

The Assembly met 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Acting Clerk: — Pursuant to rule 11(7), I have examined the following petition and found it to be in order:

Of certain residents of the province of Saskatchewan praying that the Legislative Assembly may be pleased to urge the Government of Saskatchewan to stop its policy of spending tax dollars frivolously on the Future Corporation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and to other members of the Legislative Assembly, some 38 students from St. Pius School, grade 7, who are sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. I will be meeting with them after question period for pictures and drinks and to attempt to answer any questions the children may have. And I'd like to ask the other members of the Legislative Assembly to join in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and to the other members of the Assembly, through you, 20 students from Rosemont School in Regina. They're seated up in the east gallery. They're accompanied today by their chaperons, Mrs. Petrisor and Mrs. Lafrance.

And I'm sure that all members of the Legislative Assembly want to welcome the students here. And I particularly want to welcome them here on this the last day of school. I hope you give them a welcome to which they are accustomed.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple of young students in your gallery this afternoon that I would like to introduce to you through the members of the Assembly. They are part of the Rotary Youth Exchange students, and one, the host here in Saskatchewan, is a Miss Sherry Heal, who is a constituent of mine in Regina South. And she is entertaining Miss Claire Mengelberg from Eikanlaan, Holland. And Claire just arrived from Holland and will be with us until the end of July, at which time Sherry will return to Holland for the month of August.

So I will meet with these two young ladies after question period and have a picture or two and some remembrances and discussions, but in the meantime I ask all members to welcome them to our Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martin: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and to the members of the House, Saskatchewan's Junior Citizen of the Year, Casi Brennan, and sitting in your gallery along with her mother and father. Would you please stand up, Casi Brennan, along with John and Phyllis Brennan. Thank you very much. Casi, you please still stay standing. I'd just like to say a few words about you.

She's a grade 12 student at Marian High School, having just graduated this year, was given this honour as Saskatchewan Junior Citizen of the Year for extensive school and community work. As one might suspect, Mr. Speaker, she had an average of 88 graduating from high school.

She has a list of community projects that's very extensive; I'd just like to mention a couple. She organized Students Opposing Drug Abuse, or SODA, two years ago with a small group of students that's now grown to nearly 100 of Marian High School. In addition, Casi and her friends have spoken to groups of students throughout southern Saskatchewan about this important program. And another of her community involvements is the Jean Vanier (swim) Program, in which mentally and physically handicapped children are given swimming lessons.

Mr. Speaker, Casi Brennan has been an active young lady and has made a substantial contribution to her school and to her community, and certainly a worthy recipient of Saskatchewan Junior Citizen of the Year. Please welcome her here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the words of the Minister of Urban Affairs in wishing our greetings to the guests from the Netherlands. Dutch is my mother tongue, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to give it a try. It may not be recognizable to anyone who speaks good Dutch, but I do want to say . . . (The hon. member extended greetings in Dutch).

Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my seat mate, the member for Melville, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, a group of 22 grade 3 and 4 students from the Lemberg School. They are seated in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker, and they are accompanied today by their teachers, Rebecca Maurer and Roberta Laminman (excuse my pronunciation); and as well their bus driver, Merv Stoll.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the member for Melville today is at home in his constituency at the grand opening of the Rail City Industry Group Home, and for that reason he was not able to introduce his guests. But he did ask me, Mr. Speaker, to pass on best wishes to all of the students from the great school of Lemberg. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Development of Environmental Strategy re Rafferty Dam Project

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Environment and Public Safety. Mr. Minister, as you are no doubt aware, earlier this week your Premier preached co-operation in regards to the development of an environmental strategy for Canada, instead of preaching the kind of confrontation as did the Premier of Alberta.

In keeping with that spirit of co-operation, Mr. Minister, will you here today in this House assure us that you and the Premier of this province, along with the Premier of Manitoba and the Environment minister of Manitoba, will enjoin the federal Minister of the Environment to call for a complete, scientifically credible hearing into the Rafferty-Alameda project?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that the project that the hon. member indicates has been studied extensively. The federal government is now doing its environmental hearings, and they indicate that they will make the decision whether they're going to go ahead with any further public inquiries following that.

I'm going to indicate to the House that we intend just to wait and let the federal process work. We don't at this time intend to go any further with the project. I believe it's had all the study it needs. Our people are very satisfied, and as the hearings have shown in south-western Saskatchewan where the project will be situated, and again in Minot, the people most affected are very much encouraging the project to go ahead, and I believe that that's the way it should stay.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — New question to the same minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you are probably the only one in this country that's satisfied with the studies that you and your department have carried out.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, the Premier of Manitoba, Environment Canada, the Minister of the Environment from Manitoba, we on this side of the House, the Leader of the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan, thousands of other people in this province are not satisfied with the job you've done, Mr. Minister. In that regard, the Premier of Manitoba has called for a full and complete and scientifically credible study of this project, given your hypocrisy and your failure in delivering it to the people of Manitoba as well as the people of Saskatchewan.

Are you prepared today, sir, are you now prepared today to say that this matter should be referred to the Canada-United States International Joint Commission for a proper and credible adjudication? Will you do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Mr. Speaker, the member says that I'm the only one in the province that is in agreement. Perhaps the hon. member should realize that the wildlife federations in south-east Saskatchewan — and there are a number of them — have all come out strongly supportive of the project. The city of Estevan and the other smaller towns around have all indicated they're very much in support. So for the member to make the kind of statements that he's making here, they are simply not credible statements.

I was rather surprised to hear that the hon. member feels that he has the authority to speak for the Leader of the Liberal Party. I just wonder how the Liberal Party will feel about that. But, Mr. Speaker, that authority is probably about as credible as a lot of the other authority that this member takes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — New question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, I hope you realize, sir, that it's a Progressive Conservative Premier of Manitoba who's called for the kind of co-operation which the Progressive Conservative Premier of Saskatchewan avowedly and apparently supports. Why don't you, sir, support that kind of co-operation?

Mr. Minister, how can you stand here with the audacity to say that you are satisfied, when nobody else is, including your own Premier and including the PC Premier of Manitoba? Is this just another example of your mentality of cover-up and hypocrisy in dealing with the Rafferty-Alameda project?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Mr. Speaker, at no time in this province has there been any cover-up. We have done as much study as any project that has ever taken place in this province. There has been very wide study and very wide public input into the Rafferty-Alameda project, enough that we licensed it and the federal government licensed it.

Now it was turned over by a court ruling that the federal government must do more work, and they're undertaking that work. We're going to wait for that work to be finalized.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — A very short supplementary. Mr. Minister, a very short question to you, sir. Was your Premier grandstanding for the cameras in Camrose, Alberta when he said he was going to have co-operation in this matter? Was he grandstanding or does he speak for the government, and is he undercutting you, sir, for your speaking on environmental matters?

It seems to me there is a great discrepancy what he says in Camrose and what you're saying in this House. Would you clear it up, please, for us?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Mr. Speaker, I was not in Camrose at the meeting. I did not see the Premier on television. What the Premier said was whatever he felt that he should say. But what I'm saying to you now is the position that the Department of Environment has taken, and that's the position we'll stay with.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Plans of Future Corporation

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the minister responsible for the Seniors' Directorate, I'll direct my question to the deputy leader. Mr. Minister, at the annual convention of the Saskatchewan Seniors Association last week in Prince Albert they passed a resolution, by a very large majority, calling on the provincial government to cancel your plans for the 85th birthday celebration next year. And, Mr. Minister, you have been told by teachers, rural municipalities, and now by seniors, that they don't want your birthday bash. Are you going to listen to them, or are you going to continue to tell the people that they don't know what they're talking about?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I know that members opposite have done their level best to try and discredit the Future Corporation and portray it as a birthday party.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, is it is anything but a birthday party. Let me try to describe for you what a birthday party is, Mr. Speaker. A birthday party was Celebrate Saskatchewan of 1980, where members opposite spent about \$12 million to have a real celebration. About the only thing that came out of that, Mr. Speaker, was that people got together and had a good time and felt good about themselves, and land bank gave everybody in the province a hat that they wouldn't wear. And that's a birthday party, Mr. Speaker. That was a birthday party put on by members opposite.

Now let's talk, let's talk about in the member from Quill Lakes' constituency. In the member from Quill Lakes' constituency, Mr. Speaker, there is in fact a project that was announced just two or three days ago that I think he was at; he was invited. And it's a school of the future, Mr. Speaker, funded by the Future Corporation and the local school board, Mr. Speaker. I can bring letters of support from teachers, from R.M.s, from all kinds of associations that support the Future Corporation, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Speaker, if they need new schools in the province it should be funded through the Department of Education.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Smart: — I have a new question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, when you announced that birthday celebration you announced it as that, and I want to remind you that it was the seniors who built up this province. If what we

needed was a birthday celebration, they would be the first ones to agree with you, but they see greater needs. Their resolution is calling on your government to direct that money to hospitals and to health care facilities. And my question is: are you going to tell our seniors that it's more important to have a space ship and a robot on tour than it is to have adequate health care facilities?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I don't know if there was a question there, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if there was a question there. But let me go back to a couple of the projects that have been announced by — I think there is something like 50 projects — announced now by the Future Corporation, Mr. Speaker, and it's really quite an exciting thing. There will be a technology mobile display that will go to, I don't know, maybe a hundred communities in Saskatchewan, taking things like communications technologies and energy options technologies and agricultural technologies all over the province, Mr. Speaker. The communities that those trailers will be visiting are very excited about this possibility, Mr. Speaker.

There's a thing over here call the science centre — I don't know, over here — a science centre, Mr. Speaker, that hundreds and hundreds of people have already visited even though it's not officially opened, Mr. Speaker. And that is a very exciting offshoot, Mr. Speaker, of the Future Corporation, among others.

Now she says, where is the support . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Smart: — I have a new question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, if you were listening, you would have heard that I had a question to you on behalf of the seniors of this province who would like an answer to that question.

Now, Mr. Minister, people are telling you that poverty is a problem in Saskatchewan, and you are saying that city people can't budget. Statistics are showing that the wage gap is widening between men and women, and your party is saying that women are choosing low paying jobs. Over 70 per cent are telling you not to privatize the natural gas, and you say they just don't know what's good for them. Two courts tell you that the Rafferty project violates federal laws and you say it's all a . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The hon. member is introducing a great deal of information in her preamble and she's going to elicit a very long answer if she does that, and I would like her to get to the question.

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Speaker, the question . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Speaker, the question has to do with listening to the people of Saskatchewan. When are you going to listen to them and especially to our seniors who want universally funded health care facilities and not a birthday bash.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I think the seniors in Saskatchewan are very appreciative of things like the heritage grant that was initiated by this government; of things, Mr. Speaker, like nursing homes, integrated facilities. They had a moratorium on nursing homes, I don't know how long, Mr. Speaker, five or six years, didn't build . . .

An Hon. Member: — Eleven years.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Eleven years? Didn't build one, Mr. Speaker. Compare that to almost, I think, 2,000 beds — am I right? — during the first seven years of this government. I think the seniors appreciate that, Mr. Speaker.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I'm told that Mr. Fred Herron of the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) has written a letter to, I think, Cliff Wright, the president of the Future Corporation, telling him how much he appreciates the financial support that the Future Corporation is giving to education projects, Mr. Speaker.

She, just a minute ago, was standing up there talking about the lack of support from the teachers. Mr. Speaker, they endorse, they endorse the concept of the Future Corporation.

She talks about two courts overturning — this is in answer to her question — two courts overturning the Rafferty-Alameda project and yanking the licence, Mr. Speaker. Well I can tell you 17 presentations at Oxbow out of 17 supported the Rafferty-Alameda project.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Regulations Regarding Private Vocational Schools

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education. And let me tell the Minister of Education that at Easter council the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation passed a resolution telling the provincial government to do away with the Future Corporation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — I ask the minister not to listen to the Deputy Premier because you're going to get false information.

Mr. Minister, you will be aware of the explosive growth of private vocational schools in this province that have taken place, and you'll also be aware of the vast number of students who have not graduated but have registered at those schools. In fact, Mr. Minister, at Bridge City College, in one course two out of 46 students graduated, while in another course seven out of 21 graduated.

Mr. Minister, my question to you is this: since these students are eligible for student loans, and thereby the people of this province are paying for those courses, can you tell me, Mr. Minister, what regulations you have in place that will make absolutely certain that these students are not being ripped off, and that they will be receiving value for their money?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, there are approximately 50 private vocational school across the province with about 5,000 young people enrolled in courses at those schools. I, like everyone else, I think, in the province, (a) wants to see those students who are interested in taking a course at those colleges have the opportunity. At the same time, we want to make sure that those courses are legitimate and indeed that quality-control role is vested with the Department of Education.

Is there need for us to do perhaps a better job in regulating private vocational schools, Mr. Speaker? That may well be the case. Because I think it's worthy of investigation, I put in place a committee some several months ago to investigate just that point. At the same time, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we ought not paint all 50 schools with the same brush because a number of those schools have a long-standing history of providing high quality education.

There is no question that one school has had many concerns raised about it, both by faculty and by students. I consider those concerns very serious ones. Because of that, Mr. Chairman, my departmental officials are very actively investigating all of those complaints that have been raised around that school, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — New question to the minister. Mr. Minister, I note how you very carefully avoided the question. I asked about regulations that were in place. Mr. Minister, my understanding is that about the only regulation that you have in place is that the schools, the private schools must post a bond of between five and \$10,000. That is not difficult to do, Mr. Minister, when the schools are charging well in advance of \$3,000 of tuition fees. They can easily post those bonds.

Mr. Minister, are you aware that Bridge City College was offering a class, charging \$3,000 per person, on speech communication for business professional practices? They were offering a course of \$2,160 for a 72-hour course in acting, or \$3,600 charge in a care companion course to train people to help others dress and wash, to read to the employer, to push wheelchairs, and to drive the employer in cars. Are you aware that students were receiving student loans for these, and do you believe, Mr. Minister, that these students are getting value for their money? Is that your opinion?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure exactly what the course offerings have been at the school. I can tell you this, that there have been complaints, complaints that merit investigation, and those complaints are being investigated very aggressively and actively by departmental officials, Mr. Speaker, not only from the standpoint of the quality of the course offerings, but as well relative to student aid and whether that's been judiciously handled at the college, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — New question to the minister. Mr. Minister, you licensed Bridge City College a year and a half ago. You told the people that you had assessed their curriculum. Now you tell me you are reassessing that curriculum. If, Mr. Minister, you had done a job in the first place, some of these courses which are useless and will not guarantee the students' employment would not have been permitted — would not have been permitted.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, not only hundreds of thousands, but I would guess millions of dollars have been given by the people of this province to students of Bridge City College, and they are getting worthless, worthless courses and no opportunity for employment.

I'm asking you again, Mr. Minister: will you please speed up the investigation? Now! Do it immediately and give it high priority so that no more students will get ripped off in these courses that really do give them absolutely no opportunity and no chances for employment. Will you do that now?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, because there were complaints raised some time ago, if my memory serves me correctly, I think my officials were investigating Bridge City as early as March, some three or four months ago, number one.

Based on their initial investigations, indeed in some courses — I can't say all, but in some courses — enrolments were frozen, Mr. Speaker, because there was an investigation under way. And all I can say to the member opposite again is that we consider this a serious situation and are investigating it; officials are investigating it as aggressively and actively as they can, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — New question to the minister. Mr. Minister, you will also be aware that when you reorganized SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), approximately 1,100 courses, student places were cancelled. For the first time in history also we have quotas at the university.

Is it the policy of your government to make certain that students cannot get into SIAST and cannot get into universities in order that you can provide aid for the establishment of more private vocational schools?

Mr. Minister, that is exactly what is happening. More and more of our students are forced to go to these private schools. You have no regulations to make absolutely certain that these courses are worthwhile, and I believe, Mr. Minister, the reason that you are doing it is exactly because you are accomplishing what you want to do, and that is to aid the set-up of more private vocational schools in this province. Is that not the main reason why you're

not acting?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — No, Mr. Speaker. The whole reform agenda on post-secondary education was predicated on offering more university and technical institute programming to more young people right across the province. That's why we have regional colleges, as opposed to community colleges, into delivering university first and second year standardized arts and sciences classes across the province. I know it might upset the members opposite that they're out of aerobic dancing and basket weaving, but that's what the people of the province told us clearly in consultations we had across the province.

And I ask you, Mr. Speaker, why would I want to take this educational system on behalf of parents and young people across the province back to the dark days of the NDP when we had less than 37,000 young people enrolled in post-secondary education, and last year in this province we had over 60,000? Now I ask you, which one is working?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — I have a question to the Minister of Education. Mr. Minister, can you tell us how many of these young people that are attending some of these private vocational schools are literally being forced into those schools because Social Services wishes to get them off the welfare rolls? And can you tell us how many of these young people are being forced into these schools because your government has cut training spaces at Kelsey institute and your government has forced universities to put enrolment quotas at the university?

What you are doing, Mr. Minister, is taking the most alienated and dispossessed people and putting them in a situation where they can never, ever go to a bona fide post-secondary institution because they defaulted on those student loans. And I think, Mr. Minister, you should be held accountable for that, and you better put regulations in place to protect the young people of our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I think the differences between the NDP and ourselves relative to welfare reform are well known in this legislature. They want to keep people on the treadmill of welfare.

Our approach is, Mr. Speaker, to try and give them that quality of life that comes with job training, that comes with having education and all that that can lead to. And in fact I was just at a SSDP (Saskatchewan skills development program) class this morning where that kind of thing is going on, Mr. Speaker, relative to universities and university enrolments.

The hon. member can engage in all the rhetoric she likes, Mr. Speaker, but I ask you, do we want to go back in this province to the time and place when we had no technical institute at Prince Albert? The opposition did not build a

technical institute campus in Prince Albert. The Devine administration . . . Sorry, Mr. Speaker. This administration built that.

Mr. Speaker, do we want to go back in a time when there were 7,000 less young people going to universities across this province? No, Mr. Speaker. Do we want to go back to a time when our regional colleges didn't have that mandate? Do we want to go back into a time when they did not build the new agriculture college at the University of Saskatchewan? I say no, Mr. Speaker.

Our record stands. We're proud of it, and we'll do more, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, prior to orders of the day, I would like to make a very short and brief statement respecting a note that was passed in the legislature two nights ago, and I would seek leave of the Assembly to do so.

Leave granted.

STATEMENT

Regarding a Note Passed in the Assembly

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, two nights ago, and as subsequently reported in the media, a note was passed to the member for Cumberland in this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I have thoroughly investigated this matter and I want to give the House . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I believe we should . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order. I believe we should allow the hon. member to proceed with his statement, and of course if another member wishes to respond, he'll have that opportunity. But let's give him the opportunity to make his remarks on an important issue.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, I have thoroughly investigated the matter within our caucus and I want to give you, Mr. Speaker, and all members of this Assembly my assurance that no note was sent from this side of the House from any member to the member for Cumberland.

And, Mr. Speaker, in fact it has been confirmed that the note did not come from a member but did come from some visitor to the gallery, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that this is important to clear the air on this subject. We all respect in this House that the galleries here are public, but, Mr. Speaker, I once again confirm that, contrary to any allegations, I give this House my assurance that the note was not sent from any member on this side of the House.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Melfort isn't any better as an investigator than he is as a House Leader. Mr. Member . . . if the member . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member for Meadow Lake . . . could I have the attention of the hon. member, and could I have the attention of all hon. members. And let us give the opportunity for the member for Regina Centre now to . . .

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Member, you have overlooked the fact that there were two notes delivered separately. One of them might have come from outside the Assembly and one of them might not have. You only mentioned one note. Mr. Minister, your shallow investigation is part of the problem. Mr. Member, until you investigate the matter thoroughly, a cloud will remain over this Assembly, and over that side of the Assembly, I say.

Mr. Member, your investigation isn't complete. You didn't deal with both notes. And I say, Mr. Member, the cloud still hangs over your caucus notwithstanding that statement. That statement simply doesn't adequately deal with the problem.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Point of order. I think in fairness to all members of this Assembly, there's been allegations of a second note. We have not seen the second note and . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I think that the best thing we can do now is to just remain calm and allow the member to complete his remarks, and if anybody wants to make a remark . . . but I don't think we should be interrupting each other and introducing a great deal of heat and confusion into the House at this time. And I ask the hon. member to just contain himself.

Mr. Shillington: — Just let me respond briefly to the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden. The kindest thing I can say about you is that you might not have been in the Assembly when it happened. Mr. Finance Minister, the member from the Battlefords, in dealing with it, clearly stated there were two notes which were delivered separately. I can excuse your ignorance, Mr. Member, because I don't think you were in the House. It's a great deal harder to excuse the Acting House Leader, the member from Melfort, who should have known there were two notes delivered separately, different handwriting.

The Speaker: — Order, order. We will now move on to further business.

Order, order. I've indicated a couple of minutes ago, I've indicated a couple minutes ago that — order — that this is an emotional issue we're dealing with. It doesn't do anything for members on both sides of the House to hurl accusations and insults at each other over this issue.

Members on both sides gave their remarks, and I think it would behoove the House at this time to simply leave it at that, leave it at that at this time. And as I said earlier, as I said earlier — order, order — I believe that it's in the best interests of this House that if we move on to other business and we stop hurling insults and accusations

across the floor, so let's just . . . The member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster, I'm calling him to order and I ask him to respond to the Chair.

Now we will now move on to further business. The further business being . . .

Mr. Anguish: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — What's your point of order?

Mr. Anguish: — I want to make a correction. The hon. member from Regina Centre said that on the night that was in question it was drawn to attention that I mentioned both documents in the House that night. I did not mention both documents that night. I mentioned one . . .

The Speaker: — Order. It is not a point an order, it's a dispute between two members.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 67 — An Act respecting Gaming and the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand today to give second reading to a Bill with regard to the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission.

Mr. Speaker, I've placed before the Assembly a Bill which establishes the legal framework and authority for the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission. The proposed Act represents the next stage in the evolution of gaming policy in Saskatchewan. The proposed legislation reflects the growing importance of charitable gaming activity and the paramount importance of public protection coupled with a guarantee of the games' integrity.

Hon. members will appreciate that the province has the responsibility to regulate gaming under the provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada, specifically — bingos, raffles, break-opens, and casinos. The dramatic increase in gaming activities of all kinds and their importance in generating revenue for charities require clear, effective controls and ongoing policy development.

The primary recommendation of the Saskatchewan commercial bingo inquiry was that this control be placed in the hands of an arm's-length authority such as the proposed Saskatchewan Gaming Commission. The proposed commission will provide a more viable and stable framework for the ongoing and effective regulation of gaming in the province.

Mr. Speaker, our purpose in bringing forth the proposed legislation is fourfold. First, the proposed Act establishes a commission which is able to administer the licensing powers delegated to it under section 207 of the Criminal Code of Canada. The main provision of the proposed Act includes commission organization and administration, commission powers, hearing and appeals procedures, and the setting of fees.

Second, the proposed Act provides a framework for the issuing of licences by local authorities and will clarify their relationship to the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission. Limits are set on the value, the number, and the frequency with which local authorities may issue licences.

(1445)

Third, the proposed Act provides the commission with powers to regulate other aspects of gaming for which section 207 of the Criminal Code does not provide authority and which have escaped regulation up to now. Provisions in the proposed Act will allow regulation of gaming premises, professional operators of gaming events, paid personnel, and suppliers of gaming equipment, materials, and supplies.

And fourth, the proposed Act provides the commission with the capability to run gaming enterprises on the government's behalf where authorized to do so by cabinet. I want to make it clear to all hon. members that the use of slot machines will not be allowed under the currently proposed legislation.

Mr. Speaker, gaming in Saskatchewan has literally taken off in recent years. In 1981 Saskatchewan people spent less than \$11 million on bingos, raffles, casino games, and break-opens. By 1988 spending on gaming activities in the province increased 20 times to more than \$200,000 million.

I'm sure hon. members understand that many worthy charitable and community organizations in Saskatchewan rely upon the revenues generated by legitimate gaming activities. Last year gaming generated more than \$34 million for Saskatchewan charities.

The proposed Act ensures charities get their fair share of gaming revenues through more effective sources of inspection and regulation. Mr. Speaker, the proposed Act provides the commission with the authority to register landlords of premises where gaming is conducted; suppliers of lotteries, gaming equipment, and materials; and operators of lotteries, bingos, and casinos.

These comprehensive registration requirements will allow the commission to suspend by deregistration those who attempt to abuse provincial gaming regulations. The commission thereby maintains the integrity of gaming in Saskatchewan without hurting the charitable organizations that so greatly benefit from gaming revenues.

Mr. Speaker, public confidence and the integrity of gaming is fundamental to a healthy industry. This public confidence is directly related to the protection of all who have a stake in gaming: the charitable groups, as I mentioned, who sponsor and benefit from gaming in Saskatchewan; the players who expect fair games run by reputable people; and commercial operators who expect a reasonable return on their investments and efforts.

Mr. Speaker, The Saskatchewan Gaming Commission Act reflects extensive public consultations and careful

study of gaming regulation in other jurisdictions. The Bill will allow Saskatchewan to assume a leadership role in Canada with respect to the supervision of gaming operations.

The proposed Act will also ensure that new fund-raising opportunities which may appear through electronic bingo, for example, are permitted only under the supervision of the Gaming Commission.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the specific questions and comments of hon. members during committee study of the Bill. I now move second reading of The Saskatchewan Gaming Commission Act.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the close of my comments today I will be seeking an adjournment of the debate. I would like some further opportunity to consider what the minister has said in his introductory comments in this second reading debate, and I know that there must be some consultation done beyond this House in regard to the provisions of this Bill. And so at the close of my remarks today I will be seeking an adjournment, and I do not anticipate that my remarks today will be lengthy.

Mr. Speaker, I think that just the short review of the legislation indicates there are three basic components, and the minister in his remarks has touched on those components. As I read this legislation, a significant component of the legislation is to provide for the activities and the responsibilities of the Gaming Commission itself, and in that component of the legislation there can be no objection, no objection.

I think we all recognize in this House, and beyond, we all recognize the presence of gambling in our society and communities. We recognize that it has grown phenomenally, particularly in the decade of the '80s. We recognize the presence of the bingo halls and the break-opens and the casinos and so on, and there can be no objection, no objection to the Gaming Commission, the concept of the Gaming Commission and the concept of regulation.

We are talking of course, Mr. Speaker, about a substantial amount of money, as the minister pointed out — I think in the neighbourhood of some \$200 million now being spent in the province on gambling. And so the notion of a Gaming Commission will not meet with any objection here, and this legislation will set out the activities and the responsibilities of that commission. There may be some discussion about why the Gaming Commission should be a Crown corporation. There may be some discussion about specifics and specific activities, but generally no objection here.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the second component of this legislation, as I read it, will provide to the Gaming Commission and to the government the power and the responsibility now to extend licensing and regulation to the suppliers of gambling activity. And the good example, of course, is the operator of the bingo halls.

For the first time, the government now will have the opportunity to license and to regulate, not simply the

charities who are conducting the gambling activity, but the facilities, and the owners and operators of the facilities and the staff.

Again, Mr. Speaker, no one can object. In fact, in my few contacts that I have made since the tabling of the Bill with people involved in the business, those who are reputable, those who are legitimate have no concern. In fact, they welcome this, and I'm sure that players in the province, consumers, and our society generally welcomes this development.

Mr. Speaker, my disappointment in this legislation is in the third component, and it is beyond me a little, why in fact this third component is part of this same Bill. For the third component of this Bill raises some very significant questions and concerns. Those first two components of this piece of legislation have to do with regulation. The third component of this legislation has to do with the expansion of gambling in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I would have much preferred, we would have much preferred, and I'm sure the people of Saskatchewan would have much preferred, to see a Bill that dealt specifically with regulation, with regulation of gambling in our province, and then if it was the government's desire to move into the expansion of gambling opportunities in Saskatchewan, to see that in a separate piece of legislation. And so the debate could be reasonable.

What we have is a Bill that combines both, the first two components having to do with the regulation of gambling activity, but the third component of this Bill, the component that raises the significant questions and concerns, and I'm sure the component of the legislation around which the debate will occur, is this third component.

Mr. Speaker, to be clear, what the government intends to do with part VII of this legislation, it seeks to introduce an expansion of gambling opportunities in the province of Saskatchewan through the introduction of electronic gambling. It seeks to accomplish that expansion with legislating the opportunity for the Government of Saskatchewan, through the Gaming Commission, to conduct and operate gambling opportunities in the province.

That's what this legislation permits, Mr. Speaker. It introduces electronic gambling, and because of requirements of the Criminal Code, therefore legitimizes the Government of Saskatchewan to conduct and to operate gambling in the province of Saskatchewan. And the illustrations would be the electronic bingo — which the minister has talked about, keno, perhaps electronic poker, and the slot machines. This legislation does not preclude slot machines, Mr. Speaker. Let's be clear about that.

And I would assume therefore from the legislation, that if the government is providing the legislative means for itself to conduct and operate gambling in the province, then therefore they would anticipate receiving the revenues from gambling directly to government.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have in this legislation a very significant change to the process of gambling in Saskatchewan. As you well know, Mr. Speaker, and all members of the House know, currently all the gambling activity conducted in the province of Saskatchewan is conducted by charitable organizations, service clubs, non-profit organizations. All of the gambling, including the bingo halls, are licensed; the bingos are licensed to charitable organizations.

The provincial lottery is conducted not by government, Mr. Speaker, not by government, but by non-profit organizations through Sask Sport — cultural and sporting and recreational organizations. It's not a government lottery; it's a lottery conducted by non-profit organizations in the province.

The casinos that now exist in the province are operated by the exhibition boards, the non-profit exhibition boards.

What we have now, Mr. Speaker, is an entirely new player on the gambling scene, that player being the Government of Saskatchewan — playing now with electronic games.

And so the questions, Mr. Speaker, as I see them, and the questions that need to be addressed in this debate, questions that we will want to put to the minister, but the questions that also I believe should receive wide public debate before this legislation gets passed, are these.

Number one, is it the proper role of government to be directly involved in gambling, as this legislation permits? Is that the proper role for government in a society? Is it the proper role of government to be searching for revenue by promoting gambling in our society?

Mr. Speaker, the question needs to be asked: is it the proper role . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. There seems to be a sub-debate beginning on an original issue which I think is best left alone, and let's listen to the remarks of the hon. member from Moose Jaw South.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this debate, I believe these questions must be answered, and questions that will be discussed generally in the province. Is it the proper role of government to be seeking to fund vital services through the proceeds of gambling? Those are very significant questions.

This legislation now before us will provide the opportunity for the Government of Saskatchewan, through the Gaming Commission, to be directly involved in gambling. The question that must be asked: is it the proper role of government to be involved in gaming, in gambling?

Mr. Speaker, I suspect — I suspect — the government opposite has some dollar signs in their eyes. I suspect that in gambling they see a source of revenue. Now we know that the government is desperately short of cash. We know that, Mr. Speaker; that's not debatable. I suspect they see in gambling a new source of revenue that hopefully they think can sort of fix their cash flow

situations by reaching into that gambling pool.

Is that appropriate, Mr. Speaker? Is it appropriate for government to be funding itself on the proceeds of gambling? That's a question that needs to be asked, and a question that needs to be answered.

Mr. Speaker, when an individual finds himself or herself in financial difficulty, there is often a temptation, often a temptation to turn to gambling as a way out of that financial bind.

I have a sense this government has found itself in a financial difficulty and is looking to gambling as a way to raise revenues to try and ease its financial bind. Well it rarely works for an individual, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think it's going to work for a government. It's a fundamental question: should government be funding its operations with gambling?

And, Mr. Minister, when government becomes a direct player in gambling, then we have government with vested interest in promoting gambling. Is that appropriate, Mr. Speaker? Is it appropriate that government should have such a tie, such a vested interest to promoting gambling in our society?

There's a second concern and a second number of questions that need to be asked. When this government, through this legislation, begins to move directly into gambling, into conducting and operating gambling in our province, what is the effect on the charities, on the service organizations, on the non-profit groups who now are dependent on gambling funds for their revenues? What is the effect of having the Government of Saskatchewan in direct competition for the gambling dollar? What is the effect on the charities? What is the effect of having the Gaming Commission operating its own show down the road in competition, in competition to the local charities and service organizations? I mean, is that the role for government? Is it the role of government to be in direct competition to the charities for the gaming dollar?

And, Mr. Speaker, this legislation is very, very, very nebulous, and I see it as giving to the Government of Saskatchewan, the present and future governments, more or less a blank cheque. It's more or less a blank cheque for gaming activity. There's no restrictions on what the government might do.

Now the minister just now has said he has eliminated the notion of slot machines, but there's nothing in the legislation that says that — absolutely nothing. And earlier this spring that same minister was going about the province saying indeed we are talking about casinos and slot machines. It took him about two weeks — it took him about two weeks to correct what he was saying.

(1500)

Now there's nothing in this legislation that prevents this government or any future government from then moving in that direction. He's talking now about some pilot projects with electronic bingo, but there's nothing in this legislation that prevents a much wider expansion, Mr. Speaker, nothing here.

Is it the role of government? I ask you, Mr. Speaker, is it the role of government to be in direct competition with charities and service clubs and non-profit organizations for the gambling dollar so that somehow they can begin to fund their own revenues?

Mr. Speaker, when we give a government this kind of a blank cheque, I think they have to be very specific in their answers, and we will want some very specific answers from that minister when we get to the point of debate where we're into committee and asking those questions.

Mr. Speaker, those two issues, those two are very significant issues. The question about, is it appropriate for government to be a direct player in the gambling field; and two, what is going to be the effect, if government moves into gambling? What is going to be the effect on the service clubs, the charities, and the non-profit organizations who are dependent now on the bingos and so on, the break-opens, for their funding.

But there is, Mr. Speaker, perhaps an even more fundamental question that needs to be asked. This legislation obviously introduces to our Saskatchewan society a whole new level of gambling activity. The question is this: do we, do we as a province, do we as a people, desire a massive expansion of gambling activity in this province?

I mean, it's always very easy, Mr. Speaker, to list the benefits of gaming and gambling. But have we counted the cost? Have we counted the cost of an expansion of gambling in this province? I ask the minister, has he counted the cost? Has he done any study into adverse effects of an expansion of gambling in our province?

There was a well-written, I thought, Mr. Speaker, a well-written article that appeared in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* on June 14th. I'm sure the minister would have read this article. Its headline asked, or said, "A thorough study of gambling effects is needed." That's the headline, and that's the point of the article. This article was written specifically to that minister, saying that before you go ahead with your expansion of gambling in Saskatchewan, please count the cost, count the cost. Just the final sentence of this article, addressed to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs. It says:

Mr. Minister, there is a need for a thorough and honest study of the problem. Are you up to the challenge?

I wonder if this minister and this government has done any study about the costs of expanding gambling in the province of Saskatchewan. Have they done that, Mr. Speaker?

An Hon. Member: — Not likely.

Mr. Calvert: — And I'm afraid it is not likely, as my colleague says. We need to answer that fundamental question, Mr. Speaker, because this legislation will expand gambling opportunities in the province of Saskatchewan. No doubt about that. The question we need to explore is do we desire that? Do we as a province

and as a people desire that?

And I hope in the course of this debate that a number of the government back-benchers will stand in this debate and say to the people of their constituencies and the people of Saskatchewan why they desire an expansion of gaming opportunities and why they think that is the direction that our society should be moving.

I find in this discussion, Mr. Speaker, a whole number of contradictions. Mr. Speaker, this is the government, and obviously, Mr. Speaker, there are people in our society for whom gambling does become an addiction. And obviously, Mr. Speaker, there are people in our society who spend money in gambling that may be more appropriately spent elsewhere. I don't believe those are large numbers of people, Mr. Speaker, but obviously there are some.

Now this is the government that goes around accusing people of squandering money in bingo halls; they do that regularly. They blame people for going into the bingo halls. And yet this is the very same government that wants to expand the opportunities to play bingo in Saskatchewan. I find that rather contradictory, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I find it rather contradictory that we here have a government whose agenda in this session, whose budget in this session contains not one — not one job-creation program — not a one. Even though we have 42,000 people unemployed in this province, this government's agenda does not include one job-creation program. Their legislative agenda is to expand gambling in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now very often, Mr. Speaker, as you and I both know, people who face an uncertain future, a bleak future in terms of job opportunity, may well turn to gambling in that hope, in that hope to buy a dream out of their trouble. Well here's a government — you see the contradiction — that refuses to deal with meaningful job-creation programs, not a one in this budget or in this session, but whose agenda is to expand gambling in the province of Saskatchewan, to expand this notion that you can buy a dream, get something for nothing.

I find that contradictory, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I find it contradictory in what's been happening in this session and throughout the life of this government. Here we have a government who has consistently, particularly since 1986, cut back on its funding to social programs, to health care and education and other valuable community and social services. They have forced the charities in this province and the service organizations to go out and raise funds to support those same services. We have hospitals all over the province now running lotteries to provide equipment for those hospitals. And then what does this government do? Well the first thing it does is slap a tax on those charities. It puts a tax on those charities. And now, through this legislation, it wants to get into the gambling field itself, in direct competition to those charities. Mr. Speaker, I find that contradictory.

So, Mr. Speaker, the question that needs to be asked and to receive debate in this House, and I believe wide public

debate: do we in Saskatchewan desire an expansion, a wide expansion of gambling opportunities? Because that's what this legislation provides for if it passes. That question needs to be debated. It needs to be debated in here and it needs to be debated far beyond here.

Mr. Speaker, the debate has begun. I could have brought any one of a number of letters that I've received. I could have brought some that were just addressed to me, but I brought one, Mr. Speaker, because I think it is a significant letter, and I bring it because it was addressed to the minister and he has a copy of it. I received a copy of the letter that was addressed to him. And it comes, Mr. Speaker, from the diocese of Saskatoon, the Anglican Diocese of Saskatoon. The bishop and diocesan council in their meeting have written to the minister, and I would like to just quote a short part of this letter. They say:

We certainly share the stated concern of your government that the Saskatchewan health care system should continue to provide comprehensive services on sound technical and a professional base. We would urge you, however, to reconsider whether an expansion of gambling activity in the province is an appropriate avenue for the maintenance and improvement of the system. Though occasional indulgence in games of chance or lotteries may be harmless enough, it is our view that the institutionalization of gambling, particularly as operated by commercial interests, and undue dependence by the provincial government on revenue from this source, would be an unfortunate development.

Mr. Speaker, the debate is happening in Saskatchewan. I believe that debate should go on, and people should have the opportunity to express their views and their feelings.

Mr. Speaker, I will want opportunity to be consulting with many of those people, both those directly affected by the legislation and the wider population that's indirectly affected. I again will want some time to review the minister's comments that he has made today, and therefore I would move that the debate be adjourned.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Schmidt that **Bill No. 8 — An Act to Promote the Growth and Development of Children and to Support the Provision of Child Care Services to Saskatchewan Families** be now read a second time.

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to participate in this debate today on Bill No. 8, which is an Act to Promote the Growth and Development of Children and to Support the Provision of Child Care Services to Saskatchewan Families.

Mr. Speaker, it's a nice title. It's a nice title. It sounds good, like much of the rhetoric of this government; it

sounds good, but the policy does not have very much positive initiatives — all rhetoric but very little positive substance, which is becoming, unfortunately, the legacy of this government, Mr. Speaker.

The government talks about the value of children. This Minister of Social Services talks about the value of families. The Premier talks about the value of families, the importance of our young people. They talk about investing in youth. Then they proceed to make life tougher and remove the supports to Saskatchewan families, Mr. Speaker.

There are so many examples here that one could go into. There's an array of cuts to Saskatchewan families. And of course, the ultimate test is that young people and families are leaving the province in record numbers. So that's how they feel about the way this government treats them, Mr. Speaker.

This minister in particular, this Minister of Social Services, this Minister of Labour, I have to say, Mr. Speaker, his performance is a dismal failure. Nowhere is it more evident than in this particular Bill.

This is the minister that is responsible to alleviate poverty in the province of Saskatchewan. He's responsible to assist families and young people to become independent financially from social assistance. This is the same minister who says that poverty doesn't exist in the province, in the face of overwhelming evidence — national studies and local studies and provincial studies. He doesn't recognize poverty staring him in the face, Mr. Speaker. On this basis alone, on this basis alone this minister should resign, Mr. Speaker. There's no question about that.

This minister is insensitive to the plight of people, to clients of his department — some 45,000. His policies have been punitive ever since he's come on the scene. He's an embarrassment on the national stage. I have a number of friends in various provinces in the social service sector, and they can't believe what's going on in the province of Saskatchewan.

This minister makes discriminatory comments towards women who still remember that. And his ultimate failing, Mr. Speaker, is that he is letting children in this province, women and men in this province, starve in increasing numbers.

So people basically have come to the point where they can't trust this minister. They don't believe him. This is a minister who's simply out of touch with the times. He belongs way back 400 years ago — the time of the Poor Laws.

And in May here he is again, Mr. Speaker, on this debate, and I might say that there's a difference. I worked for a few years for the minister of Social Services, the member from Swift Current, and I enjoyed that. She had a lot of very good ideas and promoted a lot of worthwhile causes. But this minister is an absolute disgrace and is an embarrassment in the province.

So here he comes along again with Bill 8. As my

colleagues have identified previously in this debate, he introduces commercial, profit child care to this province for the first time, Mr. Speaker — for the first time. Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House believe that there's no room in this province for profit child care.

Other provinces in Canada, states in the U.S., are taking a second look at this concept. But here this minister is coming along, many years behind as usual, and thinking he's got a new idea.

Mr. Speaker, what are some of the other people saying about this Bill, this Bill No. 8, and particularly child profit day-care centres? I have an article here, the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald*, May 6. The headline is: "Day-care bill comes under attack." "Province going backwards," is the subheading. Another subheading: "Profits come first." I'd like to quote just a few paragraphs from this article, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

A proposal to license private day care in Saskatchewan flies in the face of what other provinces are doing . . .

Which is consistent with my contention that other provinces in fact are moving away from profit child care.

(1515)

Bill 8 would allow private day-care centres, operated for profit, to be licensed (in Saskatchewan) . . .

"Saskatchewan has been looked at enviously for years, and now we're going backwards," said Roni Cloak, provincial representative for the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association.

Just like in many of our other policies, Mr. Speaker, we're taking a step backwards.

The article goes on to say:

Governments in other provinces — particularly Ontario, where private day-care centres have dominated child care for years — are giving more money to non-profit groups while reducing funding to private operators, Cloak said.

They are doing this because studies have found profit-oriented day-care centres jeopardize the quality of child care by reducing money spent on food, equipment, salaries and staff when rising costs eat into profits, she said.

"Profits come first. I suppose private operators' feathers get ruffled when we say that, but those are the facts."

Article, a little later, goes on to say. Al Hansen, assistant deputy minister of Social Services, says:

There will be no differentiation and standards will be vigorously enforced (in private centres).

Well there are virtually no standards in centres now, Mr.

Speaker, in terms of quality of care and in programming, and that's what the minister should be focusing on is improved child care programming, quality, more spaces, and focusing on standards and program development with the current operators and those who are proposing new centres.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: — Instead we see this minister going off in some tangent that other provinces and states in the U.S. are beginning to reject, and as if it's a new concept.

The article goes on to say:

Deb Odegaard of the Saskatchewan Child Care Association said Social Service Department officials, whose job it is to see government standards are upheld in the province's 450 day-care centres and homes, are already overworked.

Hansen (this is the deputy minister) said there are now 14 such officials compared to eight in 1987.

Well in fact the number has been decreasing. The day-care development workers in the province have been decreasing, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I think there are only two in Saskatoon where there used to be three or four. So that's an indication of this government's real commitment to child care.

We see increased cuts, deterioration of support to centres trying to start up, and ultimately a deterioration of services. And of course no new spaces, which I'll touch on in a few minutes.

Just finishing off on this article, it says:

"The government is out of step on the commercial day care in the same way it is ignoring the will of the people with its plans to sell public utilities" . . .

Mr. Speaker, another headline from the *Leader-Post*, May 5. The heading, "Sask. day-care system said headed backwards." And I quote:

A proposal to license private day care in Saskatchewan flies in the face of what other Canadian provinces are now doing, some women's and labor groups said Thursday.

Basically the same message — the government's going in the wrong direction in child care with profit child care. It's not positive for families or children because profits are paramount, Mr. Speaker, not care.

Another heading from the *Star-Phoenix*, May 8, 1989: "Opponents of private day care argue bill is a regressive step." A similar message to the two that I talked about earlier.

Mr. Speaker, these are quotes from people who are involved in the child care field. This isn't NDP . . . These aren't NDP comments. These are people who are actively involved in the child care field and have been for many

years.

Another article, May 8 in the *Star-Phoenix* by Leonard Shifrin. A heading is, "Child care proposals confusing." And I quote:

The \$175 million the government will save this year (that is the federal government) by not proceeding with this child care legislation is a direct theft from our children.

That's what he says.

So the federal government, the federal Tories, Mr. Speaker, are no different from the provincial Tories. And I guess it reinforces the point that a Tory is a Tory is a Tory. Basically, it stands for economic mismanagement and social cuts. Two-tier health care, two-tier education, two-tier social services and certainly two-tier child care, Mr. Speaker, by this Bill.

The article goes on to say, or Shifrin goes on to say:

The Mulroneys seem determined to direct their funding to the tax front where it creates no new Canadian spaces. Last year at the cost of \$40 million they doubled the child care expense deduction which gives biggest benefits to high-income family earners. That the federal budget left child care untouched tells us how concerned the Tories really are about the need for spaces.

Mr. Speaker, another article, in fact it's a brochure prepared by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, a credible organization; the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, another credible organization; and the Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care. They support the thrust of the articles I've read from, Mr. Speaker. I'll just read a few comments here. It says:

Over the past decade child care advocates, women's, religious and voluntary organizations, and many others, have developed a consensus around a future direction for child care in Canada.

This is a direct quote from the Manitoba Home Economics Association:

We feel that the Canadian family must have a child care system which ensures accessibility, quality, affordability, parental involvement, provider direction, good sponsorship, adequate wages and working conditions in child care.

Many of those who have advocated for high-quality child care believe that public funds should not be used to support poor profit child care. Why? Well because the money goes here. Profits can be increased, and are, in the experience of the studies that we've looked at, by reducing salaries and operating expenditures — on an average of 30 per cent less than those in non-profit child care programs (Mr. Speaker).

It goes on to say that:

In non-profit programs all income (and I stress, all income) from parents, fees, and public funds is used for child care. In a for-profit program or commercial program (as the minister's proposing) a portion of income from the parents' fees and public funds goes to the owners and is lost to child care. Even with the direct grant in a for-profit or commercial program, less money would be spent on a child care program, and salaries would still be considerably lower than salaries in a non-profit program.

And again, studies have proven this to be the case, Mr. Speaker. One other major heading in this brochure — which I can't hold up obviously:

This is a poor use of public funds and poor public policy. How does a for-profit sector affect the quality of child care?

And this is of course the thrust of this Bill that we're so opposed to, Mr. Speaker. How does a for-profit sector affect the quality of child care?

Well their evidence says:

All evidence indicates that the for-profit concept is much less likely to provide high quality care, and much more likely to provide poor care than the non-profit sector.

Their experience tells them this. Second point:

The for-profit sector in Canada, and in other countries, has actively worked to reduce child care standards . . .

They have actively worked to reduce child care standards. That's been their record.

. . . and has lobbied against improvements in regulations and financial accountability (Mr. Speaker).

This is the concept that this minister's promoting — and they have actively lobbied against improvements in regulations and financial accountability.

Third point they raise, Mr. Speaker:

Improved public funding for profit care child care, particularly in the form of capital or direct grants, will allow the for-profit child care sector to expand to dominate the field and determine the quality of care. In Alberta this has resulted in an erosion of child care standards.

So, Mr. Speaker, we see that this minister is supporting and proposing a system to set up large chains, large commercial operations that have a tradition of lobbying against improvements, improvements in standards and improvements in financial accountability, and in fact have come to dominate the child care field in certain jurisdictions. This is not the heritage of Saskatchewan, this is not the tradition of Saskatchewan, and this is not

what people in child care are saying they want.

In my tours around the province on a recent commission on youth education and family life, what people in Saskatchewan want, in rural Saskatchewan want, is accessible, affordable, and quality child care options for their children, Mr. Speaker. It's exactly contradictory to the kind of system that commercial enterprises work towards, and this is the kind of system that this minister wants to bring into Saskatchewan.

Finally they say:

The care which children receive in their early years in the family and in alternative settings is of the utmost importance. Canada now stands at the watershed in the development of public policy which will offer families a range of options to help them provide this care. Let's begin to build the services which will do the best job and make the best use of public funds.

What we're looking for is accessible, affordable, high quality, and not for-profit child care, Mr. Speaker. As I said, that is the position, that is a national brochure of three very credible national organizations — four when you include the Manitoba Home Economics Association.

So along with the provincial child care groups, we've got groups at the national level saying the same things, that commercial, for-profit centres are simply a step backwards and do not act in the best interests of children and families, Mr. Speaker.

So we see the federal and the provincial Tories paying lip service to supporting children, to supporting women, families, while in fact, Mr. Speaker, placing more stress on them and taking away the supports and services that they have.

Ontario and U.S. experience has shown some additional things that I've discovered in my research about profit child care centres, commercial child care centres.

One is that they're hard to monitor. Commercial centres studies . . . researchers have found that operators in commercial child care do not want and will not let you study their program — will not let you study them.

Second point that my research has shown me, that traditionally ratios are higher in commercial centres. Now we all ready know that the ratios in Saskatchewan are not suitable enough as it is, and rather than the minister proceeding down this wrong path he should be addressing the issue of child care ratios, staff to children ratios.

Experience has shown that ratios are higher in profit centres, which doesn't take a brain surgeon to figure that out — the goal is to maximize profits, so you've got to cut back somewhere.

Experience shows that in profit centres the staff spends more time controlling children than they do providing a service to them and being with them and listening and playing with them because of the numbers — they are

prohibitive to doing that, so their focus is more on controlling them.

Evidence, research again shows that because the aim is to maximize profits, like the program, like the initiative that the minister is supporting and the government is supporting; the salaries are lower; the benefits are almost non-existent. Salaries are over 30 per cent lower, Mr. Speaker, in private commercial centres than they are in non-profit centres. And the staff turnover is higher. I mean, surely the Minister of Social Services should know that one of the keys to a good child care program is the stability of the staff to the children.

And I would hope that he's already concerned about the high ratio or the high turnover rate because of the low salary and benefits that are existing in non-profit centres primarily because he hasn't given a raise in seven and a half years in terms of the subsidy. But what we know is that in the commercial centres, the salaries are 30 per cent lower and the benefits are virtually non-existent.

Some studies also show that the food is poor. They also show that there are fewer toys, fewer stimulating games. They also show, and particularly in Ontario, that centres have had to, because the commercial operators want to maintain the level of profit, centres have had to have bingo games in order to buy trikes and toys for children in the centre, much like we do in our hospitals today, Mr. Speaker.

(1530)

Studies have also shown that in commercial centres the staff training is a lower level. Studies have also shown that there is very little parental involvement in commercial child care centres. That doesn't surprise anybody. The chains, U.S. chains, and the commercial chains don't want parental involvement. They want to be able to standardize a program across the province.

One of the strengths of our system has been, Mr. Speaker, albeit that we haven't enough spaces and enough support to the centres, but one of our strengths has been the degree to which parents have been able to be involved and determine policies and initiatives that the centre has been able to undergo. And in the non-profit system, they have not been responsive to the wishes and needs of parents. The evidence has shown this; it's overwhelming. I don't know where the minister's been or where he's at in terms of this initiative, because the track record of commercial child care centres is very poor.

Mr. Speaker, I think I indicated just a few moments ago that this minister has not raised the subsidy for seven and a half years — the child care subsidy. In seven and a half years, this government has not raised the subsidy which is squeezing day-care co-ops into non-existence.

One of the other facets of commercial child care is that poor families can't afford the care, and I don't see this minister addressing that. I would say that the fact that day-care co-ops are going under, which are parent controlled, is clearly by design with this minister. And of course, we know that he is trying to . . . he is going to limit the number of spaces he'll subsidize in a day-care

co-operative, which is sort of the kind of the final nail in the coffin for many day-care centres, co-operative day-care centres in the province.

I'm speaking from some experience, Mr. Speaker. I was a chairman of a board for a day-care co-operative for three years, so I know something about the struggles that the board has to make the operation viable economically, and that was back in the better years, between 1979 and '81. And my friends in the day-care community tell me it is virtually impossible to keep the centres going now because of the kind of cut-backs or the lack of support financially given by this government in the fact that there've been no increases for that period of time.

Another major failing in the commercial enterprises that this minister is promoting, Mr. Speaker, is that because they're set up to sort of be all similar — and there are chains of commercial centres — they don't recognize the variable needs that children and families have throughout a jurisdiction of a province like Saskatchewan. They don't recognize the need for support and child care during shift hours in urban Saskatchewan or rural Saskatchewan, the infant child-care needs or the specialization child-care needs. Commercial enterprises don't recognize these variations and the need for flexibility.

Mr. Speaker, the legacy of this minister — I mean this is why child care, day-care groups don't trust him, not just that he's going in the wrong direction with this initiative, but his legacy is one of no progress. Not only no progress in child care, but in fact one of falling behind.

Reduced the funding . . . the government has money for GigaText and Guy Montpetit and their corporate friends; they've got money to squander on a birthday party that they're trying to justify as something other than a birthday party, but they keep trying to change the mandate as more public groups come out opposing the squandering of \$9 million; they've got money to waste \$34,000 a day on vacant government office space, basically because they can't manage, Mr. Speaker, but they've got no money to put into child care.

Now despite what they say, more than anything else, that must be the true test of how they feel about children and families. The record speaks for itself, Mr. Speaker. They have cut child care development staff in the province, as I alluded to earlier. There's no question about that. They have cut the staff that used to be supportive to new centres getting off the ground, used to be supportive to family day-care providers. They've cut those staff. They've got fewer spaces, Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from Saskatoon University outlined a week or so ago. We have the second lowest number of per capita spaces in all of Canada — in all of Canada. Only Newfoundland has a lower per capita number.

Only 7 per cent of our children have access to child care, Mr. Speaker — that is children under 12 — only 7 per cent of our children have access to child care. The national average is 13 per cent. We're twice below the national average, a shameful, pitiful legacy by this government.

There is no question, when you take these two points together, Mr. Speaker, that this province has the worst

record of any province in child care spaces, child care quality in the whole field of day care in the entire country, Mr. Speaker. There's virtually . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's not true. No, that isn't true.

The member from Regina Wascana is saying that we've increased in the last year 2,500 child care spaces . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . in the last seven years. That is factually not correct, Mr. Speaker. There's a net decrease, Mr. Speaker, in the number of spaces.

It's another way that the government members . . . and I'm surprised about that member because I put him in a kind of a separate category from the front-benchers over there that he would make that statement. And I suspect that he's just misinformed and is certainly not attempting to mislead the people of the province. He wouldn't say that comment to the child care providers and the families needing child care in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there have been no new standards, no new standards developed by this government in the last seven and a half years. You've got to talk about the ones you lose, too, not about just the ones you gain. There have been no new standards, Mr. Speaker. There are no developments in rural Saskatchewan in child care. They announced that they were creating 150 spots in rural Saskatchewan. When you get through all the rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, it's really only 56 new spaces — 56 new spaces in rural Saskatchewan since 1982. That's all the child care spaces this government has developed. In seven and a half years, net increase of 56 spaces in rural Saskatchewan.

Now they want to bring in a concept — for-profit day care. As I said, it's being rejected everywhere else, Mr. Speaker. It's sort of like their privatization mania. It's being rejected in Britain, as we saw in the recent European Common Market elections where the people of Britain are rejecting what Maggie Thatcher and her party stands for. That was a comment not on the European Common Market, that election was based on their privatization initiatives which have failed.

And just like those initiatives that have failed elsewhere, they've failed here. They're rejecting privatization over there, and this government's along thinking it's a new concept that everybody's into the swing of things with.

They're doing the same thing in child care, Mr. Speaker. They're moving into a concept of commercial child care that's being rejected elsewhere. They're privatizing child care, despite what people think. I mean, this government has never been concerned what the people of the province think.

And I was listening last night, Mr. Speaker, because I was home not feeling well, to the member from Regina South who was talking about this government's initiative to small business. While he hasn't been out to rural Saskatchewan lately, I've been to Pontoix and Preeceville and Sturgis recently. He's out of step with the small-business community of Saskatchewan, just like this minister's out of step with the child care needs in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

This minister, like this government, continues with their arrogant out-of-touch approach, Mr. Speaker. Commercial child care simply has created more hardships in the United States and the rest of Canada, and is certainly going to do that here.

I'd like to ask the minister why he's not supporting . . . what has he got against co-operatives, and what has this government got against co-operatives? They phased out the department of co-operatives. They've been putting hardships on co-ops in the child care sector. What have they got against co-operatives, Mr. Speaker?

An Hon. Member: — That's not even true.

Mr. Pringle: — That certainly is true, Mr. Speaker. The minister says we haven't phased out the department of co-operatives. The minister from Maple Creek says the department of co-operatives is still here. Well that's how out of touch she is, Mr. Minister.

But this government, why isn't the Minister of Social Services supporting day-care co-ops who have served this province very well over many years — parent-controlled, parent involvement, parent-supported? Why aren't they supporting family day-care homes, Mr. Speaker? Why aren't they supporting and experimenting with and encouraging work place spaces, whether it be in hospitals or corporations or small businesses? Why aren't they talking about and supporting emergency initiatives and flexible options? Why aren't they looking at the rural child care needs, Mr. Speaker? Needs, for example, that might be available at the time of seeding or the time of harvesting. Those are the kind of child care needs that people in rural Saskatchewan, in my travelling on the commission I was co-chairing, told me that they had.

The minister has no conceptual framework. There's no conceptual framework articulated by this minister in terms of child care. His only solution to the child care needs in the province are commercial centres, profit centres, child care for profit. That's not a conceptual framework; that's a blind ideological approach to social policy.

We don't know what the minister hopes to accomplish, what his objectives are, by his child care policy. He doesn't have a set of principles that he's laid before us that are important for us to analyse and discuss throughout the province.

An Hon. Member: — Yes, you can use children to make a buck.

Mr. Pringle: — My colleague from Saskatoon said, or says, you can use children to make a buck. That's the child care policy of the Minister of Social Services. I guess that is the bottom line because we haven't heard him articulate any other philosophical principle, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have a different view. We have a different view of what child care should be, we on this side of the House. And we think we're in step with families in the province and with the people in the child care field.

And some important principles from our point of view, Mr. Speaker — and I would ask the minister to give these some serious consideration — I think a first principle from our point of view would be accessible, affordable, and quality child care. And surely that has to be out front as one of the principles that you support and strive for, for those who need it.

A second principle, Mr. Speaker, should be a system based not on your ability to pay. And increasingly we know, because of the cut-backs in the subsidy, that child care is available only to families who can afford to pay. The ability to get good child care should be based on need, not affordability, Mr. Speaker, otherwise this creates, as I said earlier in my comments, a two-tiered child care system, just like we have now in education and in health care and in many other social programs.

We would like to say very strongly in support of all the others in the child care field, Mr. Speaker, who feel that child care should be in the non-profit sector, there are many positive options in the non-profit sector that the minister could explore. He doesn't have to resort to commercial, profit-centred day-care spaces to deal with the child care situation.

A fourth principle, in our view, is that the government should assume some responsibility for the quality of basic care, Mr. Speaker. There are simply too much variation in standards in jurisdictions where this isn't the case, if we really prioritize the importance of support and nurturing for young children.

Another important principle is that rural Saskatchewan should have some special . . . and northern Saskatchewan, some special focus because they have special challenges that are not necessarily the challenges that are facing people in urban Saskatchewan — as I said earlier, in rural Saskatchewan the needs during seeding and harvest time, for example.

Certainly the government talks a lot about supporting rural Saskatchewan and rural communities, Mr. Speaker, but in creating only 56 spaces in seven and a half years, obviously it's another case of a lot of rhetoric and very little substance.

(1545)

I will also submit, Mr. Speaker, that day care should be removed from the Department of Social Services and put in some separate department or commission. It's that important and requires that kind of focus.

And I would suggest as well, Mr. Speaker, that there needs to be a new day care Act that looks at . . . in a comprehensive way that looks at the child care scene in the province, the needs of families, and can address the facilitative variety of options that may be available and may be necessary as we look to the '90s and the next century.

I think if this minister . . . It's obvious that this minister didn't look at any of these principles in terms of developing this particular legislation, Mr. Speaker. If he'd

look at some of these principles and give them serious consideration, I think the families in the province and the child care people provincially would see that the process had some credibility, which it doesn't at this point.

I'd like to just make a few concluding comments, Mr. Speaker, because my colleague from Regina Centre wants to make a few points, but I would ask that the minister reconsider his Bill, reconsider his thrust for commercial, profit-motivated child care. As I said, it's being rejected elsewhere. It has many disadvantages for families and children and the child care scene generally, and that he not proceed with profit child care. Simply, there's no place for that in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It isn't working elsewhere, and it clearly gives a signal that the minister is not prioritizing children but putting their needs secondarily.

I would also ask him to lobby the federal government to not renege in its commitments, which it's just recently done. All the bold commitments it made in the federal election, it's recently reneged on that commitment in its budget, but the minister should be lobbying the federal government to enhance child care options, to enhance child care communication and co-operation with the provinces and particularly in this case, with Saskatchewan.

I cannot support this Bill. It does not deal with the real needs of children and families in Saskatchewan, and it's a regressive Bill. And, Mr. Speaker, I will strongly vote against the Bill. Thank you kindly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. I also want to address a few comments to the member from Regina South, who is as in need of instruction on the subject as any.

I want to address a few comments on this Bill. It's described as The Child Care Act. That, Mr. Speaker, is a parody. The Bill does not provide for child care at all. Indeed, it provides for care and feeding for private investors and not child care.

Mr. Speaker, this caucus is opposed to privately owned day care. We believe that the goals of privately owned day care are not directly that of looking after children; the goals of a privately owned day care are the maximization of the profits for the shareholders. We think there is a place for small business, and we think there are places for publicly owned facilities. This is one of the areas which should remain publicly owned.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of problems with privately owned day care. They have been identified **ad nauseam** to this government and to other governments, and I want to just briefly spend a few moments going over some of those problems which are likely to arise.

As I said, the most serious problem, Mr. Speaker, is that the goal of any business is to maximize the profits for the owners or shareholders. Surely the goal with respect to the care of children should be providing the maximum care and the highest quality care for children. The two,

Mr. Speaker, are really not reconcilable.

There are a number of advantages to the publicly owned system. One of the advantages to Saskatchewan's system is that day cares were set up in the form of co-operatives. The co-operative mode was chosen because it provided for parent control of the day care. That's certainly going to be lost with respect to a privately owned day care. The parents will thereby be consumers and will exercise very little control over the day cares in which their children spend their time.

An Hon. Member: — Right, they can't demand anything when they're paying money for it.

Mr. Shillington: — Well the member from Regina South who is making such . . . Mr. Speaker, I can hear the braying of a jackass . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I believe the hon. member knows the course you must follow now for unparliamentary remarks, and I expect him to do so.

Mr. Shillington: — I withdraw the remark, Mr. Speaker, given the members that are sitting opposite, I could not have identified its source anyway.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I ask the hon. member to withdraw unequivocally.

Mr. Shillington: — I unequivocally withdraw the comment, Mr. Speaker. The member from Regina South has undertaken to be quiet. That being the case, it may not be necessary to refer to his comments again.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill, I believe, is a backward step. It is a backward step by a backward-looking government.

Mr. Speaker, in the dying years of the last century, our society underwent great debate with respect to free universal public education that had been introduced indeed in Prussia by a Prussian autocrat, Otto Von Bismarck. Other nations began to consider it, and so did this.

Mr. Speaker, all I can say is I'm glad these people were not around when our society decided to provide publicly owned and universal education system. I'm sure many of those same arguments were trotted out: that we were interfering with the free market; a free universal public education would deny small business their proper role; would spoil people; would make it too available.

Mr. Minister, and Mr. Speaker, the free, universal public education was provided and was made available because it was thought to be an investment in our future, an investment in young people, and thereby an investment in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the same comments could and should apply to day care. It should be publicly funded so it has the highest possible quality. It should not be seen as a service. There's a difference between providing movies, between providing accounting services, and providing services for children.

One of the differences, Mr. Speaker, is the children are not in a very good position to defend themselves, and I regret to say, in our society, no one else seems to do a very good job of it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is universal resistance to the idea of publicly funded day care. The former member from Riversdale, Jo-Ann Zazelenchuk, did a study on day care. Her hearings throughout the province — virtually to a man and a woman, those who attended and gave briefs were opposed to privately owned day care, such that the project, Mr. Speaker, disappeared for a number of years; five years, to be precise. Now, however, presumably the members opposite think the public have forgotten, and they're coming back with an idea which they tried to peddle five years ago and was rejected.

Mr. Speaker, privately owned day care would be enough of a concern if this government had any kind of a track record in regulating the provision of services. Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time this government has turned over to the private sector the delivery of a service and has failed to provide any kind of regulation.

Mr. Speaker, two and three years ago this government began to encourage the development of privately owned vocational schools, again a service provided to young people — some of whom are over 18, to be fair, and therefore not children in the strict sense, but most of whom are not accustomed to bargaining for themselves, to taking care of themselves, most of whom are accustomed to trusting adults.

Mr. Speaker, the government opposite was told at the time that you could not blindly trust the private market to provide services to children; they didn't listen. The result has been a thorough disaster. I will not repeat what was said in question period today, Mr. Speaker. Suffice it to say that the blind assumption . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well aren't we favoured. The member from Lloydminster is going to spread light. Where all was darkness, now there will be light. The member from Lloydminster is entering the debate.

You might take the advice of the member from Shaunavon and speak from your feet and not otherwise.

An Hon. Member: — Well sit down.

Mr. Shillington: — I'll sit down in a moment, and I will be very, very surprised if the member from Lloydminster has anything to say on the subject of day care. I'll be very, very surprised if you enter the debate.

Mr. Speaker, the experience with respect to privately owned vocational schools has been a disaster. The government entered it. This government, Mr. Speaker, seems to proceed on the assumption that greed plays no part in human affairs — surely a naive assumption if ever there was one.

With respect to the provision of some services, people can choose for themselves, decide for themselves, but not children. Children are not in a position to do that. And that is why in this province we have heretofore determined that services provided to children should be

publicly owned and not left to the greed of the private market, and that's often what it is.

Mr. Speaker, this government is even allowing franchising. Mr. Speaker, this government might be interested in recalling that Jo-Ann Zazelenchuk, who used to represent Riversdale, who provided a report on day care, specifically recommended against franchising of day-care centres. She specifically recommended that all day cares must be . . . She went on to state that there may be some role for privately owned day care — something I dispute — but even that member drew the line at franchising.

This government seems to have forgotten all that took place in 1984. This government seems to be proceeding on the blind assumption that one can trust the private market to regulate anything.

I ask members opposite to have a look at the private vocational schools if you think that the private market will do justice in all occasions.

I want to mention a couple of other things, Mr. Speaker, before I sit down. I want to comment and comment adversely on the provision in the Bill which provides that the minister may, by regulation, put a limit on the number of parents attending any day care which receive a subsidy. One must question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what earthly purpose such a thing would serve, except to limit the expense to the provincial treasury of providing subsidies to parents. If such a section serves any other purpose, Mr. Minister, it escapes me.

(1600)

This government has also provided in section 25 that the minister may make a blanket exemption for any day care. Mr. Speaker, if there wasn't a history of in this government of abusing these kind of sections, of providing exemptions for its friends where no exemption is warranted on the basis of any social policy, this would be a matter of less concern. Again, given the history of this government in blatantly, openly abusing these kind of sections by providing special benefits for its friends, at the expense of the recipients of the service, we might be less concerned. As it is, there's a good deal of concern.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to comment very briefly on this government's tendency to say one thing before an election and do something else afterwards. Mr. Speaker, there was no end of soothing assurances given before the last election — both by provincial Conservatives in the provincial election and federal Conservatives in the federal election — no end of soothing noises made about how important children were. They were our future; we had to invest in them; and what a grand job this government would do providing day care.

What this government in fact is doing with this legislation is limiting the amount of resources it's going to put into day care. Mr. Speaker, it is patently obvious that child care, day care, and the services that are provided to children are going to deteriorate when this Bill is passed.

Mr. Speaker, the . . .

An Hon. Member: — They can do the same as the Tories federally.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, one member says that they're going to do the same as the Conservative members federally. That's accurate. Indeed they may go a step further. This legislation might well have the effect of limiting and reducing the amount of resources we put into child care and not expanding it.

Mr. Speaker, for those reasons I, and members of this caucus, will be opposing this legislation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McLeod that **Bill No. 45 — An Act respecting Personal Care Homes** be now read a second time.

Ms. Smart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Act respecting Personal Care Homes is one that has had a lot of support from health care givers and other concerned people. They've been pushing for a long time to have the non-approved personal care homes licensed and regulated by legislation, and I will certainly admit that fact and give credence to that suggestion that the homes need to be licensed and regulated. But I have some very grave concerns about this piece of legislation, and I want to spell them out.

First of all, I want to list the reasons why health care givers and people in the province have been pressuring to have licensing of these homes. There have been several reasons. I suppose the main reason, the most important reason, is that the personal care homes have been admitting level 3 and 4 clients on a regular basis. They're often admitted directly from hospital following strokes or some other debilitating illness, and the personal care homes in the province have been used as a solution to housing when licensed special care homes have no available spaces. They've been seen as interim solutions to the housing problem. Placement has been for an interim period, but what's really happened in reality is that people live out their lives in the personal care homes, needing levels 3 and 4 care.

The staff in many of these homes, which are run often by the families, are not trained especially to deal with peoples at the level 3 and 4 care. The homes have been often poorly equipped and staffed, space hasn't been adequate, they've not been wheelchair accessible and not safe in terms of fire standards, etc.

And so over the years the pressure has been there to see that something be done to improve these homes and for the quality of the staff to be made better. The home operators themselves have been feeling stigmatized by being labelled as non-approved, and running non-approved homes, and they believe, and have made submissions to the government, I think, by being licensed

that they will gain some status and they will assure the clients and their families that the care that they're giving their residents is a good one. And the operators hope that the government will provide more operating funds if they agree to be licensed. At the moment most operators feel they are not making enough to get a return on their investment.

I want to refer to a brief that was presented by the Saskatoon chapter of the personal care homes association to the hearing on the Saskatchewan Commission on Directions in Health Care. They said in this brief, "It is highly important for us to be licensed in order to gain credibility with the public." And they said, "As it stands now we are known as 'non-approved' homes (a very negative term) resulting in our residents getting less in health care benefits than those in homes licensed by the department under The Housing and Special-Care Homes Act."

And when I looked at levels of funding provided by the Department of Social Services, if someone is needing that kind of assistance in order to live in a personal care home, I notice that the homes that are labelled as approved homes for a level 1 patient, the operators of the home would be getting \$424 a month, and the operators of one of these personal care homes at level 1 would be getting \$365 a month. Those are rates that were set in April of 1986, and it's my understanding that they're still the same now in February of 1989. So it's no wonder that the non-approved homes are having difficulties making ends meet and also very concerned about getting a higher rate of return and a better fee from the Department of Social Services.

Now mentioning the approved homes and the non-approved homes, Mr. Speaker, brings me to the point that personal care homes are just one of a number of different kinds of homes, and people often get confused about the different kinds of homes that we're talking about. We have in the province approved homes, we have special care homes, we have group homes, we have personal care homes, and quite a variety of them. And what we've been talking about here have been the personal care homes that have been admitting up to as many as 14 or 15 people and have been operating without any licence or surveillance from the government.

Other reasons for wanting this legislation from the health care givers and other people, concerned people in the province, are things like the abuse of elders in personal care homes, which is an ongoing concern. Inspections are needed. We do need to watch out for people who are being looked after by people outside of their homes . . . outside of their families.

And another concern is about the fee structure. The fees are set by each home, although Social Services limits the amount the department will pay for clients dependent on social assistance rates, and I've already mentioned that.

The Bill itself does not spell out any specifics about personal care homes except to describe them as facilities which provide accommodation, meals, and supervision, or assistance with personal care. It does spell out the licensing process. It defines the minister's powers in

granting and revoking licences, and it establishes penalties for homes which contravene the regulations.

But all the other standards that are going to apply to these houses are to be revealed later in regulations through order in council. What I find interesting is that these regulations will include such things as the . . . the legislation itself says this:

The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations:

(a) classifying personal care homes for the purpose of the regulations;

So we don't know yet how they're going to be classified.

(b) establishing standards for the construction, operation and maintenance of personal care homes;

(c) designating any facility for the purposes of subclause 2(e)(ix);

(d) respecting the eligibility of, and criteria to be met by, applicants for licences (who's going to be able to get one?);

(e) respecting the terms and conditions to be contained in the licences (we still don't know that);

(f) respecting eligibility for residents in personal care homes;

That's not in the Act. And, Mr. Speaker, some of these points are standardized points for regulations rather than being in the statutes themselves. But it is my opinion and the opinion of my colleagues that classifying the personal care homes should be in the statutes. The eligibility for residents in the personal care homes should be in the statutes.

We should know what level of care, what kind of people are going to be accepted into these homes, because that's what it's all about — it's all about making personal care homes for people. We need to know who's going to be going in there. But regulations — we still don't know anything about, respecting the accommodation services and programs to be made available to the residents of the personal care home. We don't know the number of individuals who may reside in them. That's all going to be made in regulation, all unknown.

Also unknown is things like establishing and protecting their rights and privileges; respecting the records kept on the people there; establishing how much people will pay to be in the homes; and the list goes on. And the number of things that are going to be established by order in council and are not in the statutes — and the legislation says that these things will be dealt with in regulations.

Well some time ago, the department of continuing care, the continuing care branch of the Department of Health did publish proposed regulations. They were published in 1986 and they were to accompany this legislation. And

these regulations, these proposed regulations that were made available for discussion indicated that the homes will no longer be allowed to accept level 3 and 4 care clients. However, in this Bill the minister will have the power to exempt homes from the regulations altogether, and therefore there is nothing in this legislation that will ensure that if a particular home is upgraded to meet the regulations, that a particular home remains at a basic level of care.

And that's a very important point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because one of the main reasons for this legislation is to help deal with the issue of level 3 and 4 care. Personal care homes have been used by people needing those levels of care. The reality is that they now admit levels 3 and 4. And the practice of admitting them will be hard to stop because it meets an urgent need, and it will be hard to stop until and unless there are enough special care facilities to cover everyone needing level 3 and 4.

If they are not to accept level 3 and 4, then we have to ask what the purpose of the homes are. And it is my understanding that if regulations can be exempted by the minister, that many of these personal care homes will just go on; they will get the exemption and then go on accepting level 3 and 4, even though in the regulations they aren't to be getting in, but with the exemption they will probably be able to take them in.

But I want to refer to something the minister said in speaking to the legislation. He said that through this Act:

. . . personal care homes can be officially recognized through licensing as part of the continuum of long-term care.

Now if the purpose of this Act is to stop personal care homes from taking in level 3 and 4, and if level 1 and 2 is supposed to be the level at which people are given services through home care, then it's hard to see where the personal care homes fit in in any continuum of long-term care.

In essence, these homes will be providing services which are the equivalent of home care. And so the question is, Mr. Speaker, in what way are they part of a continuum of care, and what will be their purpose?

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to read into the record a comment made by the minister, going back to talking about the regulations, and then I want to read part of a brief. But when he was speaking to this legislation, the minister said:

My staff will be scheduling meetings this fall (this coming fall) with personal care home operators to review the standards we're proposing. At the conclusion of these meetings, we'll be finalizing the regulations we need to administer the Act.

Now, Mr. Minister, you've already gone through two processes of consultation with health care givers and with personal care home operators to review standards that you're proposing.

(1615)

You brought in legislation earlier; you had standards suggested before that; and then you had another paper that came out after that legislation, focusing on where we might go in the future. Now you're coming in with this legislation, and then you're proposing to go back to the personal care home operators and talk again about what the standards are going to be. And I find it difficult to support legislation like this which doesn't tell me what the standards are going to be and certainly which doesn't resolve this issue of the level 3, level 4 care, and doesn't really describe, in any real sense, how these personal care homes fit in to any level of continuum of long-term care.

An Hon. Member: — We're not given to a lot of blind faith in the government.

Ms. Smart: — That's right. My colleague, the member from Regina Victoria, says we're not given to a lot of blind faith in the government, and that is certainly my point in questioning this legislation. Because the government has constantly talked about how it's going to consult with people, and then doesn't consult, or else it goes round and round and round in consulting and not dealing with the issues that have been raised by people. And it also has demonstrated many times it has a very thin grasp on reality and a very nebulous idea about what is providing good health care.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to take the time to read into the record a brief presented to Saskatchewan Health, continuing care in January of 1987 — not so long ago. It was submitted by the Battlefords district co-ordinating committee. And on that committee there was a representative of the consumers in the area: there were three social workers; a director of care for the Battlefords regional care centre; a director of care for the River Heights Lodge; the home services manager for the home care district; community health nurse . . . community mental health nurse; the North Battleford Housing Authority had two representatives on this co-ordinating committee, or has; and the nursing supervisor for the Battlefords Union Hospital; and the director of care for Villa Pascal. They made the submission to the government, to the Minister of Health, and to the continuing care branch and they said this:

That there are approximately 12 personal care homes in the Battlefords and area housing an estimated 40 residents. The majority of these clients require level 3 care. They require supervision and/or assistance with many activities of daily living. Some are confused and disorientated. Some are not ambulatory or ambulatory only with the use of a wheelchair. Some pose behavioural problems.

These clients are most often placed in the personal care home as a last resort. It has been determined that home care cannot provide the amount of supervision and assistance required for the client to remain at home. The family member or members feel they cannot adequately care for the client and a preference for special care home placement is not possible due to the lengthy waiting lists and a shortage of beds. The client is

admitted to an acute care hospital and discharge planning evolves around personal care home placement as other alternatives are ruled out.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that, so far up to date now, is just saying what I've been saying already, the reasons for the pressure on the government to come in with legislation regulating and controlling personal care homes. They've been taking the level 3 and 4 care, and these are the conditions under which people are being brought into the homes.

Few residents of personal care homes are voluntary (I'm quoting again now from this brief). Most follow this scenario and have no other choice. They're referred for placement with reassurance to both the client and the family that this arrangement will only be necessary until a special care home bed is available. In other words, it is a temporary measure while awaiting long-term placement in an institution.

The personal care home clients in our area comprise a population totally different from those defined in the personal care home program consultation proposal.

And that proposal was the one put forward by the government, to which this group is responding. And these are the regulations that it's my understanding are going to be brought forward to accompany this piece of legislation that we're discussing today.

And this group in The Battlefords is saying what people are saying all across the province:

The personal care home clients comprise a population totally different from those defined in the personal care home program consultation proposal.

And the clients for the personal care homes are not defined at all in this piece of legislation, so we don't know who they're going to be.

Based on the above description and scenario (of people who are really in personal care homes at this point in time) . . .

For the record of *Hansard*, I'm adding my own comments as I'm reading this, so they may want to get a copy of this. They can get what's quoted later. The brief says:

Based on the above description and scenario, to implement the proposed client definition would be to ignore the existing need of the people and the community we serve.

In effect, the clientele defined in the proposal . . .

Mr. Minister, and you should know this of course because this is one of the many papers that was given to you when you said that you've engaged in consultation.

The clientele defined in the proposal for the personal care homes are too healthy for personal

care home placement and should be able to function with the assistance of home care in their own homes or apartments. In addition, to implement and enforce the client definition as proposed, would leave the clientele we now serve with no options and no place to go other than acute care settings.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me now put in my own comments here. We have a concern that the reality of the clients in the personal care homes are level 3 and 4. We had the Department of Health, the Minister of Health proposing, the government proposing that these homes no longer take level 3 and 4. We have one co-ordinating committee at least making a presentation to the government, saying that if they go on the definition of not admitting level 3 and 4, if they admit level 1 and 2, those are the people best served by home care.

So again, what is the purpose of the personal care homes, and on what basis do they form a continuum of long-term care if they will not be able to take level 3 and 4 and if home care serves level 1 and 2?

Now this brief goes on to say:

The cost of personal care home placement is another concern. It is unfortunate that the proposal does not wish to deal with this issue, as it cannot be denied that personal care home placement is expensive when compared to seniors' housing and special care home charges, the reason for this being the lack of subsidization.

Well some people are subsidized, Mr. Speaker, but many are not. And the point is made that:

Seniors' housing and special care homes are open to clients despite their income. Personal care homes will only be for those who can afford them.

Now this isn't clear in the legislation, Mr. Minister, I admit. But I want to refer you to page 29 of the personal care home program consultation and what it says about the fees, because obviously what people pay in these homes is a major concern and has to be dealt with. And when you're bringing in legislation to establish personal care homes and you say nothing in the legislation about what the fees will be, you raise a very major concern.

In the continuing care branch, personal care home program consultation, they said this about the fees:

Operators will maintain the right to set fees with the following protection for residents: fees will be payable no sooner than the first day of the month of service of course.

And they go on with just a few points about deposits and damage deposits. And they also say this:

That operators will be required to enter into written agreements with residents regarding matters such as the payment provisions and the conditions for changes in rates and refunds.

Nothing in the legislation lets us know what people will pay for these homes. The proposal from the government suggests that they're going to be able to set their own rates at these homes.

Now in this brief The Battlefords co-ordinating commission goes on to make two points:

Ideally, level 1 and 2, or light care clients, could occupy personal care homes. In reality, the heavier care level 3 clients need personal care homes. Ideally, a contract for service stipulating a fee could be drawn up between client and operator. However, clients are unhappy about paying an unregulated and unsubsidized fee higher than that of the special care homes, and they refuse personal care home placement for this reason.

And there is nothing in the new legislation or in the regulations that suggests that the government intends to regulate the fees, and so people will be refusing to go into the personal care homes, as they have been doing already, because they can't pay the fees.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to go on to talk a little bit more about these personal care homes because they have traditionally been small operations controlled in some places by city by-laws which have limited them to five clients or less. And the proposed regulations, as I understand it, will allow personal care homes to admit up to 15 clients.

Now I want to be clear that we don't know this because it's not in the legislation. We have no idea by the legislation how many people are going to go into these personal care homes now, but we do know that the government suggested up to 15 clients.

Now personal care home operators have complained that five is too few for them to make an adequate living, and they have wanted to have an increase in the number of people they could have in their home. But homes with 15 clients, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will be too large to retain a home-like atmosphere and will become, in essence, small institutions.

I believe this, Mr. Minister and Mr. Speaker, as a critic for seniors' issues, and I know that I'm reflecting the concerns of the health care givers in the province because they've made the same points. They have said that the personal care homes, if they go up to 15 clients, will not retain the family, home-like atmosphere that they have had to date in the ones that have been well run, and they will become, in essence, small institutions, mini-institutions.

Now what would the purpose of the government be in developing mini-institutions of personal care homes? Well the new regulations, I submit, will encourage the development of larger personal care homes as profitable business enterprises, and that the real purpose of this legislation is to support the ongoing privatization of health care facilities. That's what's behind this legislation, as much as it's behind many of the moves by the

Department of Health and the government opposite regarding other departments as well.

It will be expensive for the personal care home operators, for many of them that exist now, to make the necessary improvements to their facilities without government help — and no help is mentioned in the regulations, and no help is certainly mentioned in the legislation. Some homes will have to close; others will be able to make the changes and will become these business enterprises, as I mentioned already.

My assessment is that these personal care homes may well become expensive alternatives to home care for those who can pay. And some of these personal care homes may become quite luxurious, for a price.

I've mentioned already that there's no standardized fee schedules in the proposed regulations and no mention of controlling fees in this legislation, and that each operator will be allowed to work out a fee structure through a written agreement with each individual client or with a designated responsible person, so the rates may vary according to the client's perceived ability to pay.

And I think you're going to see in these personal care homes, with the kind of legislation that's being put before us and the kinds of regulations that have been suggested, you're going to see personal care homes where one person pays a certain amount and someone else pays an entirely different amount, based on their perceived ability to pay.

And they work out their own individual contract with the operator, and they pay what they can pay, and they pay it because they want the services and need the services. But it becomes a privatization and a facility that, I think, is not acceptable as a continuum of long-term care for the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Smart: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I know the minister is going to say that the regulations say that people will not be allowed in if they're at level 3 or 4 care, but one of the problems in the nursing homes has been that people are admitted at a certain level, and as they age and as they get more ill, they get to a higher level of care and they need a higher level of care.

And I suggest that even if people are admitted into personal care homes at levels 1 and 2 care, as they age and as they demand nursing care and more services, it may become common practice to grant exemptions to allow a home to arrange for such extra services, rather than move a client. And we may well see an amendment coming in to allow this to happen in the future, especially if we get these small institutions built that provide exclusive care and elite care for people who have money.

I can see very clearly that people could get into a home like that at a lower level of care, and the pressure would be on to allow them to stay. Older people don't want to be moved around and moved around and moved around, so of course there's public sympathy for people wanting to stay where they're put. And if they're put into a personal

care home at level 1 or 2, the pressure to keep them there will be very great.

(1630)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to put it to the minister that with home care in place and well funded, if you would well fund it, with enriched housing for seniors being developed, and with the ongoing development of group homes and special care homes, it's hard to see what the role of personal care homes is expected to be in the continuum of long-term care, except as an option for those who can afford to pay extra money for security and comfort. And I predict, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that these homes may be developed to further promote a two-tiered health care system.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a very few short comments in closing debate on this Bill. As I said in the earlier comments in second reading, this is an important Bill for the provision of long-term care in the province. It's been widely regarded by people in the delivery of long-term care across the province, as the member said in some of her comments.

When the hon. member opposite rose to speak to this issue, I frankly fully expected, because I think the long-term care community expected, that there would be wide agreement on this Bill. She began by saying she had concern with this legislation, then followed that with several arguments in favour of the legislation, and then went on to a discussion about regulations, and really they were . . . and a sort of a criticism, I think, of the fact that many of the provisions will be in regulations. But I should assure the member and the House that the provisions that are in regulations are standard provisions which are always in regulations.

An Hon. Member: — That's what you said the last time.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — No, that's what I said last time; that's what I say this time too — that standard provisions, which are always in regulations, will be. And as we get into Committee of the Whole discussion, I'm sure we can go into some detail on this if the member would like to.

And then the member went into a discussion about consultation, or lack of consultation. The fact is, there's been a wide-ranging consultation on this issue. The consultation has pointed us in the direction that this legislation takes us and takes the province. And that consultation leads us to the legislation that we're now discussing and to the . . . and there will be one further form of consultation, and that will be in the production of these regulations.

So, Mr. Speaker, just in closing this, I want to say to the hon. member and to others across there, when there is a Bill like this one, where there's wide agreement, widespread agreement across the province . . . In fact, I haven't heard anyone who is against it until now. The member stands and says, well I'm against this and this, but only looking for sinister motives even in the most . . . in a Bill which is the closest to motherhood that you're going to find. Mr. Speaker, there are no sinister motives. There are no sinister motives in the nature of the

regulations and how they will be drafted.

Mr. Speaker, I just say to the member, we — all of us — have a responsibility here when there is wide agreement across the province, there is wide agreement on the care that is needed by our people. There is a time, from time to time, when all members in here can agree and just stand and simply say, I agree with what's going on. And that's what should be going on here, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hodgins that Bill No. 47 — An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act be now read a second time.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we last left off, I had made some remarks about revenue sharing, at length, about the state of revenue sharing in Saskatchewan. But I wanted an opportunity to review the remarks of the Minister of Highways, who moved the Bill in second reading, because I wasn't quite clear as to what the Minister of Highways was talking about. And after . . .

An Hon. Member: — Nor did he.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Nor did he, says the member from Quill Lakes. And that's apparent, that's apparent because I have now read his remarks, and I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I'm having great difficulty in relating what he says about the Bill to the Bill itself.

As an example . . . well, let me just deal with the Bill first, and just to be clear what the Bill says. And the Bill says that this Act may be cited as The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, and that The (Municipal) Revenue Sharing Act is amended by adding the following section. And it says that:

Notwithstanding subsection 3(2), grants payable pursuant to subsection 3(1) (which are revenue sharing grants) with respect to the 1989-90 fiscal year are to be paid out of the consolidated fund, but, subject to section 4, the total amount that may be paid in grants:

- (a) to urban municipalities is the amount determined by multiplying the total amount available for the payment of grants to urban municipalities at the beginning of the 1988-89 fiscal year by 100 per cent.

And then it says for rural municipalities also by taking the money that was paid in 1988-89 and multiplying that by 100 per cent.

Well it doesn't take any mathematical wizard to figure out that what's happening is that the Bill basically says that whatever money was paid out in revenue sharing — in revenue sharing, as distinct from any number of other programs — the amount of money paid out in revenue sharing will be exactly the same in 1989-1990 as it was

the previous year.

So in effect, the funds under revenue sharing, as opposed to a number of other programs, such as the capital program, the urban assistance program, the cultural and recreational facilities grant program, that the revenue sharing would be frozen. That's the Bill, that's the Bill that's before us, this Bill 47 that we're discussing.

Now I went on at some length, some length last time, Mr. Speaker, about why I disagreed about freezing the revenue sharing; that why I felt there should be more; and the problems that it creates not only for municipalities but also for property taxpayers throughout Saskatchewan; why it was a problem to freeze these grants. But I said I wanted to review the remarks of the Minister of Highways, and I have now done that.

Now the Minister of Highways, and I want to quote him here, on June 19, page 1993 of *Hansard*, the Minister of Highways says:

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, there is in that budget and by way of this Bill a new \$100 million capital program for municipalities.

Now I thought maybe I was mistaken, Mr. Speaker, so I pulled out the copy of the Bill and I read what I've just read to the Assembly, and I thought maybe I've missed something and I turned it over. But there wasn't anything there about a capital program. And then I looked to see is there a page two because this just says page one. And I looked for a page two and . . . but there's no page two, and nowhere is there talk anything about a capital program. So one might well wonder, you know, what did the Minister of Highways have in his pipe that day to say that there is in this Bill a new \$100 million capital program.

I know that, you know, a government doesn't lose any opportunities to blow its own horn about things that it's doing, but surely there's better ways for the government to blow its own horn than for a minister, and in this case the Acting or assistant or the junior House Leader to stand up and totally inappropriately talk about things in the Bill that just aren't there. And again, Mr. Speaker, I turned it over and I looked for a page two in case I missed something, but it just wasn't there.

Now the Minister of Highways also went on to talk, Mr. Speaker, and I want to quote him. He says:

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, another major thrust of what this Bill will allow is under the recreation and cultural facilities program . . .

And again I thought, well I'm missing something, I've got to be missing something because this Bill that I read just talked about revenue sharing and freezing the amount of revenue sharing. So again I turned it over and looked for a page two, and there's nothing about any recreation and cultural facilities program. It just wasn't there.

And then the Minister of Highways went on, and I quote him:

I thirdly submit to you, Mr. Speaker . . .

That's kind of an alliteration, but that's neither here nor there. But to carry on with the quotation:

I thirdly submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that within this Bill are contained provisions for the increase in urban assistance respecting highways for our cities and towns across this province . . .

So again I turned the Bill over and I said, well now, is this a Bill about revenue sharing or this a Bill to do with highways? And I looked for a page two or a page three. There's nothing there about urban assistance. The only thing the Bill talks about is revenue sharing.

So again, I'm glad I had an opportunity to review the comments of the Minister of Highways, but I must admit, Mr. Speaker, that I'm no wiser today than I was then about the relationship between his comments and the Bill, and I'm just as puzzled today about his comments as I was then. Even if I'm better informed as to exactly what it is that the minister says, it certainly doesn't enhance anyone's understanding as to why the revenue sharing for urban and rural municipalities should be frozen.

Now, if I might, Mr. Speaker, inasmuch as the Minister of Highways, inasmuch as the Minister of Highways did digress from the Bill that's before us, a Bill to do with revenue sharing, and went on in some detail to talk about a \$100 million capital program for municipalities and, in fact, inviting us to talk about it and support it — and then went on to talk about the recreational and cultural facilities program, and again encouraging us to support it.

He then talked about urban assistance respecting highways and again encouraging us to support it.

And I would assume by encouraging us also, encouraging us . . . Notwithstanding the fact that we're talking in a quite limited fashion . . . in a quite limited fashion addresses revenue sharing only — notwithstanding that, the Minister of Highways, the junior House Leader, is inviting us to make comments about the capital program, the recreation and cultural facilities program, and about urban assistance for highways.

And so I want to take a few minutes to do exactly that, Mr. Speaker. And I want you to know very clearly why it is that I'm digressing away from the Bill to talk about those things. It's only because the Minister of Highways has raised these matters in debate, has raised them at some great length, and I want to take a few minutes to just address those.

With respect to the capital program, Mr. Speaker, I don't see the mayors and aldermen of Saskatchewan towns, cities, and villages turning cart-wheels of joy in their main streets about this capital program.

Now the government may think it's some wonderful thing that they've brought forward this capital program, this \$100 million capital program that's to be spread over five years, but I just want to remind the government members and remind the people of Saskatchewan that the capital program is something that the government decided to cancel for a period of two years, and we haven't seen that

before.

For a period of two years they said no capital assistance for municipalities — none whatsoever. Now they've brought it back and they say, well this is the greatest thing since sliced bread. Now if they're thinking that somehow municipal leaders have such a short memory that they're going to forget about the fact that there was no assistance for a period of two years, they have another think coming.

Now they may try and fool the public about what a wonderful thing it is, but no one's forgetting that for a period of two years — that for a period of two years they turned their backs on urban municipalities; they said, no help for capital. Notwithstanding the fact that we've got money for GigaText, we've got money for any number of things, we have no money for capital assistance for urban municipalities — point number one.

In terms of the recreation and cultural facilities program, urban municipalities in Saskatchewan have been asking for years with respect to those kinds of conditional programs that they be made unconditional; that urban municipalities be given the option of deciding what kinds of facilities and programs they want to pay for; that the government not set out such rigid criteria for capital assistance; that it roll it into capital programs and let urban municipalities make their own decisions about what's best in their own communities, as opposed to the government saying what's best.

I know the program was there before. The government took the wrong turn. They should have said, we're going to roll it into capital. Let municipalities make their own decisions about whether a curling rink is more important than it is to repair the sidewalks. Let the municipalities, let the local leaders determine and decide those things as opposed to the Minister of Urban Affairs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1645)

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Now thirdly, Mr. Speaker, thirdly, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Highways talked about money for urban assistance respecting highways. The only thing that I can say to him, the only thing that I can say to him, that a lot more is going to be required if we're going to do the job in Saskatchewan of bringing our highways, in terms of our cities, towns, and villages, if we're going to bring them up to snuff, a lot more money is required.

They cannot freeze those kinds of funds; they cannot cut back on those kinds of funds over the years and then say everyone should applaud their actions. It just simply isn't enough money; urban municipalities need more.

Mr. Speaker, again the urban leaders in Saskatchewan are not turning cart-wheels of joy about the measures this government has taken with respect to urban municipalities.

I want to make just a couple of comments again about revenue sharing. There is less money — less money — going to urban municipalities, less money going to the

cities, towns, and villages in Saskatchewan under the revenue sharing program this year than there has been in previous years, when you take inflation into account.

The amount of money that's going this year is exactly the same as last year; that is, \$67 million. That's the same as last year. But when you take into account an increase in inflationary costs of 5 per cent or so, that represents a decrease to municipalities. They're not able to keep up. They're not able to keep up.

Now the government members might think it's a wonderful thing to freeze those grants, but I tell you, municipalities are going to need more than that if they're able to truly have the moneys available for their programs without cutting back on services or without raising property taxes.

And I think that it's indicative of a government priority when they consistently freeze, when they consistently freeze urban revenue sharing. It's indicative of government priorities that they take the position that they want to emphasize that revenues to support urban municipal programs and services should come from property taxes, as opposed to any other range of taxes, any other range of taxes, whether corporation taxes, what have you. They prefer that those taxes come from property taxpayers.

They're taking the position that the property tax is a tax that they prefer, is a tax that they favour. We take the position that the property tax is an unfair tax, and that there should be less reliance on the property tax as opposed to their continued reliance on the property tax, Mr. Speaker. That is a very fundamental and basic difference between this side of the House and the right-wingers on that side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, finally in conclusion I want to say that yes, we support revenue sharing. We are the party that set up revenue sharing in Saskatchewan because we believe that there should be an ongoing mechanism to transfer money from the provincial government to municipalities in an unconditional way so that the municipalities would be assisted to provide the services and programs they saw as being necessary.

We wanted to do that to bring down the cost to property taxpayers. We instituted that program. But I tell you, Mr. Speaker, there's one thing we do not support. We support revenue sharing; we do not support revenue freezing.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would just like to close off the second reading debate . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Is the minister closing debate? Order, order. The Minister of Urban Affairs did not move the motion, so the minister is not closing debate.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I just want to explain very briefly, to allow the opposition to again talk about this, but I think we have to put something

on record. I was indeed attending a SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) conference at the time that my colleague, the Minister of Highways, brought forward the second reading speech. And he carried it on my behalf, and he did it very, very well, I might add.

He described in detail how good our total budget of Urban Affairs was to the municipalities of Saskatchewan. And in his speech, he unfortunately did refer to the Bill rather than the budget in most of his remarks, and that's probably what confused the opposition. But his opening statement was correct, wherein he indicated that I would like to highlight for a few moments some of the initiatives under that budget. So that was indeed a correct statement, and you would have felt that the opposition would have understood what he was talking about.

So I will clarify that he did say "Bill" rather than "budget" in his remarks that followed. Now my colleague, again I repeat, while I was at the SUMA regional explaining the budget — where they were pleased to receive my remarks — did a good job explaining how our government did recognize municipal problems. And my critic must be wiser now, because indeed they have approved the Urban Affairs department of budget estimates. So for him to stand up now is totally negative. You know he will soon see mayors and councils of our towns and villages throughout the entire province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, very pleased indeed with the new capital program. They recognize — they, the elected officials — recognize that our government cares about the problems and appreciates the effort that they have made over the last couple of years to be our partners, and I have no problem . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . My critic, not my colleague. And yet in his response, in his response to that very . . . those opening remarks at best, a report from *Hansard* of last year is what he did. He repeated his remarks from a year ago. And the best that he could do was take a run at my earning power and the property taxes that I have to pay.

Now you know, his record on Regina council in the old years probably firmly established the high rate of property taxes that I and all the other residents of Regina do pay. So I'm glad he brought that up because neither had to do with the Bill at hand.

And I would like to move the second reading of this, but I understand that the opposition would like to speak further, so at this time I'll give them the opportunity to do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That was an amazing speech. The man didn't even know about his own Bill. He thought he was closing debate and he was sitting here all afternoon. No wonder we're dealing with a Bill that gives no increases to the municipalities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — All I can say is that his remarks didn't add anything to what the Minister of Highways, when he introduced this Bill. And I'll tell you if you take a look at

the record, he said nothing because there's nothing good that can be said about this Bill.

What this Bill does is take from the rural and urban affairs and the revenue sharings. And it freezes the revenue sharing. That's what it does.

I want to take a look at the Bill, and it's very simple, Mr. Minister of Highways. And you shouldn't try to deceive the public in respect to trying to colour it up with other outside programs, because the fact of the matter is what you've done here is to freeze sharing, revenue sharing with the urban and the rural municipalities. And what is the net effect that this has?

Well first of all, it doesn't take into effect inflation, inflation about 4 per cent, which all the municipalities have to face. So in practical terms they are getting less money to carry on than they were a year before. There's no doubt about it.

The second thing that these people who are purporting to help out the urban and rural municipalities, they imposed and increased the gas tax — 45 cents a gallon on unleaded gasoline. And there is absolutely no rebate to any of the municipalities and certainly none to the rural municipalities. So I'll tell you, the rural municipalities by this budget are sure a lot better off all right.

So what are the alternatives left for the urban municipalities and to the rural municipalities? Well they can do one or two things. First of all what they are able to do, because the revenue sharing is frozen, is that they can cut services. Cut services, that's one alternative that all the municipalities have as a result of the squeezing of the revenue sharing by this government.

And we know what happens when that occurs. Take a look at the highways across this province. There was a freezing in respect to the expenditures there. And what happened is that we had, we have really a basic crisis in respect to the highways of this province, and the citizens of this province will concur with that statement. So they can cut services. Or secondly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what they can do is to move up and increase local taxation. That's what the option to the municipalities is, to increase taxation.

Let's take a look at the massiveness of the increases from '81 up until '87. And in Regina, take an average home. In 1981 there was \$1,102 was paid on the average home; in 1987 that had risen to \$1,531. So what we have here is a transfer, a transfer of the burden onto the local level, to the urban and the rural municipalities.

And I want to ask: how can this government justify freezing the revenue sharing to both urban and rural? Well, they say, we're out of money. We can't afford it in the budget. This is what they're telling the public. But let's take a look at their priorities when it comes to spending money. Let's take a look at GigaText where over \$5 million has been squandered — squandered — and we have nothing to show for it. But what do they do to the rural municipalities? They say, freeze the grants.

Let's take a look at whether or not they have money and

what are their priorities. Well they find money when it comes to Cargill, a multinational corporation, one of the richest corporations in the United States.

An Hon. Member: — In the world.

Mr. Koskie: — In the world. And what do they do? Well, I'll tell you, they find money. They didn't freeze the money on Cargill in their participation. They said they were going to go 50 per cent in setting up a fertilizer plant.

And do you know what happened? When we finally got it searched out, the taxpayers of this province are required to put up something like \$290 million in equity and in guarantees. All I can say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, wrong priorities, wrong priorities of this government.

Let's take a look and see whether they have money for other things that are important to them. And let's take a look at the advertising budget of this government. We took a look at it, and during the election year it was something like \$20 million was spent in one year on self-serving advertising. But they can't increase the grants. No, no. We have no money. We have to freeze revenue sharing.

And let's take a look at some of their other priorities. Well they have no problem hiring Tory hacks, not only defeated provincially, provincial cabinet ministers and members. And let's take a look. There's Paul Schoenhals, the defeated . . . kicked out of office by the will of the people. And what does he get? He gets a job at 200, \$250,000 a year. What about George Hill? George Hill, the old Tory president, past president of the Tory party; well, I can't even hazard a guess. But I'll tell you the price they paid him to be a judge wasn't enough, so he resigned as being a judge and came back. And what did he do? He's the head of SaskPower; head of the privatization. Well, they got money for him.

And they got money for Schoenhals, and they got money for Louis Domotor, who was defeated soundly in the Humboldt riding, defeated. They got money to pay him \$45,000 to virtually do nothing, in my view. Because of the basic ability of the man, I wouldn't think that 45 million was high enough.

I have considerable more to say in respect to this Bill, and I want to continue my remarks. And therefore I want to beg leave to adjourn this debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move, seconded by the member for Regina Centre, by leave of the Assembly:

That notwithstanding rule 3 of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, that when this Assembly adjourns on Thursday, June . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. Someone has to move the adjournment of the debate on Bill No. 47.

Mr. Koskie: — No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm sorry if you

didn't hear, but I did indicate that I asked to adjourn debate because I had so much more that I want to explain to the public in respect to this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order.

Debate adjourned.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I seek leave of the Assembly to move a motion respecting hours.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

House Sitting Hours

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — I would move, seconded by the member for Regina Centre, by leave of the Assembly:

That notwithstanding rule 3 of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, that when this Assembly adjourns on Thursday, June 29, 1989, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, July 4, 1989.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:02 p.m.