

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Saxinger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, a couple seated in the Speaker's gallery, Mr. and Mrs. Keller from La Ronge. Mr. and Mrs. Keller run Nature-Berry. They are the people who make this gourmet jam and pancake mix from the wild rice. Would you please help me welcome Mr. and Mrs. Keller.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Assembly, Ms. Patricia Bréaud, sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Patricia is a grade 12 student majoring in sciences and she is part of a group of 63 students who have come to Saskatchewan from France. Patricia lives in Paris, France. She is staying with a couple here in Regina, and next year a group of Saskatchewan students will repay the visit to France.

I hope Patricia enjoys her stay in our province. These students are billeted throughout the province and are here from July 4 to July 30. I'm sure Patricia will experience the warm hospitality of the Saskatchewan people and take back some very fond memories.

I would ask all members to please welcome our special guest.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, l'opposition officielle voudrait faire bon accueil aux étudiants de France, et nous espérons que vous aurez une très bonne visite ici en Saskatchewan.

(Translation: Mr. Speaker, the official opposition would like to extend a warm welcome to the students from France, and we hope that you will have a very good visit here in Saskatchewan.)

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Closure Plans for VIA Rail

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. My question today is to the Deputy Premier and it has to do with the announcement out of Ottawa that VIA Rail is filing a proposed business plan which, according to the press reports, will mean that passenger rail service in Saskatchewan is going to be eliminated for the first time ever in the history of the province of Saskatchewan. And also according to the press reports, this is going to be done, Mr. Deputy Premier, without any hearings. In other words, they're waiving the provisions of the National

Transportation Act.

I wonder whether the Premier, Deputy Premier, would indicate to the House whether or not the government agrees with the position that we adopt, namely that Ottawa has no right to change unilaterally such an intimate part of our heritage without consultation, and if you do, whether or not the Deputy Premier would indicate to the House what representations have been made on behalf of all the people of the province of Saskatchewan opposing such a Draconian move by the federal Conservative government.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I, as Minister of Highways and Transportation for the province of Saskatchewan, would like to offer my remarks on the Leader of the Opposition's question. Firstly, respecting representation made on behalf of Saskatchewan people to the federal government, I want the legislature to know that a few months ago I met personally with Mr. Bouchard and spoke out strongly on behalf of the interests of people in Saskatchewan. I want the legislature to further know that as late as this morning I had a chat with Mr. Bouchard's office to inquire further and make representation on behalf of Saskatchewan people.

I think it is very important, Mr. Speaker, to understand that no final decisions have been taken by the federal government, by the federal cabinet, but that a business plan has been submitted to the government at the government's request.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, it is fair to think that when you have a corporation that over the last 12 years has expended some \$5 billion of taxpayers' money, when you have a corporation that is providing a public service to the people of Canada to the tune of \$600 million, that it would be fair to say, let's have a look at it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the minister in charge of transportation policy for the provincial government. I say to the minister that this proposed business plan will affect, as I understand it, 14 Saskatchewan communities — amongst others, Mr. Minister, Moosomin, Broadview, Indian Head, Regina, Moose Jaw, Herbert, Swift Current, Gull Lake, Maple Creek, Melville, Watrous, Saskatoon, Biggar, and Unity, and I'm also told something like 250-plus people are going to be affected by this shut-down.

May I say with the greatest of respect, Mr. Speaker, to the minister as I preface my question, that chatting with Ottawa is not enough. Waiting may be waiting until it's too late. I want to know specifically: have you taken the message to Ottawa, on behalf of all the people of the province of Saskatchewan, that we oppose these unilateral cut-backs affecting passenger service in Saskatchewan, and what is the nature of representations? Have you put it down in writing?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I think I have made it

abundantly clear to the members of the opposition that I certainly have made representation, and I might add, Mr. Speaker, strong representation to the federal government. Mr. Speaker, this government indeed has a concern for the complete elimination of many jobs, of transportation services by rail in the province of Saskatchewan. You bet your life, Mr. Speaker, we are concerned. You bet your life, Mr. Speaker, that we have made representation.

But, Mr. Speaker, I impress upon you that no decisions have been taken by the federal government. I further impress upon you, Mr. Speaker, that it is fair and reasonable with a \$600 million annual subsidy or loss on behalf of the taxpayers of this country, that a look be taken at the service.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the position taken by the members opposite, one of holus-bolus, you bet we should just provide service all over the place regardless of cost, regardless of \$600 million, is not responsible, is not responsible to taxpayers in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a new question to the Minister of Transportation. I might say with respect to the Minister of Transportation policy for Saskatchewan, your job here is not to explain away the federal government's rationale for doing away with passenger service, which is basically what you've been doing about the cost factor. Your job is to represent the interests of 14 communities, 250 families which are affected.

And I want to know whether or not your government has taken any steps, other than simply having chats with the federal government. For example, have you raised it with the other western premiers? The western premiers' conference has just been concluded a few days ago. Did the Premier raise this issue at that conference? What concretely have you said and done to communicate to the people in Ottawa the opposition by our province to the elimination of VIA Rail? What have you taken?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I think by now it is abundantly clear that the Leader of the Opposition is grandstanding here today before any final decisions have been taken. And I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that this government has indeed made strong representation on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. And we will continue not only, Mr. Speaker, in this particular transportation initiative, but in a comprehensive transportation plan.

And I remind you, Mr. Speaker, and I remind members opposite, it was this government, when you talk about transportation, that just this year put an extra \$10 million into highways. Mr. Speaker, it was this government that today provides a public subsidy for bus transportation throughout this province by way of not only STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) but also assistance to private carriers in the bus industry. It is this government, Mr. Speaker, that has been working very hard to entice airline companies such as Time Air to fly

throughout northern Saskatchewan and elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, I talk of that part of the transportation plan as well as the strong representations that I personally have made to Ottawa on behalf of people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the Minister of Transportation. The minister says that he has made representations to Ottawa. Unfortunately he's not able to table any correspondence. Unfortunately he's not able to tell me, in a simple way, a response to my question about whether or not the western premiers were consulted. Unfortunately he's unable to tell us about any kind of direct communication that he's made, other than a chat, on this issue. So therefore this is pretty thin stuff upon which to base the defence of VIA Rail.

My question to the Minister of Transportation is this: how about us doing — us meaning the Legislative Assembly — something concretely non-partisan in a bi-partisan fashion . . . Well, the members opposite laugh. You can do this by way of your own resolution if you want.

How about — and I'll make this suggestion to you — will you give us leave — if you want, you introduce it and we'll give you leave — right after the question period today, orders of the day, to introduce under rule 39 a special motion condemning the attempt to destroy VIA Rail for Saskatchewan. Will you agree with that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I would say certainly. I would say certainly, Mr. Speaker, that this government would give consideration to sitting down in this legislature and talking about the issue.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talks about the method in which we have made representations to the federal government. I will tell you what, Mr. Speaker, I will tell the member opposite the ways that we have not made representation to the federal government, because I and this government have a fundamental difference of opinion with the opposition on how best to represent the interests of the people of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, one thing we have not done is picketed and demonstrated and gone on strike and howled to the high heights of this legislature or elsewhere, Mr. Speaker, and whatever else, whatever other obstructionistic tactic that the Leader of the Opposition and his radicals are so famous for, that produce no results.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — I think Mr. Speaker — a new question to the Minister of Transportation — he's dead right that we have a difference in approach and philosophy. And you're also right . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — You're also right that you haven't

picketed or ticketed. You people have gone to sleep as far as Ottawa is concerned.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Brian Mulroney has the Premier and this government so deep in his hip pocket you guys can't see daylight. That's how deep in the hip pocket you are of the PC government.

But look, this is an issue that we can simply put . . . let's try to put aside our partisan views on this thing. We have a fundamental difference. I'm going to . . . the members opposite don't want to hear this question. I'm asking whether or not the Minister of Highways and Transportation will agree to this kind of a motion.

I'm going to send a copy over to you. You can consider it, and if you have some word changes we'll accept them. If you want to introduce it, that's fine by us; we don't care who gets the credit for it. Will the minister agree to a resolution which says this:

That this Assembly expresses to the federal Minister of Transport, and to the Prime Minister, its grave concerns regarding recent reports that VIA Rail plans to abandon entirely rail service in this province; and further, that this Assembly urges the federal Minister of Transport and Prime Minister to immediately disavow such reports and make a firm commitment to the continuance of passenger rail service in this province.

Will you, on behalf of the government, agree to introduce, right after orders of the day today, this motion, pass it so that we can unanimously express our concern in a concrete fashion? Will you agree with that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I would have expected, fully expected such a tactic to be used by other members of the NDP such as the NDP House Leader. Mr. Speaker, I never would have expected from the Leader of the Opposition a grandstanding technique that brings today into this legislature a motion that I'm supposed to agree to.

Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite had any ounce of genuineness to him whatsoever, that motion would have been on my desk first thing this morning and not brought up here at 5 minutes after 2. Mr. Speaker, I tell the Leader of the Opposition, send us that motion and we will certainly, certainly consider it, and we will talk about it.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Minister of Transportation. He has a copy of that motion on his desk. That motion is virtually the same that was attempted to be introduced by my colleague from Saskatoon Westmount a couple of weeks ago, but rejected by your side. We all know what the issues are. If you don't like the words in that motion, suggest your own words. You've got 20 minutes or so before orders of the day begin. If you want to introduce it . . . and the members opposite laugh.

I know that for them this would be an impossible task in 20 minutes, but for any other thinking person who can read a sentence, it should be done in a few minutes. You do anything that you want. Let's get on with the job of trying to save VIA Rail, because if you don't, then I can say to you, Mr. Minister, and to the Premier and to all the Conservatives opposite, you're more interested in apologizing for Mr. Mulroney and the PCs than you are in standing up for Saskatchewan interests.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I like the Leader of the Opposition's definition of fairness. He says, you could have all of 20 minutes, the rest of the time during question period, while I pepper you with questions to see whether or not this is a motion . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member from Meadow Lake and the member from Regina North East, would you come to order. And the member for Quill Lake.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you for settling this legislature down . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you for your assistance, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will give the Leader of the Opposition the following commitment. He has provided to us just minutes ago a proposed motion that this legislature might wish to deal with. And, Mr. Speaker, I would ask, I would respectfully ask the Leader of the Opposition in all fairness, and if he's not here to grandstand, to allow the government a day or two. If you want to do it tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, I would be prepared to meet with your House Leader and make arrangements, Mr. Speaker, so that this very important issue could be dealt with tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, I once again highlight that I believe it unfair that the Leader of the Opposition would bring into the legislature today and ask in 15 minutes that we agree with his motion. But I'd be quite prepared, Mr. Speaker, to meet with his House Leader, and that by tomorrow, if mutually agreed, we deal with this motion or a motion that is mutually agreeable and ultimately, Mr. Speaker, in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before we continue to the next question, I would just like to bring to the attention of hon. members that I think you all agree that the last couple of questions and answers have certainly been in the area of debate and not what we would normally consider as being in order in question period, and I'd like to bring that to your attention.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Highways and Transportation is quoted in the newspaper today as saying he is very concerned about this issue. Almost one month ago his seat mate, the member from Melville, was very concerned about this issue as well. There has been a motion sitting on the order paper — it

was attempted under rule 39 — it's been sitting on the order paper ever since then.

The minister said he's been in touch. The minister sitting beside him says he's a personal friend of Mr. Bouchard. He said it at a public meeting. I want the Minister of Highways and Transportation to say that he will now table in this House all correspondence from members of his cabinet — from members of his cabinet — to the federal government on the matters before the House at this moment, so that the people of Saskatchewan can really find out where the Minister of Highways and Transportation stands on this issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that I have made my position very clear today in the legislature that I and this government certainly have serious concerns with the complete elimination of service, rail service, by VIA Rail in Saskatchewan.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, and to the credit of the member for Melville, that he made his own position and the position of the government quite clear at a public meeting some number of weeks ago in the city of Melville.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that I have further made my position quite clear to the press yesterday. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that in summation, the business plan that has been presented to Mr. Bouchard is only a plan and has yet not been fully decided by the federal government. This government certainly has concerns in this transportation area and others. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that that should satisfy the members of the opposition as far as the position of this government goes on this particular matter.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Bid to Purchase Portion of VIA Rail

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, we're hearing directly from the minister in charge of Highways and Transportation for the province of Saskatchewan, has said that he will not lay correspondence on the Table. His minister sitting beside him, his seat mate, said that he'd been in touch with Mr. Bouchard and was going to go down to Ottawa to see him personally. He said that at the Melville meeting. I still want to see that information.

But the question I want to ask, the new question I want to ask the minister now is this, Mr. Speaker. An agent for the Orient Express has expressed an interest of buying VIA Rail and turning it into an expensive service for wealthy passengers. This appears to be some more Tory privatization that is going to come about in VIA Rail. I want to know, does this government, Mr. Speaker, support the bid to close off passenger service to the ordinary people of Canada and instead open it up to the wealthy only. Is that the minister's position on VIA Rail?

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I am not intimately familiar with the proposal that the hon. member brings forth. I do know that there were media reports of a proposal by a business person last night in the news. Mr.

Speaker, I don't believe it fair for me to even comment on that proposal without further investigation.

I only say again, Mr. Speaker, that I have in the past made my representations to the federal government. I have as late as this morning been in contact with the federal minister's office, and I say, Mr. Speaker, that — and I'm not bragging, but I would think, Mr. Speaker, that that is a fairly responsive position to take by a Saskatchewan Minister of Highways and Transportation on this issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Care Facility for Gravelbourg

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, my question, in the absence of the Premier, is to the Deputy Premier and it concerns the behaviour of the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg.

I have a recent edition of the Gravelbourg *Tribune* which deals with the response by the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg to a recent story in that same newspaper in which Gravelbourg community leaders expressed their concerns about the failure of your government to deliver on its promise during the by-election; in other words, to construct the health care facilities in Gravelbourg.

Those quoted in the earlier story say that they have since received phone calls from the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg telling them to stay out of the issue. Mr. Deputy Premier, is it your government's policy to have your back-benchers phone community leaders and tell them to keep quiet when they voice legitimate concerns about their communities?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm obviously not familiar with the press clipping that the member has.

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I've long since learned, but when it was really driven home was during the by-election when that member became the MLA, but I've long since learned, Mr. Speaker, that you take very little from that side of the House at face value. So I'll wait until I review that, Mr. Speaker, before I even accept what she says is accurate.

But let me say this, Mr. Speaker, let me say this. I have a very, very high regard for the MLA from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I think he is an excellent MLA, Mr. Speaker, and proof of that is, Mr. Speaker, that all five hospitals in that constituency are still open despite efforts of members opposite to have them closed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Deputy Premier, you have a copy of

that article on your desk right now, and one of the community leaders, an Albert Boire, is quoted as saying that basically what he, the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, and the quote is, that he told me, was to back off because you may delay the progress of the project.

Mr. Premier, does the member have your permission to threaten and intimidate community leaders in Gravelbourg if they complain about your government? Does he have your permission to do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I rise here . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. We must have some silence before the Minister of Health will be permitted to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I rise because I have seen the article the member refers to. I don't have it before me, but I have seen it.

Let me just say this, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the hospital project at Gravelbourg and the project in the neighbouring community of Lafleche and discussions which are going on in other communities in that constituency between this MLA, the MLA for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, who is acting on behalf of all those communities and asking the communities, as he should, Mr. Speaker, as he should, to work together, which is exactly what he's done — asking them to work together, something which had not gone on, maybe for ever in that area, as far as I know, but something which is going on now, much to the chagrin of several, and I say a very small number of people in the community of Gravelbourg who do not feel that they should be working with other communities and neighbouring communities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if the member's research as it relates to this project or any other project in this province or in that part of the province is the Gravelbourg *Tribune*, Mr. Speaker, that is a very partisan newspaper. Mr. Speaker, the Gravelbourg *Tribune* is as reliable a source as is the *Commonwealth*, the official publication of the NDP Party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Would it be possible to get the order of the members so we could move to the next order of business? Could we have the attention of the member for Regina Elphinstone and Meadow Lake and the member for Quill Lakes? Could we have your attention so we could get on to the next order of business?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 78 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act.

The Speaker: — I think hon. members, including the Minister of Finance, I think hon. members should realize that when the Speaker is on his feet they should not be always making comments from their desks. The business of the House cannot proceed in an orderly manner. All members are aware of this, and I'm bringing it to their attention once more.

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

Bill No. 79 — An Act to amend The Medical Profession Act, 1981

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend the Medical Profession Act, 1981.

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

Bill No. 80 — An Act to amend The Department of Justice Act

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill, An Act to amend The Department of Justice (amendment) Act.

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

Bill No. 81 — An Act to amend The Rural Municipality Act, 1984

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Rural Municipality Act.

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

Bill No. 82 — An Act respecting Small Business Investment Incentives

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting Small Business Investment Incentives.

The Speaker: — I am going to once more bring to the attention of members on both sides of the House that this constant interruption is very discourteous and not keeping with the dignity and decorum of this House. And I think that they realize that, and I'm asking them for their co-operation.

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

Bill No. 83 — An Act to provide for the Postponement of the Tabling of Certain Documents

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to provide for the Postponement of the Tabling of Certain Documents.

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

Bill No. 84 — An Act to amend the Builders' Lien Act

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend the Builders' Lien Act.

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

Bill No. 85 — An Act to amend The Mineral Taxation Act

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Mineral Taxation Act.

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

Bill No. 86 — An Act respecting Co-operatives

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill amending The Co-operatives Act.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Media-MLA Ball Game

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm just wondering before orders of the day if I could have leave to report on a annual athletic event which has some significance to the members of the legislature.

Leave granted.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure today to report on an athletic extravaganza which occurred at Massey School last night. It was the annual ball game between the MLAs and the media, and as usual the contest show-cased some amazing athletic prowess that is kept secret from many of us in here as we do our daily work. Unfortunately we were without some of the obvious baseball talent which exists on the opposition benches, but nevertheless the game proceeded and everyone had a good time.

I'd like to draw the House's attention to a few of the more remarkable events which took place last night. As usual you would expect the captains of the two teams to show extraordinary talent, and the local member of the CBC from the press gallery and the member from Kelvington-Wadena certainly did. The member from Kelvington-Wadena was dressed in a pair of shorts and shirt and managed to sacrifice his entire body throughout the game. He did catch the odd pitch from the member from Shaunavon, who turned in a stellar performance for the MLA side on the mound.

Murray Mandryk, who is well known to most members of the House, irregardless of what some of the members of his team said, did turn in an excellent performance in the outfield and, as a matter of fact, robbed me of a home run in the seventh inning. So I'm sure he's going to pay for that next year.

I think Dale Eisler, the *Leader-Post* columnist, deserves special recognition. He came dressed as a hockey player,

and he should have stayed on the ice because he went 0 for 5 at the plate.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, you would be proud to know that your deputy served as umpire last night, and as usual the hon. member from Shellbrook-Torch River showed his amazing ability for fair and impartial treatment. According to the press gallery, he was unfortunately too fair and impartial, because the media team only managed to squeak out a 13 to 12 decision after seven innings. And I can assure the members of the press gallery that members next year — and I would hope that would include talent from both sides of the House — will redeem themselves in next year's game.

There's one final point I'd like to make, Mr. Speaker. According to the rules and procedures of this House, exhibits are not allowed in the Chamber. And I noticed earlier in the afternoon that even though we don't mind the members of the press gallery gloating a little bit with their victory last night, that they not be allowed to display that exhibit for all members of the House to see, and that you would ask them to please drop it down behind the rail. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MOTION UNDER RULE 39

Possible Abandonment of VIA Rail Service in the Province

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I want to ask for unanimous consent to put forward a motion which I hope will receive the same kind of enthusiasm that the previous item did. This motion is moved by myself and seconded by the member from Moose Jaw South. It's under rule 39, would require unanimous consent to proceed. The body of the motion reads as follows:

That this Assembly expresses to the federal Minister of Transport and to the Prime Minister its grave concerns regarding recent reports that VIA Rail plans to abandon entirely rail service in this province; and further, that this Assembly urges the federal Minister of Transportation and the Prime Minister to immediately disavow such reports and make a firm commitment to the continuance of passenger rail service in this province.

Leave not granted.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 46 — An Act to amend The Ophthalmic Dispensers Act

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to explain these amendments to The Ophthalmic Dispensers Act which deal with the method in which complaints alleging

misconduct or incompetence against ophthalmic dispensers are handled.

Under the existing Act, the process of investigating and dealing with disciplinary matters is not explained. The present Act simply says that where a member is found guilty of misconduct or incompetence, certain penalties may be applied. Mr. Speaker, the present Act is inadequate in terms of protecting the public, as well as giving ophthalmic dispensers a clear understanding of the discipline process.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments proposed are the standard provisions contained in newer legislation. In addition to defining professional misconduct and incompetence, the composition of the investigation and discipline committees are outlined. All complaints against ophthalmic dispensers will be reviewed by the investigation committee, and the person who laid the complaint will be informed of the disposition of their complaint.

The investigation committee will be able to temporarily suspend a dispenser where the charge warrants such action. As is a standard provision in such legislation, the discipline committee will be able to subpoena witnesses and records upon application to the court.

Mr. Speaker, penalties for those dispensers found guilty of misconduct or incompetence are outlined, with fines being increased from \$500 to \$5,000. Members of council, committees, and association employees who act on disciplinary matters in good faith will not be liable for action against them.

In addition to the current provision which allows ophthalmic dispensers to appeal disciplinary decisions to the Court of Queen's Bench, they would also be given the option of appealing to council.

Further, an ophthalmic dispenser who has been removed from the register as a result of disciplinary action may appeal for reinstatement in the future, and if refused, may appeal to the court.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments are neither unusual nor radical, but are in fact fully in keeping with the most common provisions of health professions legislation. The proposed amendments are for the benefit of the public and ophthalmic dispensers. The Saskatchewan Association of Ophthalmic Dispensers is in full agreement with these amendments, Mr. Speaker.

(1445)

Ms. Simard: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have also reviewed the legislation in some detail and note that it provides for more regulation of the profession and for more detailed disciplinary provisions, such as establishing an investigation committee and a discipline committee and providing for appropriate appeal process.

It appears to be in line with other professional Acts, Mr. Speaker. We have spoken to representatives of the ophthalmic association; we've spoken to a number of ophthalmic dispensers in the province, and as far as we

have been advised, there's general agreement with respect to this legislation.

I have listened carefully to what the minister has said today. I will be reviewing his comments and may have some questions in Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 51 — An Act to amend The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased today to rise to move second reading of The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act.

This Act was assented to on June 1, 1984, and amendments to the Act were assented to in 1988. The Act and its regulations came into force on June 6 of 1988. All parts of the Act were proclaimed with exception of part IV, which deals with permits.

It is proposed that section be proclaimed in order to bring all building control matters under the jurisdiction of the Act. Consequently amendments to the Act are proposed to maintain the legality of existing by-laws, and for this purpose to permit a municipality by-law to expand upon the building regulations in order to address matters of local concern that are not covered by the regulations. Such expanded regulations are currently permitted by the urban, northern, and rural Acts, and will be subject to ministerial approval.

The Act also provides exceptions for municipalities from administering and enforcing the Act and regulations. If the exceptions to is granted, the minister is required to administer and enforce the Act and regulations within the municipality. The cost for this service is the responsibility of the municipality.

In the past year a number of municipalities have applied for exemption. In consultation with a number of these municipalities, it was decided that the practical and desired approach is for the particular municipality to accept the responsibility of administration, permits, permit fees, and monitoring, and for the department to provide assistance in enforcement, plan review, inspections, etc. This requires amendments to the Act, which does not at present permit the separation of the administrative and enforcement functions of building control.

To facilitate this, it is proposed that the Act be amended to permit the minister to engage persons or companies by contract as needed, to facilitate the practical application of the accessibility standards regulations, and to permit owners the needed degree of flexibility in design of buildings. It is proposed that the chief inspector be empowered to review and grant equivalencies to the specific detail requirements of the standards where he is satisfied that the intent of the standard is not compromised. Such decisions would be subject to an appeal to the appeal board.

It is proposed that this section of building inspector

qualifications by regulation be replaced by the licensing of inspectors. A survey of building inspector qualifications has indicated that too long a period of education and training would be required before qualifications by regulation for inspectors became a practicality.

Licences may be issued with restrictions in accordance to an applicant's knowledge and experience. This will ensure that his capabilities are utilized but not exceeded. It is proposed that the membership of the Saskatchewan Building and Accessibility Standards Appeal Board be increased from six to eight persons to allow wider representation and input from the public.

Clarification of the title of a municipal clerk or administrator, and that of a northern municipality, is also proposed.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Amendment Act, 1989.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, with leave from the Assembly I would adjourn the debate. Our critic would want to have time to be here to explain his position. He's not in the Assembly right now. I would therefore beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 54 — An Act respecting Emergencies

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to rise to move second reading of The Emergency Planning Act. This Act has been drafted in consultation with Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, as well as with other provinces, namely Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Manitoba. It will replace The Civil Defence Act, which has become outdated and no longer suits the needs of Saskatchewan communities in dealing with emergencies.

The Emergency Planning Act clarifies the roles of all levels of government before, during, and after an emergency. The Emergency Planning Act provides for a structure in every local government. A catalogue of resources will be assembled, and an emergency plan will be implemented to marshal those resources should the need arise.

Local governments will be given the opportunity to declare a local emergency which could mean activation of part or all of the emergency plan in that community. The Act also includes a good Samaritan clause which provides for freedom from liability to anyone working to assist a community in dealing with a disaster.

The province also has a role to play during an emergency, and the new Bill outlines the structure within government which will allow the resources of the province to be available should the need arise. The provincial and federal levels of government have a major role before and after the emergency. Before the emergency, both federal and provincial governments provide the necessary

education and funding to assist local governments in preparing their plans.

After the emergency there are the necessary financial vehicles to assist local government in the recovery from a disaster. During an emergency the local government will deal with a disaster by bringing together the resources of their community and their surrounding area in order to take the best action they can to save lives and property.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to move second reading of The Emergency Planning Act.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened carefully to the comments made by the minister, and I want to make a few remarks with regard to this proposed Bill which is dealing with emergency situations. I want to say, first off, that there certainly is a need for legislation that provides for procedures to dealing with emergency situations, and there is no question about that.

There has been such a Bill which has been, as the minister indicated, The Act respecting the Civil Defence and Disaster.

I was a little disappointed that the minister did not explain what was inadequate with that legislation and, therefore, how this present legislation will improve or correct the inadequacies of that legislation. It seems to have, I think, clearly served very well in the past and may very well have served in the future. But that is for the minister to explain, and I hope that when we get into committee that the minister will be prepared to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the minister say again something which he was quoted in the newspaper as saying on June 23 of this year, and that he was quoted as saying, and I will read the paragraph:

Swan said the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities had been pressing for the legislation which will replace The Civil Defence Act.

Nowhere, Mr. Speaker, is there evidence that both of those associations have been pressing for this legislation.

If there is that kind of evidence, Mr. Speaker, it certainly has not come to me, and it certainly has not come forward in resolutions at conventions that have taken place in recent years by those associations. As a matter of fact, SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) and SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), as far as I know, have not been in any way through their conventions pressing for the legislation.

And I went back the last three years, and in the last three years there were no resolutions of this from SUMA. And prior to that, their resolutions which did exist were not dealing with this kind of legislation, Mr. Speaker. They were asking for assistance in the purchasing of equipment and the funding of training programs. Neither of those is provided for in this legislation or in this budget which is being considered by this Assembly.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that clearly both SUMA and SARM need some more time to take a look at what the implications of this legislation are on them. And I hope, therefore, and I urge the minister not to bring this Bill into the committee until both of those organizations have had to consider it with some care. And I hope the minister will agree to that.

I go back to the request for the increase in the funding and for the purchasing of equipment and for training. What SUMA and SARM had hoped to do with that, Mr. Speaker, was that the increase in the funding for training and for equipment, SUMA had hoped to be able to get all of its members into a position of having an emergency measures organization in place.

The fact is that at present there are only 50 per cent, or about 50 per cent of municipalities that have an emergency measures organization. In some cases there may be good reason for that. There needs to be — I agree with the minister, and I agree with the thrust of the legislation to this extent — there ought to be emergency measures organizations throughout the province to deal with potential emergencies.

Now instead of doing what SUMA and SARM have asked, Mr. Speaker, the government has made it mandatory to have an emergency measures organization in place but has not provided any of the funding. The minister indicated in his remarks that:

This legislation will provide an opportunity (which is the words he used) for the establishment of local emergency organizations in municipalities in every municipality.

The legislation doesn't say that. It doesn't talk about an opportunity. It's mandatory . . . a mandatory provision that is put into the Bill because it says every local authority "shall" — every local authority "shall," Mr. Speaker. That is not an opportunity; that is a direction by the government and by the law which will require them to do that.

Now as far as I can determine, Mr. Speaker, as far as I can determine, all of the funding that goes to local emergency measures organizations comes from the federal government, with the cost being split 50-50 between the federal government and the municipal government, and that the total budget for Canada in this program is about \$6 million. If I'm wrong on that, I'm sure the minister will correct me, either in committee or when he rises to close debate on this Bill.

The provincial Emergency Measures Organization provides no such funding. If the minister and the government are going to make this mandatory, Mr. Speaker, then surely it is also incumbent on the minister and the government to make some commitment to the funding that will be necessary in order to put these kinds of organizations in place in order that they, after being put in place, can be effective.

I want to raise another subject with regard to this Bill. This Bill provides for the establishment of an emergency

measures organization agency in the government. That's not new. We've had an Emergency Measures Organization in the government, which now exists in the Department of Environment.

Well if we are upgrading, Mr. Speaker, if we are upgrading the concept of emergency measures preparation, then surely it is also time to do away with the system of making the Emergency Measures Organization agency nothing but a dumping ground for political patronage appointments, which is what the provincial Emergency Measures Organization is today.

(1500)

We disclosed yesterday in the estimates in the Department of Environment that many of the employees in that Emergency Measures Organization are there because of political considerations. And one of those people, Mr. Speaker, who is under contract through a company which he has organized for the sole purpose of getting employment with the Emergency Measures Organization office, is one Mr. Larry Birkbeck, a former Conservative MLA, who's being paid \$4,000 a month plus sustenance expenses, plus travel expenses, for doing essentially nothing.

Because if the minister can convince anybody that the role that this gentleman is playing is doing anything constructive or useful, he will have to be a magician in order to be able to do that. And the only purpose of that appointment, and the only purpose of that company called Venus Corporation, is for the purpose of trying to pay another defeated — or in this case, retired — former Conservative member and put him on the public payroll.

If the minister is really serious about elevating the concept of emergency measures preparation and planning, then the minister ought to be serious about doing away with this kind of unsavoury patronage dumping ground in the Emergency Measures Organization agency. The time has come to stop that.

Mr. Speaker, the other point I want to mention before I take my seat, is that I think that local municipalities may well be concerned with being granted these kinds of sweeping powers in the case of an emergency. I'm not saying they shouldn't be granted them, but if there hasn't been sufficient consultation here — and I suspect there hasn't been — I think that they are going to be very concerned when they find out that whenever there is a major explosion or a major disaster that they are the ones who are going to have to pick up the . . . if they have to do anything with property which will have to be destroyed in order to deal with the emergency, that they are going to have to take up the cost. That's the way the Bill reads, Mr. Speaker. The minister made no point of pointing that out.

I only hope that the municipalities or associations have been informed about that. If they haven't been, that's another reason why I again would urge that this Bill not proceed to the committee very rapidly, but that both the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities have sufficient time to consider the implications and have their views and opinions be made known to us as the

legislators who will deal with this.

Now other than those comments, Mr. Speaker, I simply want to say again the way I began. There is a need for legislation which will deal with emergency situations. There is a need in such legislation to provide to local governments and provincial government certain kind of powers that they normally wouldn't exercise. There's no objection on those kinds of principles. That is not new; that has existed in the previous Bill, and that is proposed to be existing in the present Bill.

I am raising some of the difficulties that I see from the point of view of no funding from the provincial government and from the point of view of making sure that the local authorities know what kind of implications this has to them. And those are the kinds of questions which I want to be asking of the minister when we consider this Bill in the committee. We're prepared to let it go through second reading today.

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

Bill No. 64 — An Act to amend The Clean Air Act (No. 2)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to move the amendment to The Clean Air Act (No. 2). Environmental matters are a growing public concern, and our government takes seriously its responsibility for environmental protection. We know that the people of Saskatchewan expect their government to impose stiff penalties for contravention of environmental statutes.

The amendments proposed will increase the maximum level of current fines in The Clean Air Act from \$1,000 for individuals and \$50,000 for corporations to \$1 million and/or imprisonment for three years. These new penalties apply to both individuals and corporations.

This increase in environmental fines and penalties will make our provincial legislation equivalent to the federal legislation in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. These amendments meet the commitment made in the throne speech and budget address to increase the fines levied under existing provincial laws.

I invite the support of all members for these amendments.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, we're prepared to let this Bill go to second reading today in spite of the objections of some members of the House. Now, Mr. Speaker, we're prepared to let the Bill go, but I want to indicate once again that the words of the minister when he talks about "the government takes seriously its role in environmental protection," rang very hollow when we see before us Bill 64, An Act to amend The Clean Air Act, which is an amendment to an Act which was passed two years ago but has never been proclaimed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, any government that seriously takes its responsibility towards the environment would not certainly pass legislation simply to give it some cosmetic appearance and never proclaim it into law if it was so seriously needed. The fact that this government has had The Clean Air Act passed but not proclaimed is like the

new expensive automobile that gets polished regularly but never leaves the garage.

Here we have a Bill which was polished regularly; now we have the second amendment in this session, even though the first amendment hasn't passed, to a Bill that was passed two years ago. The government is doing some more polishing but has never taken it out of the garage.

And so I simply say to the minister, for Heaven's sake, I hope that he is serious this time and that he is prepared to proclaim this Bill almost immediately after it gets through this House, because it is an important piece of legislation. And I mean the whole Bill, not just the amendment. And it ought to be put into place to do what we know it ought to be doing.

We agree that there needs to be fines and penalties that are sufficiently stiff enough that it will discourage corporations and, yes, individuals and, yes, officials and officers of corporations from trying to circumvent the laws that protect the environment.

We have had in this country and in North America and in this province, too much of that. Too much of it because directors of corporations have looked at the kind of penalties that were there and said it is much more beneficial to them financially to break the law and pay the fine, and then break the law and then pay the fine again. They were money ahead.

Certainly this is in the right direction, and hopefully it will provide some counter-incentive to these people and these corporations and will once and for all convince them that the penalties are sufficient enough that maybe it's time that they adhered to the laws which are meant to protect our environment, Mr. Speaker.

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

Bill No. 65 — An Act to amend The Environmental Management and Protection Act

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of an amendment to The Environmental Management and Protection Act. Our government has also decided to increase the existing fines and penalties levied under The Environmental Management and Protection Act. The situation is similar to that of The Clean Air Act.

Current fines in The Environmental Management and Protection Act now range from \$500 to \$5,000 for individuals, and 5,000 to 100,000 for corporations. The new maximum fines and penalties will be \$1 million and/or imprisonment for three years. This will apply to both individuals and corporations.

As I mentioned in second reading for The Clean Air Act, these changes fulfil the commitment made by our government earlier this year to increase fines for contravention of provincial environmental statutes.

Once again, I invite the support of all the members for these amendments.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, this Bill has provisions which are similar to the provisions that are being proposed in the amendment no. 2, The Clean Air Act, and we essentially don't disagree with them. But I want to express the one concern. The concern is that having provided this kind of legislation is not really sufficient.

The next thing that will be very important is to see whether the government is prepared to administer the legislation in the spirit of the legislation that is provided here. And I once again want to say to the minister that we are going to be watching with some care to see that that is done.

There are always the risks that government, particularly this kind of government will provide this kind of legislation, and then because it is tougher and has stiffer penalties, will use that as a reason internally or publicly not to act when there are situations created in which this law should be applied.

The question I think the public would be asking and I'm certainly asking is, who would have applied this kind of penalty up to a million dollars or been put in prison on the Rafferty-Alameda situation? Here we have a situation where government officials — government officials — and indeed some cabinet ministers were involved in circumventing the law, protecting the environment. They were most certainly involved, and yet no action has been taken.

And I think that underlines and highlights the fact that the law alone is not an effective instrument unless the legislators, the people in the treasury benches, are prepared to apply the law in the same kind of spirit as it is intended when the legislators deal with it.

And simply I say to the minister and to the members opposite, this Bill is in the right direction. There is no reason for us to oppose it. I think public opinion is indicating that it is time for these kinds of moves. But I serve notice that public opinion and the members of the opposition also serve notice that the administration of this law will be just as important as the passing of it, and we will be watching very carefully to see that it is administered effectively.

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

Bill No. 52 — An Act to amend The Queen's Printer Act

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, today I'm moving second reading of The Queen's Printer Amendment Act of 1989. The Queen's Printer Act provides for the printing, publication, and distribution of official government documents and publications. Examples are the statutes of Saskatchewan and the *Saskatchewan Gazette*.

The amendment will establish a revolving fund in relation to the functions and activities of the Office of the Queen's Printer. It will permit moneys collected from the sale of government publications to be used to pay for the administrative costs of printing, publishing, and

distributing government publications.

This change will facilitate the transfer of responsibility for the Queen's Printer from the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation to the Department of Justice. With this transfer, production as well as publication and distribution of legislation and legal materials will be centralized in one department, that being the Department of Justice.

This increased co-ordination of functions should make it easier for members of the public to purchase and use government publications. Individuals will only have to make an inquiry at one place, rather than two. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Queen's Printer Act.

(1515)

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that the appropriate place to deal with this Bill is in the committee stage, Mr. Speaker. There is some suspicion from our side of the House with the Bill, and that's the purpose of wanting to ask some questions.

We know that the government over recent years has moved to centralize a lot of their printing with friends of a particular political bias it seems, and that smaller printers spread throughout the province have got smaller and smaller shares of the printing in the province, and in some cases non-existent. It seems like some firms appear on a regular basis in the *Public Accounts* of the province of Saskatchewan receiving larger and larger sums of money, and that concerns us. We think there should be some fairness in government printing throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

I would say that it's a good idea to have the revolving fund, I suppose, at least in an initial observation of the Bill. The other thing that I would have to agree with, it's likely appropriate to move the Queen's Printer out of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation and into the Department of Justice. I think that's rightly where the Queen's Printer belongs.

Nevertheless, I want to reiterate that I do have some minor suspicions and look forward to asking questions about this particular Bill when it reaches the committee stage. And again I reiterate my concern about the government centralizing a lot of the printing with their friends rather than a lot of decentralized printing throughout the province of Saskatchewan. I look forward to the committee stage coming back up, Mr. Speaker.

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

Bill No. 53 — An Act to amend The Public Libraries Act, 1984

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to outline the amendments to The Public Libraries Act. Since 1973, Mr. Speaker, the southern half of the province has received library services through a system of seven regional and two city libraries. This system has been known as the one-province library

system, Mr. Speaker, and it has been praised many times for its success and indeed is recognized right across Canada for a fine and excellent system.

However, northern Saskatchewan has been less well served with a smaller number of libraries of any kind, and such co-ordination has occurred, being done at a distance by the provincial library in Regina. These amendments will improve library services in the North and bring them more closely in line with services in the South.

This Bill will create a northern library office similar to the regional library headquarters in the South. The northern office will co-ordinate inter-library loans, training and other activities between school, regional colleges and public libraries in the North. These changes, Mr. Speaker, follow two years of consultation with Northerners who all supported the concept presented here.

Let me briefly outline the key points, Mr. Speaker, for you and members of the legislature. The northern library office will act as a central library for the North. As I said earlier, it will co-ordinate services between school, college, and public libraries. The office will also provide library service directly to individuals who are remote from a library, and it will deliver training to people employed in northern libraries.

This northern library office will be governed by a board appointed by the office's clients, schools, regional colleges, public libraries, and Indian bands. In the South, municipalities appoint members to represent their communities on the library board. In the North, this is not a workable mechanism for getting representation from each community, so the amendment builds on those formal structures that already exist.

In its operations, powers, and duties the northern board closely resembles a regional library board. It may elect an executive committee and delegates power to that committee by resolution. The board must hold an annual meeting and elect a chairman. It must have an annual report and audit of its financial transactions and submit those documents to the minister and to the bodies which appointed the board. Funding for the operation of the northern library office will be provided mainly by provincial grants although the office is empowered to receive and administer funds from other sources.

Mr. Speaker, the broad purpose of this legislation is to complete the one-province library system by creating a 10th system to serve the North. This system will be governed by Northerners, and that is as it should be, because that is who it will serve, Mr. Speaker.

I am therefore pleased to move, An Act to amend The Public Libraries Act, 1984, Bill No. 53, and that it be now read a second time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Rolfes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments that I wish to make on the Bill that is proposed by the Minister of Education. And I think, Mr. Speaker, before I continue, I do have to say to the minister that I think he has left a wrong impression as he took me somewhat by surprise in the estimates when he also made

the same comment that Northerners really didn't have any library services whatsoever. And that did not jibe with what I had known of northern Saskatchewan when we were the government in 1971 to 1982.

And let me tell the minister that there have been libraries in existence in the North for a number of years. In fact La Ronge Library came into existence, I believe, in 1964 and is still in existence today and does provide a service, not only for La Ronge but for a number of other communities. And the minister did state today that there are some local libraries in existence. And let me indicate to the minister that those libraries exist in such centres as Ile-a-la-Crosse, Pelican Narrows, Buffalo Narrows, La Loche, Pinehouse, and Beauval. They all have libraries.

The problem, Mr. Speaker, that the Northerners have had is exactly . . . but a worse problem is that the minister has underfunded them. He simply has not provided the moneys so that they can operate. And I want to draw to the minister's attention what he has done, and this is another thing that he did not mention, when you look at the funding for libraries, for example, in the South, and the same thing, Mr. Speaker, pertains to the northern libraries, except it's worse, except it's worse.

When you look at libraries . . . for example, in 1986-87 — I want the minister to pay very close attention — the grants for libraries in 1986-87 was \$5,568,440 — five and a half million dollars. In 1987-88 did the minister give any increase at all? No. Did he leave it the same? No. What did he do? He reduced it. He reduced it by 12.7 per cent to \$4,861,600. He reduced, and then he's saying, today he's saying, oh well, we haven't had the structure set up. Well he can set up all the structure he wants, but if he is not successful in his plea to treasury board to get sufficient funds, then the Northerners simply will not have a first-rate library system.

In 1988-89 he got a 6.8 per cent increase, and then in 1988-90 he got a 5.5 per cent, but, Mr. Speaker, even today, four years later, the minister is supplying less funds to the libraries than he was in 1986-87. And then he's saying, oh well, you know, the structure isn't set up to provide first-class libraries. How does he expect, how does he expect them to have first-class libraries if he does not give them sufficient funds.

So, Mr. Speaker, you will note that the problem isn't so much the structure as so much as a commitment, a financial commitment by the government opposite to make these libraries work.

Now let's turn to the Saskatchewan library, as he says, out of which the northern libraries were serviced, out of Regina. And what has happened? In 1987-88 there was 2.146 million given to the Saskatchewan library; 1988-89, 2.150 million, a \$3,600 increase; 1989-90, \$2,225,400. And, Mr. Speaker, the generous minister has given them a 3.7 per cent increase in three years — 3.7 per cent increase in three years, and his answer is, well the structure hasn't been set up. It's not the structure, it's underfunding that has been the problem.

And yes, I appreciate him setting up a structure in northern Saskatchewan which will co-ordinate the

services and activities in northern Saskatchewan. But let us not have the minister state today that the problem was that there wasn't a structure set up. The problem was that he simply underfunded them, and they didn't have the money to provide those services that were required. That has been his real problem.

Mr. Speaker, the minister noted that there's going to be a central library, which we support. But that central library, Mr. Speaker, will not be able to do its job. I want to say to the minister today, that central library will not be able to do its job unless there are substantial increases in funding next year — substantial increases. They have been suffering under your administration. They've simply not had sufficient funds to do their job.

I agree with a board being set up, and I also have to agree with the minister that you can't establish your board according to the criteria that we use in southern Saskatchewan. That simply doesn't work in northern Saskatchewan, and I recognize that. And I'm glad the government has recognized that.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated already, he said the funding will be done mostly through provincial grants. That is fundamental to having a good library system in the North, because really their revenue, the basis of revenue in the North simply isn't there in many of the communities, and they have to rely on the provincial government for their funds.

Mr. Speaker, he says we will now have one complete provincial library system throughout Saskatchewan, and that is also an acceptable and laudable principle that the minister has brought forward. It is, Mr. Speaker, a concern of ours on this side of the House that we do not believe that the minister has, and the government opposite, have a real commitment for a first-class library.

And I think the funding that they have brought to the libraries, the increase in funding that they have brought to the libraries very well validates that statement that I have made. It confirms that statement. And I think the minister will have to realize that, unless he succeeds at treasury board, unless he succeeds at treasury board to get adequate funding for next year. And we will certainly reserve judgement on that until we see the budget for next year.

I think, generally speaking, Mr. Speaker, the Bill and the thrust of the Bill that he has brought forward is acceptable; however, I have not had an opportunity to study the Bill in detail, and I want to do that. And I want to also consult with a few other people in northern Saskatchewan before I will confirm one way or the other whether I will support this Bill; therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of this Bill for today.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 55 — An Act to establish the Agriculture Development Fund

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to propose second reading of An Act to establish the Agriculture Development Fund, 1989. First, Mr. Speaker, I would like

to provide some background regarding the agriculture development fund and also explain the intent and purpose of this Bill.

As part of the government's commitment to building a strong future for agriculture in Saskatchewan, it established the agriculture development fund in 1985. The five-year, \$200 million program funds activities in such areas as crops and forages, soils, livestock, land improvement, engineering, marketing, new product development, and agricultural processing.

Working in conjunction with agri-business, the agricultural development fund has undertaken to work on some of the most challenging aspects of farming today, including things like, Mr. Speaker, soil conservation, speciality crop production, livestock production, livestock nutrition, and farm business management.

(1530)

The fund has supported a multitude of research and development projects with the College of Agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan, with private sector research companies, and perhaps most importantly, Mr. Speaker, with grass roots producers throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, the government is very pleased with the number of producer and industry groups which have become active partners in an increasing number of agricultural development fund projects. They have co-funded many projects and have helped to ensure that the information and technologies which are developed are forwarded directly to Saskatchewan producers and Saskatchewan farmers.

Results from the research development projects are then put to the ultimate test on Saskatchewan farms through the fund's on-farm demonstration program. This transfer of information and technology directly to the farm gate and beyond the farm gate is extremely important.

Research theories can be tested many times in controlled conditions, in the laboratory, on the laboratory bench, Mr. Speaker, but unless they stand up to practical application they are of no benefit to the end user, the Saskatchewan farmer. Therefore the fund's on-farm demonstrations provide farmers with an opportunity to view or to have hands-on experience with new agricultural technology.

Bringing new technology to the local level serves two purposes, I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It provides researchers with an opportunity to evaluate results obtained in actual situations, and most importantly, it allows producers to evaluate the benefits of a new variety, new practice, or new technology in their farming area.

Since 1985 the fund has supported more than 500 on-farm demonstrations. The success of a feedlot demonstration at Baldwinton in northern Saskatchewan has resulted in the co-ordination of efforts to evaluate new feedlot technologies province-wide.

Mr. Speaker, during the past four years many

accomplishments have been made in the co-ordination and promotion of basic and applied agricultural research, the support of advanced agricultural technology, and in the transfer of new knowledge and information to the farming community.

The fund has approved a total of 1,034 projects. Many of these projects have been completed and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you might be interested to know, as might other members of the legislature, that these results are attracting international attention because of the quality and pertinence of the work.

As the fund has progressed, target areas have evolved. Some of these, now identified, have included biotechnology, soil conservation, agricultural diversification, on-farm demonstrations, and northern agriculture.

For example, the agriculture development fund has been instrumental in the establishment of a biotechnological program in livestock at the University of Saskatchewan. With continued funding of the Crop Development Centre, new varieties of crops are being developed which will potentially have a significant economic impact on rural Saskatchewan.

Under the fund's umbrella, the federal-provincial subsidiary agreement on agriculture development, or as it's more commonly known here, Mr. Speaker, ERDA (Economic and Regional Development Agreement), resulted in federal-provincial co-operation in the funding of over 200 projects.

Mr. Speaker, many innovative agriculture diversification projects have been established in Saskatchewan through the support of the fund. For example, the use of canola oil as a dust suppressant; research into a biological control agent for grasshoppers — certainly an area that's plagued a good part of our grain belt for several years in this decade, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and the use of flax seed oil as a concrete preservative are just some of the projects that this fund has supported.

In addition, the results from a market research project supported by the fund on a mustard processing plant resulted in the establishment of a new salad processing plant in Delisle, Saskatchewan. These efforts are directly related to the thrust towards agricultural diversification within our province.

Mr. Speaker, the government is keenly aware of the importance of developing agriculture in northern Saskatchewan. As a result, the fund is actively supporting wild rice initiatives, wild berry processing, management techniques, fish farming opportunities, as well as efforts to establish national and international markets for northern agricultural products.

As you can see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fund is an integral part of this government's commitment to building and diversifying Saskatchewan's agricultural community, and I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to outline the key features of The Agriculture Development Fund Act, 1989.

Key features of the Act are: number one, the fund will become a legal entity which will allow the ag development fund to efficiently manage joint-funded projects with industry and other government agencies. This will also allow the fund to carry over funds from one year to the next in order to ensure the funding of long-term projects.

The activities of the agricultural development fund will be managed by a board of directors consisting of producers, agri-industry representation, university and government personnel. The board is responsible to the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

The agricultural development fund, Mr. Deputy Speaker, may provide funds, grants and/or loans for the purpose of agricultural and food-related research, development, and on-farm demonstration projects that will help to keep Saskatchewan farmers competitive in that ever-increasing competitive international market-place, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The agriculture development fund may initiate and implement research, development and diversification, marketing and demonstration projects in areas such as: biotechnology, soil conservation, food product development and processing, northern agriculture, marketing and farm management.

Mr. Speaker, staying in touch with the challenges facing Saskatchewan farmers today, and anticipating those of the future, are the ways to remaining competitive in the agricultural market-place. By supporting research and development, the agriculture development fund is helping to provide Saskatchewan farm families with the technological tools to build a stronger future in farming.

The intent of this Bill is in keeping with this government's continued, and our Premier's continuing, commitment to provide the necessary agricultural research and diversification opportunities for Saskatchewan farm families to reach that goal. Mr. Speaker, I therefore move second reading of Bill No. 55, The Agriculture Development Fund Act, 1989.

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I only have a few brief comments to make right now on this Bill, but I just want to relate for this House for a moment some of the problems that I have, not with the Bills particularly, but with the way the government handles the rhetoric that it puts forward.

I just want to take a few brief moments to tell you that this morning I was in Humboldt at the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute, an institute that is used for developing agriculture, a very useful tool that has been used in the past and will be used in the future, hopefully, for manufacturers and small entrepreneurs to use this facility to develop products to enhance agriculture in Saskatchewan.

And at that open house today, our fair Premier was there, expounding the virtues of the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute, which is all fine in rhetoric, the same man who, about a year ago, we had to battle tooth and nail to have him fund the Prairie Agricultural Machinery

Institute — the most hypocritical act that I've seen in many, many months. Well maybe many, many days with this government, but it's quite regular. And that's the problem that I have with this government and with the Bills that it brings forward.

Now there's nothing wrong with the ADF (agriculture development fund) to enhance agriculture, but what is wrong is the way this government plays it. On one hand, when it's opportune to come forward and be very vocal and support something, it does it, but in the back rooms all the while they're manipulating and manoeuvring, trying to slash and cut and play political games. So that's the danger involved in this type of an operation.

So I have many more things to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I just wanted to let the House know today that the hypocrisy is the danger in this government, not necessarily this Bill. So having more things to say, I will move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 69 — An Act to provide for the Financial Stability of Agriculture

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Premier to move second reading of an Act to provide for programs that ensure the financial stability of Saskatchewan farmers known as The Farm Financial Stability Act.

The Farm Financial Stability Act is very important because it consolidates existing farm finance legislation with the exception of The Agriculture Credit Corporation Saskatchewan Act, and widens the scope of existing legislation.

The Farm Financial Stability Act continues the consolidation of agriculture-related legislation initiated last year with the passage of The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Premier, our Minister of Agriculture and Food, recently outlined the many new and innovative financing options which are contained in The Agriculture Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan Act. These financing initiatives for farm families include, for example, financing for the purpose of a home quarter; financing the purchase, construction, or renovation of buildings and improvements, including existing housing; loans for farmers to re-establish their farm operations; and a guaranteed vendor mortgage program.

The Farm Financial Stability Act, which is in addition to the recently introduced Agriculture Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 1989, achieves four objectives in farm finance legislation. First, it consolidates and simplifies relevant legislation into a single piece, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Secondly, it extends existing programs already in place. Thirdly, it introduces some amendments to existing programs to improve their effectiveness in serving Saskatchewan farmers. And fourth, it extends the scope of legislation to enable programs for producers of other commodities similar to programs already in place.

The Farm Financial Stability Act will combine farm finance legislation, consisting of The Farmers' Counselling and Assistance Act, The Saskatchewan Beef Stabilization Act, The Saskatchewan Agricultural Returns Stabilization Act, The Farmers' Oil Royalty Refund Act, The Feeder Associations Loan Guarantee Act, The Livestock Facilities Tax Credit Act, and The Livestock Investment Tax Credit Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, through consultation with farmers and farm groups, this government and our Premier has initiated innovative and effective agricultural programs to protect and assist Saskatchewan's farm families. I believe it is important to briefly outline the purpose of some of these programs which come under the legislation of The Farm Financial Stability Act, and describe the positive impact of these programs.

In 1984 our government established the counselling and assistance for farmers program, which provides counselling to farm families from panels consisting of other farmers, their peers, Mr. Speaker. This program also provides operating and consolidation loan guarantees for farmers.

And I am pleased to report to the legislature, Mr. Speaker, that since April 1 of 1984, 2,330 loan guarantees totalling more than \$163 million have been issued. The average guarantee then, Mr. Speaker, is approximately \$70,000.

Mr. Speaker, this was our Premier's and our government's, one of our very first pieces of legislation to help farmers through some of the difficult times as a result of the high land costs and the high interest rates left unattended to by the NDP administration through the '70s and early '80s, a time that put many of our young farmers and not-so-young farmers into a situation of duress.

And I can say, Mr. Speaker, that through this last five years, that counselling and assistance for farmers program, if you talk to the panellists that serve on that and the young farmers who have been served by them, it's been very well received. And I think it speaks, Mr. Speaker, to the sensitivity and the understanding that these farmer panellists bring to the job. And I know that many of my colleagues on this side of the House would want to have it on the record, our thanks and appreciation to those many people who have served so well, facing some difficult and challenging situations in helping out these young farmers and their farm families, Mr. Speaker.

And the record speaks for itself — 2,300 families; 70,000 average guarantee; \$163 million in total. And, Mr. Speaker, that's but one program.

(1545)

In March, 1984, our government established the livestock investment tax credit program to encourage the finishing of livestock in Saskatchewan. As of March of this year, Mr. Speaker, approximately 5.4 million in tax credit were issued to over 3,700 individuals — over 3,700 feeders of pork and beef cattle in this province, Mr. Speaker. That was for the 1988 tax year. Since March of '84 over 30

millions of dollars in tax breaks, tax credits, have been issued to our farmer producers, Mr. Speaker.

In 1984 this government introduced the feeder associations loan guarantee program to promote cattle feeding in Saskatchewan. Under this program, the government guarantees to financial institutions 25 per cent of a feeder associations' authorized loan limit. As of March 31, 1989, 58 associations with more than 1,600 members were in existence with authorized loan limits for \$53.9 million.

I just want to pause for a moment on this point, Mr. Speaker, because I think it's important to ask yourself, are these programs working? And one of the best indications, Mr. Speaker, in terms of whether we're getting in place a network of feeders in this province, whether it be for the pork industry or for the beef industry, Mr. Speaker, one good indication is this . . .

And I had a chance to attend the Saskatchewan (Cattle) Feeder Association annual banquet and meeting here in this last year, and they were telling me there that six or seven or eight years ago, when they held their first meeting, there was something like seven people showed up to that meeting, Mr. Speaker. The banquet I was at had something close to 400 — and I may say, young farmers and their wives in attendance at that banquet. And I think that speaks directly to the kind of flourishing that we've seen go on in the livestock feeding industry in this province as it relates to the beef sector. And the story is similar in the hog side, Mr. Speaker.

To build and strengthen the livestock industry in Saskatchewan, our government initiated the livestock facilities tax credit program in January of 1986, and as of March this year approximately \$6 million in tax credits were issued to Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, it is these types of new and innovative agricultural programs which Saskatchewan farmers have worked with this government to implement, and these programs, because of those farmers, Mr. Speaker, are working.

As part of the farming community's recognition of the importance of these programs and its continuing partnership with this government, we are broadening the legislative scope which will allow for the expansion of these programs to cover other commodities. The track record is so sound, Mr. Speaker, on the commodities that are covered, we are now going to expand it to cover other commodities and to provide assistance to even yet a larger number of Saskatchewan farmers.

Mr. Speaker, I want to briefly outline the major changes to these existing programs and legislation as the result of The Farm Financial Stability Act.

Within the counselling and assistance for farmers program, the sunset date will be extended from December 31, '89 to December 31, 1990, with provision for a further extension to December 31, 1991. Changes will also be made to establish a maximum five-member program board to authorize guarantees to farmers.

Under stabilization legislation The Farm Financial Stability Act will provide enabling legislation for Saskatchewan to participate in the national tripartite beef stabilization plan. This legislation also allows for participation in any other tripartite programs which are established in the future, Mr. Speaker.

The Farm Financial Stability Act will benefit farmers by providing enabling legislation for the formation of producer association beyond the very successful feeder cattle associations that I talked about just a moment ago, Mr. Speaker.

The Act also provides authority to develop tax credit assistance for agricultural products and facilities.

Mr. Speaker, The Farm Financial Stability Act is in keeping with our commitment to listen to and to work with Saskatchewan farm families to improve and expand this government's agricultural program. Mr. Speaker, that has long been the commitment of our Premier and this caucus, to work with, to listen to, and act on behalf of Saskatchewan farmers and farm families.

As part of our continuing commitment to build Saskatchewan farms and protect these farm families, Mr. Speaker, I therefore am very pleased and proud, on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and Food, our Premier, to move second reading of The Farm Financial Stability Act, which is Bill No. 69, Mr. Speaker. I therefore move second reading of this Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say a few words about this Bill. Of course you know that this is the Bill that arrived anonymously in my hands several weeks ago, and at that time we brought forward to the public the content of the Bill because we didn't think it was sufficient to cover the problems that farmers are having in Saskatchewan today.

And we did that to give this government an opportunity, to let them know that it wasn't satisfactory and to give them an opportunity to take it back and rework it and put some body into the Bill, put some specifics into it, and put some parts that would be a bit substantive into the Bill. But of course we see that did not happen.

As the minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Is the minister finished his speech, Mr. Speaker, or is he wanting to continue it?

As the minister said, this is a compilation of a number of Acts. It broadens the scope of the Acts, it is true. But what this Bill does, unfortunately, it gives broad, sweeping powers through regulations to the cabinet.

This Bill has less specifics in it than many of the Acts that it replaces. And that is a sad state because in this day and age when we need some rationale, some clear thinking, some clear direction from government, we see that through regulations and through this Act, compiling a number of other Acts, we have less specifics in the Act.

This Act has nothing in it to do with the foreclosures, the

tremendous number of foreclosures that we are seeing farmers faced with today. And I think that should have been the number one priority in any farm finance stability Act. We still have no long-term predictability providing stability to Saskatchewan farmers. This Act, this Bill, because of its vagueness, nobody knows exactly what's going to be happening.

And I guess the main thing is that we see on day 70, I believe, that this Act has come forward. We've been sitting in this legislature since March 8. If this government had any force behind its rhetoric, any commitment behind its rhetoric, it would have brought the agricultural Bills down, number one, number two, number three. But what did we see? We saw the privatization Bills coming before this House as a priority, a priority at a time when farmers are losing their land, when the debt load is mounting, and when they are crying out for predictable programs. We see this government coming forward very late in the day with this Bill.

Under this Bill the administration is entrusted mainly to the minister, and as I said, it gives broad, sweeping powers to make grants, loans, or other financial assistance to any persons, institution, or corporation within Saskatchewan — broad powers. And it is not restricted to farmers. So what we have here is that are we going to have more people, more institutions and people involved in this program with the same amounts of money that we've been seeing, spreading the purse a little thinner? I mean, that's the possibility under this Bill.

It gives the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Agriculture full powers to use government's funds for any purposes it chooses that are not set out in the Act but will be set out through regulations. And I will get into these things in much more detail later. But under the counselling and assistance, it leaves room for more Tory hacks to be hired. And section 26 authorizes the privatization of the administration of the program in true Tory fashion. They've got to slip their privatization in in every little crack that they can force it into. So they're going to allow for privatization of the administration of the program.

Section 31, 10 out of the 13 parts of this section are prescribed in regulations — 10 out of 13. And in part V, six out of seven of the sections are prescribed in regulations. And also in that section, there's no obligation to provide refunds to farmers. The Act states that there's potential, but there's no obligation.

Under part VI of the Act, Mr. Speaker, the producer association loan guarantees, the meaning of "commodity" has been lost because its scope will be defined in regulations. And the definition could expand far beyond primary products, so we don't really know what this meaning is. How will the farmers know if the definition in regulations can be prescribed or could be changed at any time?

And the word "producers" is not limited to farmers; it could mean virtually anybody that the government decides who a producer is. And I guess the question that I have to ask again is: because of this broadening, because of the definition of producer, because of the definition of

commodity, will there be more money in place? We've seen this last budget cut the Department of Agriculture and Food financing, and now they're expanding it to a broader base.

The questions I'll be asking is: will there be more money in place to cover these things, or is this just a front to have people think that they're going to be looking after the agriculture sector, at the same time using the same amount of money to try to string it out a little further?

Also under this section, Mr. Speaker, the provincial supervisor for commodity is appointed by that minister, and that person is unrestricted in his capacity to authorize or not to authorize a custom operator to operate. So he has total, sweeping powers.

Another little interesting part of this Act is under the miscellaneous section. Under this section cabinet can make regulations:

defining, enlarging or restricting . . . the meaning of any word or expression used in this Act . . .

Of course this gives cabinet very wide-ranging scope for defining words and expressions in such a way as to include or exclude any person or any kind of business or individual. So there are a number of problems.

First of all, this Act does nothing to engage farmers into a program that is predictable, providing stabilization. It does nothing to restructure the mounting farm debt crisis out there. The attitude of this government is that, well, there's a little bit of rain around now so the problem is going to go away. I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, the debt problem will not go away.

The major problem in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is that everything, or nearly everything, is prescribed in regulations. That means that this government — and we know its track record — can provide, through the regulations, any program, decide when it begins, when it ends, what the program is, what the interest rate will be, and it can be changed at any time without debate or consultation.

I mean, we have a 10- or 12-page Act here and virtually all of it is prescribed in regulation.

I mean, it's just a smoke and mirrors thing. Why did they not put some substance in it so that we could debate in this House what they're going to do so that farmers and farm groups can ask questions as to what your program is, and why did you do A, B, or C, or why didn't you do A, B, or C.

But this Act does not provide for that. It simply provides for the cabinet to make these decisions behind their closed doors and with no consultation. This government again, as I say, Mr. Speaker, is so preoccupied with its privatization that I think it just is ignoring all the agricultural problems that we're having here, and by bringing Bills like this forward, trying to create an impression in the agricultural community that it actually is going to do something.

Well I and many other farmers and farm groups in this province sincerely hope that this government will finally take action to do something. But in this Bill we have no idea what they're going to do. No one will know what is happening — gives them the opportunity to tinker with the programs as they have done so consistently in the past, which aggravates, I might add, many, many farmers.

Therefore I don't see the real commitment to agriculture because of the timing of the Bill so late in the session, because of the power embodied in the cabinet to make the regulations, because there's no debt restructuring, and no predictable income programs.

But I guess one of the other major points is that, and I will repeat again, that in this Act, because much of the detail's prescribed in regulations, it does not give this side of the House an opportunity to debate anything of a substantive nature. It does not provide for consultation with farmers and farm groups so that they can help decide what the program will be, to provide details of what the needs are.

And I think that as my colleague so accurately says, it's more government behind closed doors. And that is what we do not need in agriculture. We need open, up-front, clear ideas in agriculture such as we provided during the last federal campaign and such as we will be providing in the future if these people ever have the gumption to call an election.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have much more detail to express on this matter, so I would move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1600)

Bill No. 70 — An Act to amend The Education Act

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to outline the purpose of these amendments to The Education Act. The amendments can be divided into essentially three main categories, Mr. Speaker, and I will deal with each of these.

The first category is a series of amendments which we introduced in the legislature last year but which did not go beyond second reading before the House adjourned. The amendments are being now reintroduced without any additions, deletions, or changes.

Some of the proposed changes, Mr. Speaker, are simply technical or housekeeping amendments, others deal with a variety of matters relating to the policies and procedures used by school boards. Let me briefly outline the key points.

School boards are currently required to set their members' remuneration at a certain amount per day. They will now be given the flexibility to define a member's remuneration in other ways, if they consider it more effective to do so, such as a monthly or annual amount. I should point out, however, that board members will still not be paid where they miss a board meeting without valid reason. In other words, a balance is being maintained between board's authority to establish

remuneration and whatever way they consider most efficient, and the need for public accountability with respect to that remuneration, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, boards will now be clearly required to make their adopted minutes available to the public, and also to establish written policies with respect to the release of other information and documents. This is a reasonable requirement which should help to clarify the public's right of access to board documents.

The third amendment to note involves the conduct of board meetings. It is generally accepted that school boards have the right to discuss sensitive and confidential matters *in camera*. However, the Act provides no authority for this practice but states that all board meetings are to be open to the public. The amendment, Mr. Speaker, will authorize boards to hold *in camera* discussions that will require any votes arising from such discussions to be conducted in an open meeting.

Another amendment relates to the ability of boards to establish committees. This is obviously a power which is important to many boards, particularly the larger ones, since they cannot reasonably be expected to deal with every matter in full board sessions.

The amendment gives the board the authority to delegate matters to committees and sets out the powers and duties to be assigned to such committees, Mr. Speaker. It is important to emphasize that boards are not being allowed to delegate their ultimate responsibility for decisions. Any recommendations or decisions of a board committee will have to be ratified by the board in the usual way at an open board meeting.

The final amendment I wish to mention deals with provisions for the suspension and expulsion of pupils. At present the maximum possible suspension is four weeks. For longer periods, the only options are to keep renewing suspensions or to expel the student. A provision is now being included whereby a board may be able to suspend a pupil for a period of more than four weeks, up to a maximum of one year. The option of expulsion will remain for those cases where a one-year suspension is considered inadequate. Mr. Speaker, this new provision will provide the flexibility to deal with disciplinary matters in a more appropriate fashion.

I should also mention that suspensions for reasons of irregular attendance are now being incorporated in the general discipline section to ensure consistency in the application of criteria and procedures.

I want to emphasize, Mr. Speaker, to you and all members of the legislature, that all of these amendments were developed in full consultation with officials of the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association, who have indicated their agreement with the proposals.

Mr. Speaker, I will now turn to the second major category of amendments of the Act. These deal with private schools, or independent schools as we are now calling them, since this is the more common and preferred term. These amendments are needed in order to implement the policies announced by our government last year in

response to the report on private schooling by Gordon Dirks.

The key decision was that the Department of Education would assume responsibility for the inspection, regulation, and registration of independent schools. The amendments addressed this decision in several ways, Mr. Speaker.

First, the Minister of Education will be authorized to make provision for the regulations and registration of independent schools. Secondly, registered schools will be required to submit to inspection and provide any information about their operations that may be required. Third, children attending a registered independent school will be explicitly defined as satisfying the compulsory attendance provisions of the Act.

The Lieutenant Governor in Council, Mr. Speaker, will be authorized to make regulations on a wide range of matters relating to independent schools, including the criteria which these schools must meet in order to qualify for registration.

Mr. Speaker, I should point out that the amendments relating to independent schools are enabling provisions only. The details of the actual system for regulation and registration of independent schools will be developed in the coming months by the Department of Education in conjunction with an advisory board to be appointed shortly, Mr. Speaker.

I will now move, Mr. Speaker, to the third and final set of amendments, and these amendments establish a public accounts system for boards of education. At present the only public financial document which boards are required to prepare is the annual audited statement. While necessary, such statements give taxpayers very little detail about where and how school boards are spending money.

Last year legislation was passed requiring Saskatchewan cities to prepare detailed public accounts. This requirement is now being extended to boards of education in the same fashion. The Act itself will set out the general framework, with specific requirements and limitations to be spelled out in regulation. The system will take effect with the 1989 calendar year.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this public accounts system will help to give the public a better idea of how their education dollar is being spent, as fewer and fewer taxpayers have school-age children. One statistic that is bandied about, Mr. Speaker, is that 70 per cent of the population do not have children in school, and that makes the point that fewer and fewer taxpayers have children of school age. This kind of information increasingly becomes important if education is to continue receiving strong fiscal, moral, and physical support among the public, Mr. Speaker.

I should point out that this proposal has been discussed with the Saskatchewan school trustees, along with all of the other contents of the Bill. The information has also been shared with both the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and the League of Educational Administrators,

Directors and Superintendents.

Mr. Speaker, we all want to see our school system operate as effectively and efficiently as possible, in the best interests of students and the public at large. For this to happen we need a balance between the powers of school boards on the one hand, to operate in ways which they consider most appropriate, and legal obligations on the other hand to help guarantee openness and accountability on board activities. As well, we need to ensure the place of independent schools is more clearly defined and that these schools are providing a quality education to their pupils.

Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that the provisions of this Bill will be of great assistance in helping us to achieve these goals. I therefore move that Bill No. 70, An Act to amend The Education Act, be now read a second time.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the onset I want to say that this Bill was finally presented to the legislature in its written form a week ago today, and as all members are aware, we adjourned the legislature for the Friday and the Monday. So in essence the official opposition has had very little opportunity to examine this Bill in any great detail due to the fact of the holidays and the delay in printing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the minister has said that he has talked to the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) and the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association) and LEADS (League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents) and the other collaborators in education, and we also wanted to have the opportunity to talk to those people as well, to ensure ourselves that in fact this Bill does enjoy the support of the various interest groups attached to education in this province.

However I would like to spend a few minutes in addressing this Bill in a very preliminary way. I will be adjourning my remarks, or adjourning the reading of this Bill, in order that we will have a longer opportunity to speak about this Bill.

But initially, Mr. Speaker, it appears to us that this Bill adds a new category of school to the province's education system, and that category is one called "registered independent schools." This Bill also sets out the minister can establish the regulations governing the registration, operation, and reporting of these schools.

Now this appears to be harmless. It appears to be harmless on the surface, but in fact it is a move towards the implementation of the Dirks report, which a number of groups in this province, including the members of the opposition, have had some concern with.

Now I note that the minister did not talk about amendments that will be coming forward in changes to The Urban Municipality Act, The Rural Municipality Act, but we have had one Bill introduced in this legislature, Bill 60, An Act to amend The Northern Municipalities Act, that exempts all registered, independent schools from the payment of taxes on its properties.

Now I find it interesting that the minister presented this

Bill in a rather harmless way, but he neglected to tell and inform the members of the legislature that there are other amendments that are going to be coming forward that will allow registered, independent schools exemptions from our tax system. And I think that that sets an important precedent.

Now as I said earlier, we had some concerns with the Dirks report, and the Dirks report refers specifically to the need to exempt private schools, particularly private Christian schools, from paying municipal property taxes. And the Dirks report states that, should this exemption occur and should there be amendments to The Urban Municipality Act and the various Acts that are necessary, along with amendments to The Education Act, that it would cost the Department of Education some \$209,000. Now this was based on 1987 figures.

While the money involved does not appear to be a large sum of money, it does indicate that the government is willing to begin the process of funding more private schools than it currently does. They are opening the door, in my view, for a third education system in the province, and as we all know, all school boards across Saskatchewan are facing funding difficulties as a result of this government's underfunding of education in this province. And in fact we've seen the Catholic school system here in Regina recently announce that it is going to have to close five schools in the city of Regina due to a lack of funding resources available to them on the part of the provincial government.

Now what we think, Mr. Speaker, is that this Bill is watering down the education system so that the quality of education in our province is really left up in the air. And what I mean by that is that this minister is giving himself, through regulation, the ability to regulate and register and determine what criteria these private schools will have to meet in order to be considered registered independent schools.

Now we think that some criteria should include the fact that teachers should be certified in this province, that you should have to be a member of a professional association such as the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, we think that all children in Saskatchewan should have to adhere to the basic curriculum in our province.

And while we recognize that there is a need for some private education in our province, and parents have to have the ability to access that kind of private schooling, we think that there is adequate scope within the present curriculum that would allow those schools to adequately meet the requirements of those curriculums.

So we have a real fear that this may be a watering down of the quality of education in our province.

We are also concerned about the fact that all of the criteria which is to be used to classify registered schools will be set by the Minister of Education, and we would like to see some of that criteria included in this Bill so that we can have at the very minimum, minimum standards.

(1615)

We in fact don't really trust this Minister of Education or the Government of Saskatchewan to regulate these schools, because we've certainly seen what has happened to private post-secondary education in this province.

And all we have to do is look at the Bridge City College in Saskatoon. They too are governed by regulations, and as a result of this minister's inability or incompetence or something, the students at that college are suffering. They have to pay back student loans that have not given them an adequate education . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Not at all. They have received a piece of paper that doesn't necessarily get them a job because it's not recognized by anyone in this province and in this country.

And so we really do question whether or not this minister, based on his past practice in regards to private post-secondary education, really will have the competence to adequately regulate private schools in the province of Saskatchewan.

So we wonder, why does the minister not put these regulations into the Act in terms of where they belong. We wonder, are you going to implement more of the Dirks report in these regulations, items such as allowing non-certified teachers to be used in private schools — we think that that's inappropriate — such as allowing for partial funding of these private schools.

We certainly have no difficulty with the present nine schools in the province of Saskatchewan that receive public funding, such as Athol Murray College Of Notre Dame, the Rosthern Junior College, the Lutheran College, the Caronport High School, Collège Mathieu, St. Angela's Academy, Western Christian College, Rivière Academy and Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute.

Those schools presently receive some operating funds from the province of Saskatchewan, and we believe that they should continue to receive those funds, but we're not convinced that any further operating funds should go towards private schools in the province of Saskatchewan.

The other point that we want to make in terms of the regulations is that we think that the curriculum of this province, the curriculum as determined by the collaborators in education and the Saskatchewan Department of Education, should be followed by all schools in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now if the minister is going to establish criterion in these areas that are reasonable, then why not put them into the Act where we can see them and debate them on the floor of the legislature?

Now the other point that I want to make, and it's a question — I pose the question — and the question is this, and I would ask the minister to consider this question when we debate this legislation in Committee of the Whole. The question goes like this. If all of the private schools in Saskatchewan, including the nine that are now being funded by the province of Saskatchewan are lumped into the same category, i.e., registered independent schools, would it necessarily mean that the Government of Saskatchewan would not be able to

discriminate as to who is funded and who is not funded?

That is the question, because right now — and the member from Saltcoats shakes his head — but right now, Mr. Member from Saltcoats, there are nine schools in the province of Saskatchewan that receive operating funds from the Government of Saskatchewan on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. And once these schools are considered to be registered independent schools and other private schools come along and they also meet the criterion as established through regulation by the Minister of Education, can those schools who aren't presently receiving operating funds, can they then argue that they're entitled to receive funds as the other nine are presently receiving funds?

And that's a critical issue because I think school boards across Saskatchewan would argue that they cannot afford to have any more funds come out of the present grants from the Department of Education because they are already struggling and they can't afford to have their base diluted any more than it is.

Now with that question, I hope that the Minister of Education will be prepared to answer that question when we come back before the Committee of the Whole, because I think it's fundamental as to the future of education in our province whether we are going to have a publicly funded education system that is accountable to the public, that where we presently have public school boards across Saskatchewan and separate school boards across Saskatchewan receiving public funding, along with the nine private schools. Or will we then have to get ourselves into a situation where the other private, many of them Christian schools, will be eligible for public funding.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have much more to say about this Bill, but we want to receive a legal opinion on the implications. We have to look at the amendments to The Urban Municipality Act which haven't yet been tabled in this legislature; we have to look at the amendments to The Rural Municipality Act, and the amendments to The Northern Municipalities Act, compare that to the amendments contained in this Bill, along with the Dirks report, to really come to grips with the implications of these amendments that appear on the surface to be very, very small, but we think in the long run will have serious implications for the province of Saskatchewan.

So with that, I would like to adjourn the debate on second reading.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 56 — An Act to amend The Human Resources, Labour and Employment Act

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This amendment is relatively brief, easy to understand, and should be non-controversial.

What we have before the Assembly today is an amendment to permit the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment to establish a disabilities directorate. This is a request made by various

groups representing disabled people in Saskatchewan at a meeting that we had in November of 1988, and this was a recommendation they made. It is a consideration that the government had been considering for some time.

And we have already proceeded to start setting up a disabilities directorate at the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment. This amendment will give us the jurisdiction to make the final preparation and proceed with plans for this directorate, which has a budget of \$477,000 for the current year, and will employ approximately six persons when it is operational. This will give disabled persons their own directorate separate and apart from the services provided by the Department of Social Services.

It is our intention, Mr. Speaker, to move more and more of the assistance and counselling of those type of services that are now provided by the Department of Social Services to this directorate for disabled persons. This is not in the Department of Social Services, but in the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment.

Since the people concerned have asked for this type of a directorate, and we feel as a government it is in the best interests of disabled persons and the people of Saskatchewan to have this kind of directorate, this amendment will set up officially this directorate. And we feel that it will be able to grant more guidance, assistance, and in general, improve the lives of disabled people in Saskatchewan.

Disability can take many forms. And if you take into account all people with visual, physical, hearing, learning, health, or psychiatric disabilities in Saskatchewan, we estimate that includes approximately 120,000 people, or 12 per cent of the population of Saskatchewan. And certainly it's the position of the government that we need a separate directorate to look after the concerns of these people. So in that light, and for that reason, I move second reading of this amendment, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, we have no objection to this Bill as such. I do, however, want to make a few comments about the treatment of disabled persons in this province. A literal reading of this Bill was suggested in their eighth year in office. In 1989 they had suddenly discovered there was such a thing as the disabled.

Mr. Speaker, to some extent I hope that's true. To some extent I hope this government has discovered the disabled, and I hope that this directorate will be and will mean that there's some meaningful programs to assist disabled people.

This government's record with respect to programs for the assistance of disabled people is a very sorry one. There has been responsibility . . . this is I think the third time that the responsibility for this has been established. It used to be in Health. It was one point in time in Health, then it was in Social Services, then it was in the Environment.

Now it's over to Human Resources.

I think, Mr. Speaker, we hope that with this directorate will go some meaningful programs which will assist disabled people. This government has done very, very little to date. Other provinces and other jurisdictions have moved forward with a variety of programs, with programs which provide assistance to disabled people in getting into the work place. This government has . . . and which provide assistance to disabled people to get training programs. Other provinces have established programs which provide employers with incentives to hire disabled people. None of those programs have ever found their way into this province. This government on very, very rare occasions has paid lip service to the needs of disabled people, but has never got beyond that.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the establishment of this directorate does mean that there's going to be some attention paid to the needs of disabled people. To put it at its crassest, it would simply be a good investment to assist them and to encourage them to become a fully integrated part of Saskatchewan society.

There's little reason, from this government's past history, to believe that the establishment of a directorate is anything other than window-dressing. I remember some years ago, Mr. Speaker, when this government in that very same department established a women's directorate, with great fanfare, appointed a staff to it. For a period of time it looked as if they might actually find some sort of a role for themselves; they didn't. Their role has atrophied, I think, and very, very little has been done to assist women and to improve the role of women in society.

I hope this is not a repeat of that performance. I hope that with this directorate, and I think all members of the opposition hope that with this directorate this government will put some effort and some resources into assisting disabled people. Most disabled people are quite capable of playing a full and meaningful role in society if given half a chance. They tend to face all sorts of barriers which have very, very little to do with their ability to perform a job. Many can't get into buildings where the jobs might be located. Many have enormous difficulties, Mr. Speaker, in getting transportation to and from work.

This government's record with respect . . . if one wants to judge this government by what they do rather than by what they say with respect to mentally disabled . . . with respect to disabled people, one might look at the grants for transit for disabled people. This program has been . . . lacks the resources it needs. The transportation program for disabled people is overcrowded; there's very long waits. In some cases it's virtually impossible for people, disabled people, to hold down employment because they can't get to and from the work.

That's not a program this government indeed invented. The program was there before. What this government has done is not properly fund it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say that we will not be opposing the passage of this Bill. We hope that this Bill does in fact mean that the government's going to pay more than lip service to the needs of disabled people. We hope that

disabled people will not receive that sort of disinterested approach that other minorities and other groups, such as women, have received in the past.

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

(1630)

Bill No. 57 — An Act to amend The Wascana Centre Act

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague, the member for Turtleford, this Bill introduces changes to The Wascana Centre Act which by and large have been requested by the Wascana Centre Authority.

A number of the amendments reflect parallel adjustments made in 1988 to legislation respecting Meewasin Valley Authority. Others pertain particularly to Wascana's unique situation. All of them will help to mould the future development of Wascana Centre, now under the guidance of Saskatchewan Parks, Recreation and Culture.

Mr. Speaker, Wascana Centre has been in existence naturally for many years, but in all that time the formal statement of purpose of the centre has never acknowledged one of the dimensions to Wascana which is obvious to any resident of Saskatchewan who visits. Government, education, cultural arts, and recreation have all been there.

Wascana's until now silent mandate has nevertheless been pursued faithfully over the years by members and employees of the authority alike. Conservation of the environment has been reflected in the water-fowl sanctuary, in the development of parks and the museums and interpretive programs, and in many other activities at Wascana Centre.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill contains a number of amendments which will acknowledge and reinforce this mandate to conserve and protect the environment. By introducing these changes the government hopes to signal a renewed focus for Wascana to encourage the participating parties to support improvements in the centre which will make the most of Wascana's natural environment as it has evolved over the years.

In addition to amending the preamble to the Act in section 3 of the Bill, this expanded mandate is reflected in the desirable qualifications for members of the authority in section 5, the areas which Wascana's by-laws may address in section 10, what the master plan may contain in section 11, and in the strengthened enforcement provisions now proposed in section 14 of the Bill.

Another matter which is addressed in this Bill is Wascana's master plan. The members of this House may be aware that Wascana recently adopted a new master plan. This plan was adopted following a process which, for the first time, included extensive public consultations. These amendments make public consultation a permanent feature of the new process to adopt, amend, or repeal the authority's master plan.

New requirements for public notice and public hearing by the authority are introduced. They are modelled on the provisions for municipalities of The Planning and Development Act, 1983.

An outline of what the master plan may contain is also now offered as guidance. By-laws pertaining to the use of land within the centre must be consistent with this master plan. In addition, the legal relationship between Wascana's plan and any municipal plan adopted pursuant to The Planning and Development Act, 1983, is clarified for the area within Wascana Centre.

This will not, Mr. Speaker, change the role or authority of the city's plan outside of Wascana's boundaries. The authority will have five years to adopt a new master plan in line with these requirements. This, Mr. Speaker, is consistent with current requirements of the Act that the master plan be reviewed every five years.

These amendments pertaining to Wascana's master plan and section 11 of the Bill parallel changes passed by the legislature in 1988 respecting Meewasin Valley Authority's development plan.

Sections 12, 13, and 14 of the Bill improve the enforcement provisions of the Act, giving the authority the ability to ensure that improvements by either participating parties or other persons are consistent with the master plan, have the authority's approval, and meet with any terms and conditions attached to such approvals, and further meet the requirements of the Act.

Some of these amendments adding fines and court orders to comply as options for enforcement are similar to recent changes made to Meewasin's legislation.

However, this Bill does go further. It responds to a situation which recently occurred where there was interference with the Wascana watercourse. These amendments will permit the authority to seek immediate remedy from the courts should any situation which threatens to damage Wascana Centre arise again.

Enhanced enforcement provisions are consistent with the broadened mandate for Wascana to focus on environmental conservation.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Bill will address several other concerns. Firstly, section 7 remedies an oversight in 1977 when new pension legislation was introduced for provincial employees. The government of the day neglected to extend this legislation to Wascana employees, and this change will be made retroactively.

Second, reference to The Urban Municipality Act, 1984, and its provisions have been updated in several instances.

Third, authority has been added in section 8 for Wascana to accept financial donations from the public to further its work. This may be of particular value in relation to conservation initiatives and accommodates a fund-raising effort now under way by all four urban parks.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, there is an amendment which will

continue the level of statutory funding for Wascana Centre from the participating parties for 1989-90 at the same level as for the previous two years.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of this Bill, an Act to amend The Wascana Centre Act.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, even though the Wascana Centre is a familiar area for all of the members of the Legislative Assembly because this building is located in the Wascana Centre, and even though the Wascana Centre is very familiar to the people of Regina and surrounding area, it may be less than familiar to many other people in Saskatchewan.

The Wascana Centre is a 930 hectare area in the heart of Regina, and it was established in 1962 by an Act of the Saskatchewan legislature, The Wascana Centre Act. One of the people who was instrumental in the passing of that legislation and in the early days of the Wascana Centre was Allan Blakeney, the former premier of Saskatchewan. In fact, Allan Blakeney has often said that one of his proudest achievements in public life was the passage of The Wascana Centre Act and his involvement in the Wascana Centre.

The Act united the province of Saskatchewan, the city of Regina, and the University of Regina to form a separate corporate body known as the Wascana Centre Authority, and the authority consists of representatives comprised from the provincial government, the city of Regina, and the university, to work together to ensure that the Wascana Centre is developed in accordance with the purposes for which it was designed.

And those purposes that the minister talked about were . . . up till this point have been fourfold. And it proposes that the area surrounding Wascana Lake in the city of Regina known as Wascana Centre be devoted to: one, the development of the seat of government; secondly, the enlargement of educational opportunities; third, the advancement of cultural arts; and fourthly, the improvement of recreational facilities.

The Wascana Centre, I think it's fair to say, is an achievement of the people of Saskatchewan that we can all be proud of; that is to say, all the people of Saskatchewan can be proud of. We have built an urban park, in the midst of a prairie, that is the envy of many other urban centres in other jurisdictions, not only in Canada but throughout the world.

The Wascana Centre Authority has won national and international recognition because of the type of development, and because it is such a pleasing environment in the midst of an environment that is not always that pleasing to the eye and perhaps lacks the natural beauty that one might find in other parts of the world.

The amendments, as the minister indicated, are in the main good amendments, amendments that I feel can be supported by this side of the House. To expand the stated purposes to include conservation of the environment, I think is an appropriate one and a timely one, and is one

that can be supported by the members of this side of the House.

The expansion of the process for adopting and amending the Wascana Centre's master plan to include provisions for public notice and hearing — those are amendments that, again, I think can be supported by this side of the House.

We have some questions about some of the changes and those questions will come out in committee, but in the main, Mr. Speaker, the amendments are good amendments.

They bring the process of adopting a plan in line with municipalities throughout the province and basically provide for a forum for public input. In addition to the input that is now provided through representation from the province of Saskatchewan, from the University of Regina, and the city of Regina, it also provides for direct input from the public, something that we on this side of the House can agree to and can support.

I think there is evidence of the need for this kind of public input in recent years when there was an attempt to develop a facility in the park that many of the public oppose. And at that point the need was expressed for the public to be able to directly to relate their concerns to the Wascana Centre about the kind of development taking place in the Wascana Centre.

Provisions to enable the Wascana Centre to be able to respond more forcefully to unlawful improvements such as dams which were . . . or a dam which was built on Wascana Creek by the Wascana golf and country club, I think a year or so ago, are improvements to the Act that can be supported by this side of the House. There can be no doubt that the Wascana Centre needs to be able to move forcefully and effectively against anyone who would tamper with the environment in such a way as to affect Wascana Centre. Clearly, the Wascana Centre Authority needs the kind of power to be able to move effectively.

Expanding the provision concerning gifting to explicitly permit the authority to accept donations of funds from the public are provisions that can be supported by this side of the House, even though we have some serious questions about what it is that the government intends with the amendments as proposed.

They state that the Wascana Centre, in conjunction with the other urban parks, the Meewasin Valley Authority in Saskatoon and the Wakamow Valley Authority in Moose Jaw, will come together in a fund-raising effort. Well we have some serious concerns, having witnessed the government in recent years take the hospitals in Saskatchewan and say to the hospitals in Saskatchewan that funding which hitherto had come from the provincial government must now come from private fund-raising, or public fund-raising. That is to say, you must, through lotteries and bingos and fund-raising schemes, be able to raise money to be able to support the hospitals.

And that is something that we have some concerns about because we feel that the Wascana Centre Authority and

the other urban parks are, and must be, funded in a clear, set way by the provincial government, in conjunction with other funding bodies, and that the orderly expansion of these parks should not be something that should be entrusted to the vagaries of fund-raising drives, and therefore begin to implicate the orderly development of those parks. So we have some questions about that, although we are prepared to support that specific amendment.

The housekeeping amendments that the minister referred to are again amendments that we can support, even though it would seem that there's at least one amendment that is proposed that needs to be clarified. But that is something that we will get into in committee.

But finally, Mr. Speaker, we have some grave reservations about the Bill, not because of all the points that I've mentioned, but because of the level of funding that is again proposed for the Wascana Centre Authority for the coming fiscal year, or for this fiscal year.

Now that is something that the minister did not dwell on. The minister did not dwell on the fact that the Wascana Centre Authority is proposed to receive the same amount in funding this year as it did last year.

Now that by itself is not necessarily a cause for concern, but put in the context of decreasing funding over the years — when one looks at, for example, the year 1984 when there was \$2 million flowing from the provincial government to the Wascana Centre, and this year it's proposed to be \$877,000 going from the provincial government to the Wascana Centre — we have some serious concerns about the level and appropriateness of government funding for the Wascana Centre to enable the Wascana Centre, in conjunction with the other partners, to move forward, to not only move forward, but to maintain the level of services that are desirable, but also to move forward and to expand the opportunities that should be found in a park such as this and to continue to develop the park so that we don't rest on our laurels but that we continue to strive for and obtain international and national recognition as an urban park, bar none, in Canada and throughout the world.

(1645)

That is something that we have some grave concerns about. And it's my opinion, Mr. Speaker, that we cannot vote for the Bill because the level of funding is just totally, totally inappropriate for the needs of Wascana Centre.

I mean, the members of the Legislative Assembly need do no more, need do no more than step outside this building to witness the crumbling sidewalks and the gutters and to drive on the Lakeshore Drive from the Legislative Building to the Wascana Parkway in Regina and to witness the rattling and shaking of the automobile, to know that Wascana Centre needs money, needs money badly, needs more money than is provided for in this legislation so that we can have a park that is properly serviced, properly maintained and is a park that we can all again be proud of, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again many of the amendments are

amendments that we can support, but again there is a serious, serious shortcoming in this Act and that is the level of funding that is proposed. It is totally inappropriate to the needs of Wascana Centre today, and it is inappropriate for the needs of Wascana Centre tomorrow.

And it's for those reasons, Mr. Speaker, that we must send a message, send a message to this government and to the people of Saskatchewan that enough is enough, that the Wascana Centre belongs to all of the people of Saskatchewan, is something that is a show-piece for the people of Saskatchewan and needs to be improved on. And therefore we will oppose it because the level of funding is totally inappropriate and not enough. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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.

Bill No. 58 — An Act to amend The Wakamow Valley Authority Act

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Bill is required to ensure the level of funding for Wakamow Valley Authority from the participating parties for 1989-90 continues at the same level as in previous years. The amendment parallels those changes to be made respectively for Meewasin Valley, Wascana Centre, and Chinook Parkway.

Mr. Speaker, responsibility for Wakamow Valley Authority, Wascana Centre, and the other urban parks was transferred from Urban Affairs to Parks, Recreation and Culture. Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture to carry out a comprehensive review of the funding formulas for all of the urban parks. This will be done over the next several months, and it will be done in consultation with the parks' authorities to ensure that their views will be taken into consideration.

Mr. Speaker, it should be recognized, however, that in the face of current fiscal conditions, urban park funding has been maintained at the same level without any decrease for the past three years.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore move second reading of this Bill to amend The Wakamow Valley Authority Act.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister who introduced the Wakamow Bill seems to take some pride that they've held funding the same for three years. Mr. Speaker, that is not welcome news in the community that I represent and it's not welcome news for the Wakamow Valley Authority.

To be very clear, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation freezes the funding to the Wakamow Valley Authority at the 1986 level. But beyond that, Mr. Speaker, it also freezes funding to the Wakamow Valley Authority in such a way that it continues the inequity in funding that is only true of the Wakamow authority. Of the four urban park

authorities in the province, there is an inequity that exists in the Wakamow funding that is as well frozen by this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take just a few minutes, for the benefit of the House, to review the history of the Wakamow authority. It was established in 1981 by an Act of the then government, and at that time funding to the Wakamow Valley Authority was set at the rate of two city mills — 40 per cent of the funding to be provided by the province of Saskatchewan; 60 per cent to be provided by the local municipalities, primarily the city of Moose Jaw.

Mr. Speaker, I point out to you that that was a difference in funding from the other two existing urban park authorities at that time, Meewasin and Wascana. At that time, Meewasin and Wascana were being funded at the rate of five city mills; Wakamow was established with a funding rate of two city mills, Mr. Speaker. Now the intention in those early days was that once the park achieved some development and became operational, that that funding would be adjusted upward to near the funding of the other two urban park authorities at that time.

Mr. Speaker, that adjustment has never happened. The Wakamow Valley Authority funding still falls behind the funding to the other urban park authorities in the province. And worse yet, Mr. Speaker, even following the establishment of the new authority in Swift Current, even that new authority was given a better funding arrangement than what Wakamow has received.

In 1982, of course, the government in this province changed; along came the Tories. And in 1983 funding to all of the urban park authorities, Wakamow, Meewasin, and Wascana was cut — cut dramatically by 20 per cent. And so the initial funding, even lower than the other urban parks, was cut for Wakamow, cut back to 1.6 of a city mill.

The legislation we have before us now freezes the funding at the 1986 level, and freezes it at the 1.6 of a city mill.

Now Wakamow faces other inequities when compared to the other urban authorities in the province. I am pleased to hear the minister say today that the funding formula and arrangements will be reviewed by the new minister responsible. I think, I and the Wakamow authority in Moose Jaw, and other members of my community, are happy to see the transfer of the authority to the Minister of Parks, and the Department of Parks.

And I'm happy to hear the Minister of Highways today say that there will be in fact a study done of the funding arrangements. And I sincerely hope that these inequities that exist today will be considered and will be changed, because it's not just a funding inequity that happens for Wakamow.

As I pointed out, whereas the other urban authorities are funded at a higher level, there is also a difference in the kinds of funding. For instance, in the Swift Current Chinook park authority, the Chinook authority is funded on a 50-50 level, a 50-50 basis so that the province pays 50 per cent and the local municipality pays 50 per cent.

In the Wakamow case, the province is only paying 40 per cent, and the local authorities are paying 60 per cent. I sincerely hope that that inequity will be considered.

I point out to the House and to you, Mr. Speaker, that the urban authorities — here in Regina the Wascana authority, and the Meewasin authority in Saskatoon — enjoy the benefit of a third party, that being in each case the university. No third party exists for the Wakamow Valley Authority in Moose Jaw. I see that too as an inequity, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that is considered when the minister and his department look at the funding arrangements.

As opposed to some of the other urban park authorities in the province, Wakamow must fund, out of its statutory funding, its own landscape maintenance. That too differs, for instance, from Wascana. And you'll understand, Mr. Speaker, why that presents a problem to Wakamow. The more that the park is developed — and a great deal has occurred in the few years since the establishment of Wakamow, Mr. Speaker — the more that is developed, of course, the greater the landscape maintenance costs.

And so it's a bit of a vicious circle in that as Wakamow develops further and further, higher and higher are the maintenance costs, and all of those costs must come out of the statutory funding as opposed to the other urban park authorities. I sincerely hope, Mr. Speaker, that when the minister reviews the funding arrangements for the urban parks that that inequity, as well as the others, will be considered.

Mr. Speaker, I approach this subject with some vested interest, and I admit that to the House, in that I believe the entire Wakamow development falls within the constituency of Moose Jaw South. In fact each morning as I have breakfast, as I look out the kitchen window, I view the Wakamow Valley Authority and the work they've done. As a family we spend many hours within the confines of the authority, and I want to report to the House and to the people of Saskatchewan that one of the most exciting things that has happened in Moose Jaw in this decade is the development of the Wakamow Valley Authority, and the foresight of those who established that authority should be recognized and praised.

Mr. Speaker, Wakamow, from its initial days, in a unique concept in those days and still somewhat unique, has sought private support, and the volunteers that have worked hard in Wakamow have gone, not only about the province but about the country, and have found support for Wakamow. And the work they have accomplished in the short period of time that the authority has existed is nothing short of phenomenal.

Mr. Speaker, I would invite you and all members of the House to visit the Wakamow authority and to see what has been accomplished through the efforts of local people, primarily volunteers, within the city of Moose Jaw.

I want to extend a very special invitation to the minister now responsible for the Wakamow Valley Authority to visit that authority and to meet with the board. I do not believe he has had an opportunity to do that yet. I

understand the transfer to his department is somewhat recent and he hasn't had that opportunity yet, but I encourage him, I invite him, Mr. Speaker, to visit the authority.

In terms of this legislation, Mr. Speaker, because it freezes the funding for the authority and because it also freezes the inequities that exists for the Wakamow Valley Authority, I will not find it possible to support this Bill. Of course we support the notion of the funding of Wakamow; that is without question, but, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support this Bill which freezes funding at 1986 level and freezes the inequities that exist.

Mr. Speaker, I would have been more than happy to support, perhaps, a compromise, not looking for identical funding as the Wascana authority, the Meewasin authority; not looking to a five city mill. But I would have been very happy to support at least a return to the two city mills before this government took over and slashed the 20 per cent in funding — I'd have been pleased to support that.

Mr. Speaker, I could have supported a 50-50 split as the Chinook park authority enjoys, so that the province and the municipality would share 50-50. I could have easily supported that and I would have hoped to see that in the legislation. But neither of those changes is there.

We're just back to the 1986 funding, a funding that is desperately low for the needs of the expanding park in Moose Jaw. And so for that reason, Mr. Speaker, I and members on this side of the House will not be supporting the Bill.

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

Bill No. 59 — An Act to amend The Meewasin Valley Authority Act

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, this Bill is required to ensure the level of funding for Meewasin Valley Authority from the participating parties for '89-90 continues at the same level as in previous years. The amendment parallels those changes to be made respectively for Wakamow Valley, Wascana Centre and Chinook Parkway, Mr. Speaker. Responsibility for Meewasin Valley Authority, Wascana Centre and other urban parks was transferred from Urban Affairs to Parks, Recreation and Culture.

Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture to carry out a comprehensive review of the funding formulas again for all the urban parks. This will be done over the next several years and, I should also suggest, in consultation with the parks' authorities to ensure that their views will be taken into consideration.

It should be recognized, however, that in the face of current fiscal conditions, urban park funding has been maintained at the same level without any decrease for the past three years. I therefore, Mr. Speaker, move second reading of this Bill to amend the Meewasin Valley Authority Act.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words on this, amendments to The Meewasin Valley (Authority) Act. It's a very important Act for the city of Saskatoon, the University of Saskatchewan, the Government of Saskatchewan. However, the way the Government of Saskatchewan of recent times has been treating these authorities, including Meewasin Valley Authority, what they're doing to them amounts to damning them with faint praise, Mr. Speaker. And that is unfortunate.

These members, when they sat on this side of the House, stood up and supported the creation of these authorities, such as the Meewasin Valley. They did it with their tongue in their cheek, Mr. Speaker. I know, I was there and I listened to them, and it's quite clear by their actions since that time that what I understood at that time is actually happening now when I say they damn it with faint praise, because that's exactly what they do.

The cut in the grants or the matching funds to the Meewasin Valley Authority took place in 1983. That was the first opportunity this government had, once it attained the power of the Executive Council, to cut the authority. And they took the first opportunity they could to cut them, Mr. Speaker.

At that time I was a member of city council in Saskatoon, and the city council of Saskatoon raised a motion in city council which responded to this crass action of this government who, in a time of buoyant revenues, took the first opportunity to cut the Meewasin Valley matching grants and funds.

The city of Saskatoon responded with a resolution that says as follows:

That the city of Saskatoon inform the provincial government that we appreciate their financial support for MVA (Meewasin Valley Authority) and encourage the provincial government to re-establish funding level at 5 mills for the year 1984-85.

Well the minister in charge at that time was Mr. Schoenhals, and Mr. Schoenhals held out the hope that in the next budget they would return to the funding, because I read the debates. Mr. Schoenhals held out the hope that, oh yes, we will return you to the funding.

Well again this government holds out the hope that there's going to be a return to funding in better times. They say, we're going to reassess the financial arrangements with the authorities and it will take several years. Well, Mr. Speaker, a government that had the intention of serving the authorities and the people of Saskatchewan and the people of these four cities would not take several years to review the funding of the authorities.

That is a crutch, along with many other crutches this government uses to get by the financial picture, the financial mess that they've created in this province, their inability to fund the authorities.

Why, why can't they fund these authorities the way they

should be funded, the way they were originally established to be funded, Mr. Speaker? Well, it's quite clear. They have to first take care of the Peter Pocklingtons, they have to have the money for the Cargills, they have to pour some money into GigaText, and of course they have the general waste and mismanagement this government has become well noted for throughout this province.

And of course they have to provide for the people like the Paul Schoenhals, hiring him into the potash corporation and giving them big salaries for a full-time job when they don't need them full time. And they've illustrated that point just recently by saying the minister, or the former minister, Mr. Schoenhals, will now be a part-time chairman of the potash corporation. But I'll bet you he gets better than half-time money for the job as part-time chairman.

So they have to have money for all these things, and all those things, Mr. Speaker, come ahead of Meewasin Valley, Wakamow authority, and the Wascana authority. These authorities are way down the line when it comes to the money.

And that bothers me, Mr. Speaker. We're in a position that all we can do is note the crassness of this government in the way they treat these authorities and hope that some day the funding will be returned. Mind you, when we form the Government of Saskatchewan, it will not take several years, it will not take several years to examine, to re-examine the funding of these authorities.

In maximum, Mr. Speaker, this should take about a year, about a year. If you involve the authorities, get the responses from them, should be able to realign the financing for the authorities in a matter of a year.

I suspect, Mr. Speaker, this government will not bother doing that. All they're doing is getting themselves by the next election, or attempting to, by this suggestion that it's going to take several years to reflect on the funding of these authorities.

The minister, three times in a row, gets up and says we've maintained the funding at last year's level. Well what bunch of nonsense that is. Why didn't the minister call a spade a spade and say we've frozen the funding of these authorities again for the third time. And you take into consideration the declining value of the dollar, Mr. Speaker, this government has not only frozen them, they've shrunk them. They've shrunk them.

It's high time we had a re-evaluation of the funding of the authorities, but I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, this government will not get around to it before the next election. That will be one of the promises. That will be one of the promises. They say to the people in Swift Current, Moose Jaw, Regina, and Saskatoon that we hold out the promise that we're going to have another look at the funding of these authorities. Well I tell the people of Saskatoon and the other cities that have these authorities that the funding arrangements for these authorities will be looked into *tout de suite* when we form the Government of Saskatchewan. You can rest assured of that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — We will not continue, as this government has done for three years, to hold these authorities in subservience to the Pocklingtons, the GigaTexts, and the Schoenhals of this world. They'll be higher up in the priority than those people are. And we'll cut out some of the waste so that there'll be money available to these authorities when we form the government, Mr. Speaker. We can't stop them; they're on a cruise to nowhere. We can't stop them; all we can do is say, Mr. Speaker, things will be different when we're running the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Bill No. 71 — An Act to amend The Renewable Resources, Recreation and Culture Act

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today and move second reading of An Act to amend The Renewable Resources, Recreation and Culture Act. The purpose of this Bill is to incorporate two important but albeit largely housekeeping amendments into the Act.

Mr. Speaker, The Renewable Resources, Recreation and Culture Act, among other things, provides for the general administration and management of Saskatchewan's parks and renewable resources. Saskatchewan's parks system and its renewable resource base provide both excellent recreational opportunities as well as considerable economic benefits to this province. The changes that I have introduced, although relatively minor in nature, will greatly assist in the management of these resources.

Mr. Speaker, the two components to this amendment are: number one, to establish clear authority for officers investigating contraventions of the Act or its regulations; and two, to authorize the Lieutenant Governor in Council to determine, by regulation, the uses to which the commercial revolving fund and the resource protection and development revolving fund may be put.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members of the Legislative Assembly to support this Bill, as I now move second reading of The Renewable Resources, Recreation and Culture Amendment Act, 1989.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of concerns regarding this Bill, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to check it further, so I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Mr. Chairman: — It being near 5 o'clock, the House stands recessed until 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.