most insensitive Minister of Urban Affairs in Saskatchewan history.

And the last paragraph, I think is very telling because it counters the argument which you made about your pretended support in rural Saskatchewan, I mean the business community, when he says:

As another merchant down the street has stated, there isn't a self-respecting storekeeper in Saskatchewan who will ever vote PC again.

And he could be right. Now you're getting those kinds of letters daily, Mr. Minister, and you know it. And it's surprising that your caucus members who sit behind you have not caught on to that because their political future is at stake here, and it's as good as shot already. And if they wish to follow your lead and therefore suffer the consequences, that's their business, and we will welcome that. And after the next election they'll have a government in Saskatchewan that can address the problems of urban Saskatchewan and work with the urban municipalities to deal with the problems that they face.

Now, Mr. Minister, I would like to ask you some specific questions. Out of the \$885,000 that you put into the fund to make sure that the decreases weren't more than 3 per cent, how many communities were eligible for this money in Saskatchewan?

If you can give me the numbers of communities and send over to me so we don't have to take the time of the House of you reading, I would like to know which communities they were.

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Mr. Chairman, before I get into specifics, the member just proved my point . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, you know, it shows how little you know about business tax and the issue. The business community knows very well who levies and collects the tax. And everybody in Saskatchewan sees what's happening with the issue of business tax, and they're not knocking down the government's door; they're going where the tax is levied and collected, and that's to the municipality.

**An Hon. Member:** — Oh, come on, Jack.

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Well . . . And the member from Lakeview knows that. They're after the municipalities and their levy. And even at the SUMA regional conferences . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — You don't know what you're talking about. It's a transfer of tax. Be honest.

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — And there goes the member from

Lakeview. She hasn't attended the SUMA regional conferences. At least my critic has, and I compliment them for that. But I ask him to pay a little bit more attention when he's there because we've discussed the business tax issue. And it's not a problem throughout the whole province; it's a spotty problem, and we'll resolve that.

But in any event . . . First of all, just to correct the records, and I know that member will appreciate this. He inverted his figures; he said 885,000. The dollars were \$585,000, and it went to some 229 communities in the province.

If you would like a list of the communities, we would supply them to you, but you can understand that it will take a while to . . . for a print-out to occur. But we would supply you with a list of the 229 communities. But that's the number.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Do you have any . . . If it's just a simple print-out, can you give me an indication when I may roughly be able to get that, so I don't have to wait till the fall?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Mr. Chairman, probably within two days.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you very much.

While you're doing that, can you tell me which municipalities in Saskatchewan this year received reductions in their revenue sharing? Can you tell me, first of all, how many, and then undertake to provide that information to me from your print-out in the next two days, as you are going to do with the other one.

Maybe I should just do all of these, and then we won't have to go around that way. I would like those municipalities who received reductions and those municipalities who received increases, and obviously it'll show the amount of the increases. And if you would be so good as to have that for me, I would appreciate it. I already have those for last year, so I won't pursue that with you today.

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Mr. Chairman, I'd be delighted to send that to the member because there were over 200 municipalities that indeed received increases, and that's why the revenue-sharing distribution formula is so important; that's why our consultations with SUMA is so important. And we work out what we believe to be a very, very fair system.

And we have no trouble at all providing the member with the information that will show probably last year's revenue sharing, this year's revenue sharing, and the percentage change. And it will indicate that 229 communities were protected by the 3 per cent safety net, minus three, and it will indicate probably over a couple of hundred that indeed received increases.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — I will wait for that information and look forward to it.

Now I'd like to ask you some specific questions about specific communities. I would like to know, Mr. Minister,

what is the increase or decrease for the city of Moose Jaw? And I'm sure your officials have that and they'll be able to provide it.

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Mr. Chairman, my apologies for taking that length of time. We had to go through a whole long list here. But Moose Jaw's total grant this year was some \$3.6 million, and it amounted to an increase of some \$35,700, for a 1 per cent increase.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Can you do the same for Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Okay. Saskatoon went up 0.58 per cent, just a little over half of a percentage point. They received a \$91,400 increase in round figures, and received \$15,721,000; Regina, \$15,711,000, an increase of almost \$84,000, a percentage increase of 0.54 per cent. And what was the other one?

Mr. Chairman, my apologies that my computer-like memory can't contain these 511 figures, but their grant was \$3.2 million; it was down \$43,155; percentage points, 1.33.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Now here we go, Mr. Minister. I asked you those questions because I think they prove something, and it proved why . . . they show why this example of this small-business person who's struggling to stay in business has had his property and business taxes increased by 90 and by 116 per cent.

In the city of Moose Jaw, last year you gave a reduction of 4.5 per cent. This year you boast about giving them an increase of 1 per cent. Even though there is an inflation factor of something like 4 to 5 per cent in the last year. That's not an increase, Mr. Minister, that's a further cut.

For the city of Prince Albert last year, you cut the revenue sharing by 6 per cent. Now you're trying to say that it's great; you're doing them a great favour by further reducing the revenue sharing this year by 1.33 per cent.

The city of Regina, last year you provided a cut of 3.3 per cent in revenue sharing alone. When all was considered last year, you cut the city of Regina funding from the province by \$8 million, and you say that an increase of 5.4 per cent somehow this year is a major step forward.

Now that's the point of all this, Mr. Minister. Your priorities are also perverted. You think you can give up \$2 million, or over \$2 million worth of revenues from oil corporations who, in the early '80s up to about two years ago, were making massive profits. You say you've got \$2 billion for them, but you're saying to these municipalities — and I'll only use them as examples because all over Saskatchewan they're affected in the same way — you're going to continue, in some cases, to give them cuts in revenue sharing of two years in a row. Now isn't that a transfer of the tax burden to the property taxpayers, Mr. Minister?

(1215)

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Okay, Mr. Chairman. Well my officials provide me with some interesting information

that would probably spark a lengthy debate, so I think that rather than do that, I think a simple explanation that perhaps the people can understand . . . and that's my concern, is the people understanding.

As a municipality grows, Mr. Chairman, so too does their assessment base, and as their assessment base increases and they apply their mill rate, they are capable of generating higher internal revenues as a result of their growth. So consequently SUMA recognizes that, and when we sit down with the size of the pool and determine the formula, that's how you establish the distribution of it. And I think the proof is in the pudding when you recognize that over the last few years, taxes have not increased as much as the rate of inflation has.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Minister, one of the significant . . . If you want to categorize property owners in cities in Saskatchewan, and in some cases not in cities, as the Government of Saskatchewan itself, and if you take Regina, for example, into consideration, the amount of assessed property in the city of Regina which is owned by the Government of Saskatchewan is very considerable. Most provinces in Canada now pay either grants in lieu of taxes or taxes for government property, which the city has to provide the infrastructure for and the taxpayers of the city have to pay for.

One of the few provinces that does not do that is the province of Saskatchewan, and thus eroding a very substantial tax base for the city of Regina, for one example. And that can be applied to other cities to a lesser degree, because they're not the capital cities and therefore don't have as many provincial government buildings and facilities.

Mr. Minister, has your government considered the changing of that system, which I think has some merit, so that the government will provide its share of the property tax for its facilities in the same way as this confectionery which I referred to a little earlier, or any other business in the province of Saskatchewan located in a town or city?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I suppose about the only argument that I would care to present right now is that as our government came on stream we lease an awful lot of our space now from the private sector, who do indeed pay taxes and contribute to that.

The NDP government in all the years that they were in power operated the same as we do; they didn't pay taxes. So that as we change and as we decentralize . . . For instance, when we moved crop insurance to Melville, they welcomed the new government offices with open arms and weren't too concerned about it.

The problem that we've got now is that obviously your two major cities of Regina and Saskatoon, if the government were to implement paying that, would gain a tremendous increase in taxes at the expense of all of the people of the province.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Now, Mr. Minister, that's not quite accurate, and you know it. Because to some degree the revenue-sharing formula would then rectify that problem and there would be a net increase to these cities.

But wouldn't you agree, Mr. Minister, that your argument is wrong — the simplistic argument — because the revenue-sharing formula would rectify that so-called unfairness problem that you refer to?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Mr. Chairman, I think that the member brings up a valid point, yes, but it would to some degree rectify itself, but not anywhere near the dollar for dollar that the balance to the taxpayers would have to absorb for the two major cities.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Well, Mr. Minister, why then is it fair and justifiable for the taxpayers of Regina, or the taxpayers in Saskatoon, or the taxpayers in Moose Jaw to subsidize government office buildings at their expense because you're not prepared to pay grants in lieu of, or taxes on property like everybody else in those cities.

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Chairman, I'm sure that the member wouldn't even begin to argue the obvious economic benefit of the government employees to those cities, certainly to the city of Regina where our capital is. I mean the economic spin-off available to the people of Regina, that's what keeps us alive here in Regina and always have, ever since I was a kid, and I think that that speaks for itself.

You have to recognize too, that it's not each and every government building that is omitted; our Crown corporations do indeed pay grants in lieu of taxes.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Minister, once again your argument is full of holes. The government employees, true, contribute very substantially. Your government doesn't seem to recognize them because your habit is to abuse employees of the government and try to portray them in a bad light and get rid of them, as many as you can, unjustifiably.

But I want to remind you that those very same government employees pay very substantial income taxes to the provincial government; they pay very substantial flat taxes to the provincial government; they pay very substantial gasoline taxes to the provincial government. And so they contribute to the coffers of the provincial government, and yet you're cutting back the revenue sharing to the municipalities in which they live.

So the net of this thing is further example of transferring the tax burden to the property owners and those people you refer to as government employees, as well as their friends and neighbours and relatives, and at the same time taking money from them to transfer to the provincial treasury and not to the city treasuries or the urban treasuries of the province so that you can give \$2 billion a year, or \$2 billion to the oil corporations and the resource companies so that they can live high, take the money and invest it in other parts of the world, while these people who are trying to make a living have to pay more.

Now you have not addressed that, Mr. Minister, since your government has been in power and you have made a little announcement in your budget speech in which you provide no money in that budget for — no money at all. You say in 1989 you're going to provide a \$10 million

fund to municipalities so that if they cut the business tax by 1 per cent . . . or \$1 and you will give them another dollar.

Now, Mr. Minister, you announced this, or your Minister of Finance announced this in the budget speech. No one had heard about it. Urban municipalities had not heard about it; even your department had not heard about it. Out of the blue it comes, and then you somehow think you have got a program that is going to work.

Now, Mr. Minister, at what stage, just in case I'm wrong, at what stage of development was this program when it was announced in the budget speech at the end of March?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Well it was hardly a surprise, Mr. Chairman. You know, the business tax problem through the province has been a favourite challenge of mine, I guess, for the last 25 years. And certainly since I've been a member of government, it's been a favourite challenge. And I was just simply delighted when our Minister of Finance was able to make the announcement that we were in a position to put aside \$10 million next year.

And there's nothing cast in stone about the formula. I'm explaining that to SUMA. I'm explaining that to the business community. I'm explaining that to everybody. We're entering consultations on the whole issue of business tax. There are no predetermined formulas. There's nothing cast in place. We are offering some guide-lines and suggestions. Understandably we have to do that, and hopefully we're going to arrive at conclusions that everybody will welcome — certainly the business community.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Minister, at what stage of development is this program now, and is it at the stage where you could provide to this House or table in this House some criteria for the program? It was announced in March. You must have given it considerable thought before you announced it, I'm sure. I would really be surprised if you just pulled it out of the air and said, well, we're going to announce it just like you did with your gasoline tax, and then we're going to find a way to address it.

I want to say to you, yes, you're right, I have been to regional meetings. I missed one in Macklin, which my colleague from North Battleford represented the government at, and I will be attending those on a regular basis.

But I can tell you this. In my discussion with urban councillors at those SUMA meetings, they were not very happy with your proposal. I don't know what you're hearing and who you're hearing it from, but unanimously they're saying to me, those I've spoken to and those who've come to speak to me, they say that this is a proposal that is not workable, it's unfair, it's nothing other than an attempt by you and your government to unload the business tax problem from yourself and try to attempt to take the heat off yourself and put it on the municipalities from who you've cut funding substantially already.

So you can report to the House, Mr. Minister, at what

stage of development this program is, and can you provide the criteria for it so that the municipalities can know?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — I'd like to correct one statement, Mr. Chairman. When he sent his representative, it was as a member of the opposition. They simply try to carry the aura of representing the government. That's the difference between the NDP and us. There is no criteria established and I am very vividly . . . the only criteria is that it will be in 1989. SUMA is very aware of that.

And what you tell me about everybody saying that they don't like it, is simply not true, Mr. Chairman, and they are not saying that. And I have to take exception. I don't want to get into an argument over it, but they are not saying that.

As a matter of fact, what is most prevalent in the SUMA meetings — and I'm going to another one on Monday — is that there does not exist entirely, throughout the province, a problem with the business tax. And by our trying to help resolve the situation may not necessarily do that, and is it fair for the entire province to kick in where a business tax problem only exists in a few communities.

Mr. Chairman, we listen. We went out there with no predetermined guide-lines to this program. We simply said this government has the resolve to try to help the municipalities with their problem of a business tax, if indeed they have it. We have to arrive at some fair, meaningful solution where the small-business community will be the winners, where the municipalities will not indeed be the losers. And there is no predetermined criteria, and they know exactly where it's at as far as the development stage is concerned.

We have written as many of the interest groups that we can think of asking for their input into this. Formal meetings will be; SUMA is asking how they should start. I am asking SUMA, as an organization, to establish at these regional meetings what they would like to see happen, and the meetings will then continue. What I am saying is that I would like to have a solution by the end of the year.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Minister, what consultation have you had with the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association and library boards?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned, all of the interest groups have been notified about the beginning of the consultation process and the fact that we are looking for their input. As a matter of fact, at the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce annual meeting in Moose Jaw about a month ago, I was on a panel discussion with the executive director of the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), a member of the chamber of commerce, and myself, and the whole issue of business tax was discussed in wide open public with the media present.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — So you've been on a panel with the SSTA. Can you tell me whether your departmental officials or yourself have had formal discussions with the SSTA and the library boards — and you did fail to mention

them — on the business of your proposal to deal with the business tax?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Mr. Chairman, I have invited them for their opinion, for their proposed solutions, for how they can become involved and to get involved in discussions with us. I'm presently waiting for their response, for their ideas, for which direction they would like to take. Clearly there is going to be an awful lot of people, an awful lot of interest groups, and indeed the small-business community, very interested in this important issue.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I want to draw to your attention another example of the continuing contradiction of things you say from day to day, which has I think caused you many of the problems that you face as a minister and as a government. You said last year, on October 29, that's in 1987, that:

The municipalities could indeed, if they chose, eliminate the business tax, but it has become an everyday fact of life with the municipalities and it has become an integral part of their financing, an integral part of their income. So for them to dispense with this is a very costly item.

Now in light of that, Mr. Minister, which you see to . . . the way you seem to view the issue a year ago, last October, how do you think they're more capable of dealing with the business tax by reducing it now, than they were last year when you were saying, it's not possible for them to do that? What has changed, other than the fact that there is greater unemployment and greater inflation and less provincial funding?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Mr. Chairman, you know, he reads a few lines out of a total text. And you have to understand the whole situation. And obviously, if there is \$40 million in business tax collected throughout this province, and if the approximate amount is 50-50 to municipalities and to education, that's a significant amount of dollars.

And in reference to that statement, it was probably made regarding the business alliance, who was simply saying that they wanted the entire business tax removed. Well you just can't come up with \$40 million overnight, and then to ask the government to come up with the \$40 million, it's fraught with danger from a whole lot of areas, number one.

Number two, in this time of restraint it's very doubtful that the government could come up with the \$40 million. And number three, even if it all did work out, does that particularly mean that that's going to put everybody into a heaven regarding this issue.

(1230)

And I think it's a lot more complex than that. I haven't backed away or changed from that statement one bit, and I still say it openly. And it is still a major problem that we're dealing with, with one major difference. We are confident now that a solution will be forthcoming because this government has committed itself to \$10 million.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Minister, \$10 million out of a \$40 million business tax problem out there is hardly a convincing solution to the problems that municipalities are facing.

Now obviously they don't have any option. You say to them in the budget speech that they have to cut every dollar for any dollar that you provide. They're already cut to the bone.

You also say to them, as a condition of this, Mr. Minister, as a condition of this, they can't increase property taxes. I don't know how you arbitrarily can tell urban municipalities, or any municipalities, whether they can or cannot do something with the property taxes.

If those are the conditions, where do you expect them to find that dollar for every dollar that you supply, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — You have to study the context, Mr. Chairman. There is no criteria, as I mentioned. There are no guide-lines. There is a suggested strategy. We will encourage the municipalities to match it dollar for dollar. The word "encourage" is in there. We do not say it is mandatory, and that's why the consultation process is going to become very, very important.

And keep in mind earlier remarks that I've said. Although the total business tax revenue generated in the province is in the area of \$40 million, there is not a business tax problem in the total area of Saskatchewan. It is a spotty problem. It is a spotty situation, and we're going to have to come up with some sort of a solution that will be fair to the entire province of Saskatchewan, and yet at the same time address the local problems.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Minister, it has become more than spotty, and you know as well as I do that it's growing. It is not a problem that is going away.

I simply conclude my discussion on this subject by saying, your proposition is inadequate; it's totally inadequate. Your proposition has only one purpose, and that is a political purpose, the political purpose being to shift this responsibility and shift the political pressure away from you and the provincial government onto the municipalities who don't have the resources to handle it. That's a very cynical approach by the Government of Saskatchewan.

It's unfair of your government to cut, drastically, funding to municipalities by 20 per cent last year in total, then say that somehow they have got to deal with the business tax problem and somehow they've got to find some other resources to do it. I say to you, Mr. Minister, that's not the position of the New Democratic Party, and I want the business community and I want urban municipalities to know that. The New Democratic Party believes, our caucus believes, that this is a responsibility which the provincial government has main responsibility for. And when we are the government, I can say to them that we will deal with it in a responsible way and shoulder our responsibility.

We wouldn't expect school boards to pick up a greater

and greater and greater portion of the education costs as they've had to do under your administration. We would not expect municipalities who are barely struggling to keep their streets and their sewage and water systems and their roads intact to pick up another \$40 or \$20 million because of your inadequate proposal. Our position is that this proposal is not adequate.

We regret that you're thinking that every solution to Municipal problems is a political solution. We would provide practical solutions that would work and would be of benefit, and we would do it in discussions and consultation with urban municipalities. We wouldn't catch them by surprise; we wouldn't make announcements and then say, oh, then come talk to us. Our commitment is: we would sit down with them, we'd work out the proposals, and then we would be able to be in a position to announce the program with the specifics so that everybody knew where they stood. And I guess that's a very distinct difference between your approach to government and public administration and what ours would be. And I think the public is becoming very much aware of that.

The part of the problems that . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — He must have been to Damascus.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Part of the situation that has caused . . . I may have been to Damascus. You see, Mr. Minister, the member from Meadow Lake . . . the difference is that we are people who learn . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You can blame him, Jack. We are people who learn from what people tell us. That minister over there refuses to even listen to them, and that is the difference, and urban municipal people know that, finally.

Now, Mr. Minister, one of the other problems that your neglect has caused is the area of the neglect of the infrastructure in our urban municipalities, and this is one of the greatest failures that your government, I think, is responsible for. We face, in urban municipalities, a major need of rebuilding our municipal infrastructure which is now reaching crisis proportions. We know, everyone knows that, and I think you know that.

If this need continues to be ignored for any further length of time, the costs will increase dramatically, and some infrastructure is going to literally collapse, and our communities will not be able to catch up before there is a crisis.

And yet for two years your budget has not addressed this problem. This is really quite unexplainable, that you would not address the problem, knowing what the facts and what the reality is. The need is there; the problem grows. The economy is sluggish, and the program of capital rebuilding of our infrastructure in the cities could be a major stimulus. It could help the unemployment situation in a very massive way, and rather than make-work projects of questionable value which your government is now sponsoring, putting money into the capital funding of municipalities would create meaningful work and projects that would be . . . that are necessary and long standing. No capital fund this year, Mr. Minister, shows absolute no leadership when it

comes to this major issue.

Now I know you're aware of this. I simply want to know: why has it not been addressed in this budget so that the capital infrastructure crisis that is facing municipalities out there could be addressed by them? Surely in your budget you could have found some money to meet this problem, because by not doing it, it's going to cost more money because of inflation and because of further deterioration.

You promised, in your last estimates in 1987, that you would be looking into this problem and likely have an announcement. We're still waiting for that announcement, Mr. Minister. Can you tell us where it is?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, before I address that last topic, which to some degree I certainly have to agree with the member, I just want to finish off on the business tax and say, let's wait and see. And if it turns out to be the disaster that he indicates it will, then it's fair to say that the NDP can lean on me, and I'll accept that. But if it's false, it's highly unlikely that we'll get any credit from the NDP. But our aim as government is to satisfy the local governments and the business community, and I hope that the consultation process will lead to that satisfaction.

Regarding the capital grants, in 1979 when the times were good, that program was done away with by the NDP. That was in good times. We found ourselves in a time of restraint. We removed it one year. We hoped to get it back. We found that we were in a position that we couldn't — has extended at least into this budget.

But I do agree with the member that if it continues too long that we could suffer some more expensive problems as a result of that delay. I do agree with the member that it is a good source of generating employment, and I can assure the member that it is a major concern of this government, and I hope that we find ourselves to be in a position to address that very, very soon. You bring up a very valid point.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Well it's nice . . . it's very nice to know that the minister recognized the problem. It's unfortunate the minister doesn't recognize it is time for a solution to the problem.

This is a situation that can't wait. We have communities throughout Saskatchewan whose sewage disposal systems are such that they're ready to fall apart, and some of them in fact have fallen apart. There are environmental problems. There are problems of getting this sewage disposed of, Mr. Minister. It's not a tomorrow problem, it's a today problem, and therefore there has to be a solution today. And so I would urge the government to act quickly.

I can also take this opportunity to assure those communities throughout Saskatchewan that one of the highest priorities of a New Democratic government would be to address the infrastructure and capital funding these problems of municipalities in Saskatchewan. And there is no doubt about it, and we wouldn't dilly-dally around for two years the way you're doing it and letting it

all fall apart.

Well I think strong leadership would be putting all kinds of strong pressures on the federal government, which also has some responsibility here, Mr. Minister. I want to ask you: what initiatives have you taken with the federal government in the form of communications, formal communications, to get them to act and carry out that responsibility which they have and which the Canadian federation of municipalities has urged them to do?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — The provincial ministers from across Canada, with the exception of Saskatchewan because I was here and we were in session last summer, met and have pressed the issue with the federal government. I join in with the provincial ministers across the country and certainly hope that the federal government finds themselves in a position to assist the provinces if they can.

None the less, again I have to agree with the member that whether the federal government is a player in this or not, the provincial government will try to address this need just as soon as our resources allow us to do that.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Minister, simply joining with others isn't good enough. In this province, traditionally we've provided the leadership. Now have you got any proposals which you have made or you're prepared to make to the federal level which will provide that kind of leadership?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I find myself in an awkward position to spearhead a movement across the country. I think all I can do is join in. We have the province of Quebec where municipalities are a couple of hundred years old; certainly I don't have that argument to present, and to some degree we're fortunate that way. Our municipalities are not that old, but by the same token we recognize that their infrastructure problems have to be dealt with and resolved just as soon as we can help them do that.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Now, Mr. Minister, I just want to underline, in leaving this topic, that that's not good enough. If we in Saskatchewan have known Urban Affairs ministers and provincial governments who have led the way, and therefore have been the model for the rest of Canada in many situations, this is a good example in which you could have . . . your government could provide that positive example and that positive model by showing some initiative and some leadership and making some proposals.

If every minister across Canada, which seems to be the case, simply says, well I'm going to join with the others, nothing is ever going to happen. And that seems to be the position you're taking; you're waiting for somebody else to do it. That's not going to happen that way.

I urge you, Mr. Minister, and I urge your government to provide some leadership and take some initiative in this area so that it can be dealt with. Unless that happens, the federal government is going to continue to say, go away; we don't care. Obviously all you can do is join together and have nice little dinners and chit-chats, but nothing ever comes forward. Now that's a prescription for failure,

and that's why you've failed so far.

Now I want to ask you about another failure. There is a case of where students used to be employed by local governments, a very important employment program for students in the summer-time, employing up to 4,000 students, I believe. Your government cancelled that program, eliminating the opportunity for those young people to have jobs in their communities.

I will have a brief question on that, and here it is, Mr. Minister. On October 29 in your estimates, same day as I referred to earlier, you said, when you were questioned by my colleague, the member from Victoria: I will surely make representation on behalf of the municipalities to see if they could participate in this program. Mr. Minister, what happened? Why did you fail on this one?

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I suppose that all I can say there is that those representations were made, as the member knows. That program is in another department, and I can't answer and respond for the other minister.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Well here's an example of another joining together, you know. The minister, Mr. Chairman, joined together with the other ministers. He didn't show any leadership at all. I mean, that's the problem here. We need somebody who will take some initiative and put some pressure on and make some demands and get some action. Now it may be very easy for the minister to deal with the mad dog situation because he didn't have to deal with anybody. When it comes to dealing with his other colleagues, he can't seem to perform.

(1245)

Now, Mr. Chairman, I have a great deal of questions to ask, as is displayed by the files I have here, which I want to pursue on the question of store hours and business tax and the question of the ward system when we debate the Bill, both in the second reading debate and in the committee. And I forewarned the minister that he could be here a long time because there are 26 of my colleagues who want to ask him questions, which they will, and many of the things I would normally have covered under these estimates will be covered when we get to the Bill. And so because of those . . . because the Bill is in this House, and because there is a revenue-sharing Bill as well in which I can address questions there, I'm prepared today to get us go subvote by subvote on the Department of Urban Affairs estimates at the present item.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 17 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 24 agreed to.

**Consolidated Fund Loans, Advances and Investments  
Urban Affairs  
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 162**

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 162 agreed to.

**Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure  
The Local Government Board  
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 22**

Items 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 22 agreed to.

**Mr. Chairman:** — That concludes estimates then for the Local Government Board, and I would like to thank the minister and his officials for attending.

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Mr. Chairman, I too would like to thank my officials. They do a great job in conducting the affairs of the department, in setting up the meetings with SUMA, supplying us with the information.

I apologize for the little bit of time that it took to read that print-out earlier, but we will supply you with the entire print-out that you look for, and I thank my officials.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — I would like to also say my thanks to the officials. I have, from time to time, met them in . . . in particular at the last regional meeting and other places, and they've always been courteous and helpful when necessary, and I want to express my appreciation to them.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly recessed until 2 p.m.