

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order, I have reviewed the petition presented by the member for The Battlefords yesterday and find it to be irregular pursuant to rules 11(7) and (6). Therefore it cannot be read and received.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Martin: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to all the members in the House here today, in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, we have 14 pupils from Balfour Collegiate's English as a second language program. Mr. Speaker, these young people, these young adults are representing nine countries, actually 10 countries, Mr. Speaker, and they are China, Eritrea, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, Czechoslovakia, Hong Kong, Nigeria, El Salvador, Mexico, and Vietnam.

They are learning about Canada, Mr. Speaker, and about Canadian politics. And they said that they are . . . nearly all of us are of voting age and hope to become Canadian citizens by the next election. And Regina is our home but we are originally from all these other countries.

Well we're really pleased to have you here today. I'll have an opportunity to speak to you in a little while. Meanwhile, enjoy yourselves. Mr. Speaker, please welcome your guests.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLaren: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly some students from outside our border. They're the grade 7 — 57 in number, from McKenzie Junior High School in Dauphin, Manitoba. And they're seated in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker.

I have a special interest as far as the Dauphin schools are concerned because my son-in-law and daughter teach school in Dauphin. My daughter Tenley teaches music and also teaches organ and piano in her home. Maybe some of those students there are learning the organ and piano from her.

We want to welcome you here. We want to thank your teachers, Kelly Anderson and Kathy Baxter for bringing you. And we hope you enjoy your stay in the Assembly and your visit to Regina and have a real happy holiday season that's coming up shortly. I would ask all members to please welcome these students.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member from Yorkton to welcome the students from Dauphin to our Legislative Assembly. Dauphin is a very special place in my heart as well. That is the place in which I was born and my family farmed north of Dauphin

in a place called Fork River for many years. As a matter of fact my uncle, Henry Solomon, still has the farm north of Fork River.

So I join with my colleagues, and I certainly would ask you to say hello to the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for Dauphin, Mr. John Plohman, who's also a friend of mine. Welcome to the legislature. Welcome to Saskatchewan. I hope you enjoy your stay in the city of Regina. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with a great deal of pleasure that I introduce through you to the Assembly some 22 grade 8 students from Lumsden High School, in the beautiful community of Lumsden. Mr. Speaker, they're here visiting, watching the proceedings, question period, and I will meet with them a little later this morning for questions, answers, and refreshments.

They're accompanied by teacher, Deanna Chernick. I know that all hon. members will join with me in welcoming the students from Lumsden High School here this morning. Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Federal Funding for Agriculture

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, farmers are today reacting to yesterday's very disappointing and heavy-handed announcement. In fact, I spent the evening last night phoning several farmers around the country just to see what their reaction was, and I think the comment that summed it up quite vividly was when one farmer said, well they changed the old carrot-and-stick approach into the sledge-hammer approach.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Now, Mr. Minister, my question to you is: why were you so willing to take part in this blackmail approach to our farmers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday, the farmers of Saskatchewan and the farm organizations wanted to see two things particularly: one, as much cash and as quickly as possible into the hands of farmers through a separate account that is not linked to GRIP (gross revenue insurance plan) and not linked to anything else. And the NISA (net income stabilization account) mechanism, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is not tied to any participation by the farmer; in fact, the farmer doesn't even have to put any money into it. That's 5 per cent of their gross sales, and the money can go right into an account for them. They set it up for themselves. They don't have to take out GRIP. They don't have to do anything at all connected to any other program. That's the

first.

The second thing, Mr. Speaker, is that the farmers have said to us, perhaps the premium is too high on the GRIP program, so they recommended to us if they could get some more assistance in reducing that premium, particularly on the revenue insurance because it's the most expensive, because the average price is about 4.50 a bushel for durum or 4.15 for wheat. The market price is about \$2 a bushel, so there's going to be a big payment of about a billion dollars starting this year in GRIP. So if the farmer can get 25 per cent of his GRIP payment on the revenue side picked up, then obviously it's a significant help to them, Mr. Speaker.

So I would just say to the hon. member that the combination of the two, cash into their hands only, plus 25 per cent of the revenue portion of GRIP, so that they can afford the new long-run safety net which farmers have asked for, is the principle behind the thing that was announced yesterday. And I would say, Mr. Speaker, for all farmers . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can understand why the Premier goes on, because he's got one heck of a lot of explaining to do to get through this one, I'll tell you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — New question, new question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture. Farmers have very serious misgivings about joining the GRIP program because they don't see it as a long-term solution. I'll tell you, Mr. Minister, even your own member from Pelly said that in order to benefit you had to be somewhat solvent, but it will leave quite a few out in the cold.

And, Mr. Minister, in order to join this program, if you join this program, you get the 25 cent reduction. Why just one year? Why not for the full three years of the term? I ask you this, Mr. Minister: is it one year because one year will get you by your next election?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I would say to the hon. member that he has asked . . . and he has commented in the newspaper, Mr. Speaker, that he himself will be joining the program. And so if the member from Humboldt is interested in joining the program because it is going to be helpful . . . and farmers have asked for a long-term stabilization safety net which means the provincial government can contribute. And when we contribute, Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Centre says it's criminally unfair when we would participate, Mr. Speaker. On the other hand, the member from Humboldt is saying, well I'd join it if you could only put more money into it. So he's got one member of his caucus on the NDP (New Democratic Party) side saying it's way too much for the rural people, the city people shouldn't have to do this. The rural member out there says, I'm going to join the program but I wish you'd put more money into it.

I would think, Mr. Speaker, the two members could get

together and come up with a plan so the NDP has a policy in agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — That's the problem we face in this province. The NDP has no plan. This may not be enough money for everybody, Mr. Speaker. And the dilution of a national program means Ontario, Quebec and others can get into it. But for the province of Saskatchewan, it's \$90 million into a savings account this year; \$45 million next year, Mr. Speaker, and no strings attached, just for the agriculture community, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — A new question, Mr. Speaker. It's to the minister. Mr. Minister, I don't think you should be as concerned about whether or not we're going to support you because you know we're not. Who you should be listening to are the farmers. And it's the farmers who have told you for five years that they wanted a long-term, predictable income. You gave them GRIP, a predictably short program. For eight months you've been told by farmers and farm groups that they need cash to bridge the gap this spring, before spring seeding. You gave them a blackmail program, and it's not going to be here before seeding.

Mr. Minister, my question to you is this: simply tell the people and families of rural Saskatchewan why you have totally abandoned them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday, over the last eight years we have provided the farmers of Saskatchewan with, in the neighbourhood, Mr. Speaker, of \$12 billion, \$12 billion in the last eight years, Mr. Speaker.

We put . . . and asked to have the federal government put almost \$10 billion into the hands of farmers, just for the province of Saskatchewan. We put almost 2 billion ourselves, Mr. Speaker, and now we're into a long-run program that will put over a billion dollars into the hands of Saskatchewan farmers every year, year after year, on top of the crop, Mr. Speaker.

And on top of that, Mr. Speaker, now we're opening up a special savings account for farmers where \$90 million will go into that savings account, no strings attached. And we'll put \$45 million into it next year, no strings attached, Mr. Speaker. The farmer doesn't even have to put money up.

And on top of that I remind the members of the opposition, Mr. Speaker, during their administration from 1971 to '81, Saskatchewan lost 10,000 farmers and the NDP weren't able to get even \$1 billion in a whole decade, Mr. Speaker. And today they don't have a plan.

The combination of ours with \$12 billion and more to come, Mr. Speaker, in the face of the NDP having no agriculture policy and no money over 10 years, losing 10,000 farmers, Mr. Speaker, I would say that it's time at

least the NDP stood up and offered to the people of Saskatchewan their plan for agriculture, their plan for rural Saskatchewan, their plan for the future of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Manslaughter Case in Prince Albert

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, today in Prince Albert a number of people are holding a demonstration and vigil to protest the handling of the Carney Nerland case, the incident where the head of a white supremacist organization shot and killed an Indian person, and recently charged with manslaughter and then sentenced to four years after pleading guilty.

Given the man's racist view, given that the man's racist views were well known and given that witnesses saw him fire shots from his weapon while the victim, Leo LaChance, was in the store, given that he refused to allow others to use the phone in his shop to call for assistance for the wounded man, and given reports to his comment to a policeman that they should pin a medal on him for shooting an Indian, could you tell this House who in your Justice department gave the prosecution . . . prosecutor permission to bring a manslaughter charge rather than a charge of second degree murder? In these circumstances, why was there any plea bargaining?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — As difficult as it may be for the hon. member to accept, as Minister of Justice and as Attorney General of Saskatchewan, I have followed a practice and procedure of never interfering in prosecutions.

An Hon. Member: — Ho, ho.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — And the hon. member says ho, ho. And in fact he has absolutely . . . and will never be able to get any evidence, and I challenge him to put any evidence that he has, that any prosecution has ever been interfered with. And I think, as a lawyer, that his comments are highly inappropriate, knowing it reflects on the administration of justice.

I believe in the independence of the prosecutors and the independence of the director of public prosecutions and her office. And, Mr. Speaker, any decisions would be made solely by the prosecution staff.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, people across this province find the four-year sentence of this case to be highly unacceptable. A recent media poll in Prince Albert found more than 98 per cent of the respondents found the sentence to be too lenient.

It is also not a small price to pay for claiming a human life. It also sends . . . If it is not a small price to pay for claiming a human life, it also sends a message to racists that it is not a big deal to kill an Indian in Saskatchewan.

Will you assure the people of Saskatchewan today that your department will review this case, seeking an avenue of appeal of the sentence.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I will join with the hon. member in expressing my abhorrence of the racist attitudes, particularly of that group, Aryan rights or whatever they call themselves. They're frankly not worthy of citizenship in this province in my personal view. I disagree with them as strongly as the hon. member.

Having said that, I do stand behind the principle that the prosecutors are independent and have to act independently and I would not give any instructions to the prosecutors in any way, shape, or form. I will rely on their judgement and their independence.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — Another question, Mr. Speaker, to that same minister. Mr. Minister, justice has to be done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Minister, the law cannot, the law cannot ignore justice. This was found in the Donald Marshall case when it became necessary to go outside the bounds of the system to correct an injustice to a Micmac Indian. The Nova Scotia government was willing to do so, why won't you?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — As Minister of Justice, I have never said that our system is perfect and that's not the allegation or statement that I make. I have responded to your questions fairly and stated my position, as Attorney General and Minister of Justice, of prosecutorial independence.

I have also joined with you in expressing my abhorrence of racist organizations like the one that the individual proposes. Having said that, our system is still, in my view, the fairest in the world — not perfect, and I've not stated that. And I indicate to the hon. member that the prosecutors made and exercised their judgement independently and I am prepared to uphold that principle.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, another new question. Mr. Minister, the judge in the case has recommended that Nerland be allowed to serve his sentence in a provincial correctional centre, rather than in a federal penitentiary, as the law would demand for a four-year sentence.

As I understand it, it would take the agreement of both provincial and federal governments for this to happen. Many aboriginal women have not been offered this choice and have been sent to the prison for women in Kingston where in despair a number have committed suicide. All they had asked was to serve their sentence in a provincial institution close to their families, but this was not allowed. The law should not have two standards —

one for aboriginal women, and one for white supremacists. Why should Nerland be given special treatment in this case?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Again I've indicated the principle that I uphold, and stand behind this, to the independence of the prosecutors and the independence to exercise of their judgement. The point the hon. member makes about the treatment of female native offenders is a valid one, and the Government of Saskatchewan has encouraged the Government of Canada to build a new institution in this province — I think to extend it further, a question of the adequacy of institutions generally for female offenders.

Having said that, the Government of Canada, my understanding, has not made a decision where in western Canada it is going to build the new facility to replace Kingston, but we have encouraged them to build that institution here which will alleviate — and I carefully use the word alleviate — the issue that the hon. member has raised.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, the minister did not answer my question. I'll repeat the question. Why should Nerland be given special treatment in this case to serve in a correctional centre where aboriginal women were not given the same treatment?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Let me indicate that on the matter of native female offenders that are sentenced to institution, the broader question is the adequacy of institutions, correctional institutions or penitentiaries for women. That problem has been at least partially dealt with, with the closure of Kingston and the announcement of the Government of Canada that is going to establish facilities throughout Canada, regional facilities.

Okay. If there had of been a regional facility in western Canada, at least some of the issues the hon. member raises would not have happened. I think the hon. member will accept that. So that problem is there. Obviously we are trying to deal with it. The federal government is trying to deal with it.

The argument you make about double standard: I indicated that there are two problems. There are the problems of the sentencing which the judge will decide and then, secondly, the existence of institutions which is being dealt with.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, the same question: why was Nerland given special treatment, and aboriginal women not given special treatment in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The question of aboriginal or women being sentenced to penitentiaries . . . The first problem is

there aren't any other really than Kingston. So they were sentenced to Kingston. We have one for males in Prince Albert; the one for females in Kingston. So when there was a matter of females being sentenced to penitentiary, by and large they had to go to Kingston. Okay?

Now that is being dealt with, with the announcement of the Government of Canada that there will be regional institutions. Now regional institutions . . . we have made the argument, as the Government of Saskatchewan, that the western regional institution should be in Saskatchewan. If the western regional institution in Saskatchewan . . . as I indicated earlier, part of the latter problem you raised would be dealt with because they would in fact be sentenced here in Saskatchewan, or serve their sentence here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, another question. Since the minister is trying to duck my question of why he is indeed supporting white supremacist, Nerland, and not supporting aboriginal women, I will go to the next question.

The death of Leo LaChance was a tragedy which should have never been allowed to happen. The subsequent treatment of Carney Nerland leaves many, many questions unanswered. But this is just a symptom of the problem. The problem is racism, and at its worst, white supremacist groups. We need to address the growing problem of these groups and how they threaten the safety of Indians, immigrants, Jews, and other people, and just about anyone else they choose to hate.

Expressing abhorrence about the situation is simply not enough, Mr. Minister. Will you announce today that your department will conduct a full investigation or inquiry into the activities of white supremacist groups and that you will bring the result of that investigation back to this Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The hon. member indicates that nothing has been done, and that is very, very inaccurate. We have indicated in the past our position on the matter of our abhorrence to racism and the racist attitude.

Secondly, we have SaskTel, for example — has taken some practical effects of installing special equipment for some organizations at no cost, that are affected and harassed by those with racist attitudes.

I have raised before in this Assembly my concerns about an inquiry. One of the fundamental things to do to in the matter of racism is to change public attitudes. I have a deep concern that a public inquiry will in fact bring a lot of those racists out and give them a platform, will give them a platform to talk and propound their views to the public. I question the wisdom of that approach.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Executive Compensation at PCS

Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the minister responsible for the Potash

Corporation. Minister, I have in my hand a management proxy circular from PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan) which shows that Chuck Childers continues pulling in what must be the highest salary in the province of Saskatchewan. In fact for the second year in a row his compensation tops \$675,000 and that doesn't count his special income tax adjustment or the pension contributions that are made on his behalf.

Now that \$675,000 is a higher salary than is being paid to the top executive officers in all kinds of companies. I'll mention some of them: Abitibi-Price, Magna International, Canadian Occidental, Mitel, North Canadian Oils, Domtar, CN Rail, or MacMillan Bloedel, just to mention a few.

Now given the financial situation in this province, how can you possibly justify that kind of a salary for one man?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Again, Mr. Speaker, this is a similar debate to what we had in the last session, as have most of the questions from the opposition. Having said that, I repeat what I said last year. Yes, I find that a very high salary.

Having said that, the public information makes it abundantly clear that the other potash companies in Saskatchewan — at least two of them — are paying their chief executive officers, in one case I believe, nearly double the salary that Mr. Childers is earning.

And the difficulty of course is if you're going to get the high quality help — and the hon. member himself has publicly complimented Mr. Childers on his abilities — if you're going to pay that, you have to pay what the competition is paying in similar industries. It is a very, very high salary, I've acknowledged that, Mr. Speaker, but compared to the rest of the industries, it turns out that it is low, unfortunately.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — A new question to the same minister. I said that Mr. Childers was intelligent and obviously he is, to negotiate this kind of a contract with you, Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — And the Minister of the Family says, in response to my question about this outrageous salary, so what, so what. What an incredible question. Not only does Childers receive that kind of salary but this same document shows that William Doyle earns nearly 300,000 and John Gugulyn over 200,000 and Jim Bubnick 160,000 and Barry Humphreys 160,000. Right in their own document, Mr. Minister, it shows salaries paid to these five people of \$1.631 million — for five people.

Now, in light of those expenditures, how do you justify the lay-off that has recently taken place at Allan where 180 potash miners have been off work? How do you justify that, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I always enjoy when the hon. member, whom I have a high regard for, gets a little political when he knows the answers to the questions.

The lay-offs in potash deal with matters of inventory, Mr. Speaker, and the potash industry is cyclical. And there are times of the year when they build up the inventory, then the sales take place generally twice each year in two seasons. The company then sends its potash around the world at those times when the farmers are seeding — not when they're not seeding, Mr. Speaker — in preparation for seeding.

So they do build up inventory, then they sell their products. When they're not building up inventory they have the seasonal lay-offs, Mr. Speaker. That is typical of the industry and that has been the proper and long-standing practice. Having said, I have indicated to the hon. member that the salaries are less in some cases than . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 70 — An Act Respecting a Right of Access to Documents of the Government of Saskatchewan and a Right of Privacy with Respect to Personal Information held by the Government of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I move first reading of a Bill respecting the right of access to documents of the Government of Saskatchewan and a right of privacy with respect to personal information held by the Government of Saskatchewan.

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

Bill No. 71 — An Act Respecting a Right of Access to Documents of Local Authorities and a Right of Privacy with Respect to Personal Information held by Local Authorities.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting a right of access to documents of local authorities and a right of privacy with respect to personal information held by local authorities.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 61 — An Act to amend the Education and Health Tax Act

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. I have a

number of comments I want to make. The minister might want to exercise some patience because this may take me some time to express the depth of the anger that people have on the health and education tax.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — This government has a record of financial mismanagement and, I may say, a record of less than honourable dealings with the opposition. I want to say to members opposite, if you want to call Bills out of order, without warning, if you want trouble, I'll tell you this is the opposition that . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, all members of the . . . Mr. Speaker, all members of the public know that this institution works by agreement. They know, Mr. Speaker, that we agree ahead of time on what . . . we don't agree, we get from the Government House Leader a list of what we're going to speak on.

The member from Melfort . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order! Order, order, order! Order. Order, order, order! I would just like to bring to the hon. members' attention that obviously there is a . . . I'd like to ask them to not interrupt, not interrupt, and that applies to all members — not interrupt.

Now the member for Regina Elphinstone, the member for Regina Elphinstone and the member for Moose Jaw North, now let's all settle down.

An Hon. Member: — Saskatoon Mayfair.

The Speaker: — I'm calling your attention again, the member from Moose Jaw North. I just asked you and once again you interrupt. I'm asking all members, I'm asking all members to allow the proceedings to go forth. Obviously there is a dispute on both sides of the House. You will each have . . . order. You will each have your opportunity . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Now the member for Regina Elphinstone and the member for Moose Jaw North and the member for Melfort, now if you people aren't going to come to order, I'm going to recess this House! This House is recessed for 10 minutes.

The House recessed for a short period of time.

The Speaker: — As you are aware, I have had to resort to an action which I haven't had to do since I became Speaker, and an action which I hoped I wouldn't have to. However the disorder in the House was grave. Obviously there are frustrations. However that is part of our parliamentary system, that there will be frustrations, and hon. members must work out those frustrations within a parliamentary context. And unfortunately it was incumbent upon me to recess the House for a few minutes to draw attention to this serious disorder which was taking place.

I trust that this won't happen in the future. I certainly don't want to have to take this action. We will revert back to where we were at the time of the recess.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the Assembly reacted with shock and surprise at what was an intentional misrepresentation to us of today's agenda by the Government House Leader. I don't know why we should be surprised. I don't know why we should be surprised . . .

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — I'd like to make a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — What is your point of order?

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — My point of order, Mr. Speaker, is the member's remarks as to the agenda for today, I believe are totally irrelevant to the subject at hand, which is the subject of the E&H tax (education and health tax) for which the member opposite apparently has been unprepared to debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, if I could I'd like to speak to the point of order. Mr. Speaker, the long-standing debate on how the agenda of this House is set . . . I think I would like to comment on the Government House Leader's statement that the way the House works is somehow very ordinary today. I want to point out how it is not ordinary, in fact very unordinary.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, late in the afternoon as usual, my staff contacted the minister's office to get the agenda for the House. Fridays being unusual — we start early in the morning — it's necessary to get the agenda the day before, and we got an agenda. The agenda stated that we would have first reading of freedom of information. Then we would have Bill 57, Financial Administration Act; Bill 58, Statutes Act; Bill 59, Interpretation Act; Bill 60 and Bill 62.

Nowhere on the agenda for today was the Bill that the minister attempted to jam through, not to harm the opposition, but to put through in secret a very unpopular tax increase. That's what was happening here today.

On one further point, Mr. Speaker, last year in a similar circumstance, when the House wasn't functioning properly, Mr. Speaker, you remember it well. The Rules Committee met and there was an agreement made that a written agenda would be provided to the opposition on a daily basis by that member from Melfort, the member from Melfort who today in a sleazy attempt to jam through a tax Bill . . . and tries to mislead the public and the opposition.

And I say to the minister . . .

The Speaker: — I have listened to the point of order given, and I have listened to the response. And based on what I have heard, the point of order is well taken. I believe that debate of this nature should be done between the House leaders and is not relevant to the actual debate on the Bill

under question — is not relevant. Order, order!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

The Speaker: — What is your point of order?

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the Rules Committee of the House has an agreement that a written agenda would be provided by the government to the opposition. That rule is not being accepted and acted on by the government. How can we . . . if I could . . .

The Speaker: — I believe your point of order is not . . . The hon. member does not have a point of order.

Mr. Shillington: — I respect your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I must say I'm a touch surprised by it. I'm surprised that an agreement in the rule . . . I am not in any sense disputing your ruling.

The Speaker: — Order. I believe that what we're doing here . . . and you're introducing debate in your remarks on a ruling, and I'd suggest that you continue on your remarks on the Bill itself — on the Bill itself, and not introduce this argument into the Bill.

Mr. Shillington: — Apparently, Mr. Speaker, it is now fair game, accepted rules of the procedure, accepted rules of this House that they can get . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. Order. I'm just drawing your attention, before you go any further, sir, not to involve that debate in your remarks. I'm just drawing that to your attention again, and I expect that you will co-operate.

Mr. Shillington: — I started to say, Mr. Speaker, that I rose . . . I was half off my seat expecting to speak on The Financial Administration Act. It was therefore with some surprise when I found myself standing up speaking to an entirely different Bill.

I've said, Mr. Speaker, that the Government House Leader intentionally misled the opposition. He has as good as admitted it with respect to the order of the day.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. Order. Order, order. I have asked the hon. member twice. I've asked the hon. twice not to debate the ruling as to the point of order that was just raised. And I'm asking him one more time to continue his remarks on the Bill. I have been lenient with him, as lenient as possible. I'm asking him to continue with the remarks on the Bill and let's get on with the debate.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, I will abide by your ruling and deal with the Bill. I would expect that the tactics of the government in trying to pass the Bill are relevant but I'm not going to get into that at the moment. I say to members opposite, if this is the way that you treat us . . . We shouldn't be surprised . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now I'm going to ask all members and the member for Rosthern . . . I'm going to ask all members to just refrain from any interruptions. We have just had a serious breach of order in the House

where I've had to recess the House for several minutes. And I'm asking all members once more to co-operate, to act as responsible parliamentary members, to allow this debate to continue. Now the member for Regina Centre.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — I don't know why I should have been surprised. You haven't been honest with the public with respect to this Bill and your approach to taxation. I don't know why we should expect to be treated any differently than the public of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — I don't know why your patently dishonest behaviour should surprise us. It's the way you've governed for eight years. For nine years it's the way you've governed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1100)

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, the last serious altercation in the House, of this magnitude, had to deal with the SaskEnergy Bill. One of the reasons was because you were patently dishonest with the public during the election. You gave a little certificate saying you wouldn't do it, and then you did it six months later.

You have done the same thing with this tax Bill. You never expected to have to deal with it in the House. You never expected to be here. I say to members opposite, I say to members opposite that you are going to be here for a while. I want to tell members opposite that we are going to do everything possible to see that this Bill doesn't pass.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — We take that approach, Mr. Speaker, and members opposite, we take that approach because we find this particular tax Bill abhorrent. We find this to be regressive. But moreover we are reacting to public opinion, because the public of Saskatchewan find this tax Bill unacceptable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — The public of Saskatchewan are saying it's time a line was drawn, and this is where they want it drawn and that's what we're going to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite know that every bit as well as we do. I suspect members opposite, even members opposite, cannot be unaware of the public anger over this particular tax Bill.

I suspect that's why the government called this Bill in a surprise fashion, hoping that I wasn't in the House, because Mr. Speaker will recall that I did not adjourn this Bill the last time it was up. It was called at 10 o'clock. Thus if I had not been here, I would have lost, as the financial critic, that the opposition would have lost his

right to give the position of the opposition on this overarching Bill. So I say to members opposite . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order! Order, order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — All I can say to members opposite, Mr. Speaker, is that this is an unusual way to launch a program of democratic reform. This is a most unusual approach to that.

Mr. Speaker, I guess we will now deal with this Bill at any time, no matter what he said to us. I guess that's the rules. The rules are that we will deal with it whenever you decide you want to call it, and what we get from you is just so much waste paper. I could chuck the rules. We are quite prepared to live with those rules. We are quite prepared to live with those rules.

I think members ought to ask themselves if you think that's the most efficient way to conduct the business of the House. I really think you ought to ask yourself that. In my 16 years here I have found that this kind of chicanery does not indeed lend itself to the efficient conduct of the business in the House. But if the Government House Leader thinks that this chicanery serves his purpose, we can live with it I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to . . . well I'm going to get back to the Bill, and I may spend some time on the Bill, so the member from Morse will be pleased, no doubt, at the thoroughness of my comments. I know he has been looking forward to this, and you will no doubt want to sit there.

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, order, order. I'd ask the hon. member to refrain. He's certainly had more than one opportunity to express his views from his seat, and I think he should realize that and refrain from any further interruptions.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you. This Bill was launched under a cloud of, if not dishonesty, then something that certainly was a long way from being candid with the public. This Bill was not introduced in the traditional fashion in the legislature. There is no reason why that could not have been done.

For decades this legislature met in February and began its session in February. If the government felt — which I question — that there was some need to introduce this Bill in February, the legislature could have been in session.

The fact was that the last thing this government wants is an opposition in the legislature asking difficult questions and calling on them to justify their behaviour. That's the last thing this government wants.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Indeed, Mr. Speaker, that is why the whole program of democratic reform is so hypocritical coming from this particular government. No government in the history of this province has done more to make the

operation of this Assembly more difficult than this government opposite.

No government, Mr. Speaker, no government would consider, no government in Canada would consider introducing the largest tax increase in the history of the province outside of the legislature. This was not something minor. This was not something which was ancillary or peripheral to some federal agreement. This was a major change in our tax structure.

Members opposite may or may not know — I am always astonished at how little members opposite understand the fiscal structure of this province — members opposite may not know that the sales tax is our largest single tax. To change our largest single tax completely, to give it a whole new shape, a whole new effect, a whole new group of taxpayers indeed, outside the legislature is an astonishing bit of contempt for this Assembly.

One has to ask why they did that. One doesn't have to look much beyond the visage of the Government House Leader, the member from Melfort, to find out why that is. Why? It's because you never did learn to play by the rules. You never did learn to play by the rules. Members opposite have always found the rules to be a major inconvenience in governing this province, just a major inconvenience. They found them to be a major inconvenience this morning, and they found them to be a major inconvenience on February 20.

The rules, Mr. Speaker, heretofore were crystal clear. Tax bills could be introduced and made effective before being given third reading and Royal Assent but never before the budget address of the minister. The members opposite are chortling. The member from Weyburn, who had the opportunity to make some of these comments in his address . . . and I don't think took five minutes, I don't think he took five minutes in introducing the largest tax increase in the history of the province. If that isn't contempt for the legislature, then I don't know what is. The member from Weyburn . . .

The Speaker: — Now I'm going to have to ask the hon. member from Moose Jaw North, once more I'm going to have to ask you, sir, to refrain from interruptions. You've had your share of them this morning, as I'm sure you realize. And I know that you have strong views; however, other members have strong views as well. And if we all start interrupting, well we have the chaos which we had earlier. So please refrain.

Mr. Shillington: — While the member from Meadow Lake describes this as the mother of all battles, I think for a variety of reasons that's an unfortunate description. Members opposite may look to that particular political leader for some sort of guidance; we don't. I think it's an unfortunate phrase, if for no other reason than the person who spoke it.

I say to members opposite though that we are determined to give voice to the anger of the Saskatchewan people with respect to this Bill. The public of Saskatchewan say with respect to this Bill, this shouldn't be; this Bill should not pass. And we say, Mr. Speaker, this Bill isn't going to pass. It is not going to happen, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, we believe that the public have the right to pass judgement on this government before any such monumental changes in our tax structure are introduced. And so do the public. When you ask the public what they ought to do about this or anything else, what do the public say? Call an election. The public want an opportunity to pass judgement on this government.

And in a normal course of events, the time when the public would pass judgement on this government is long past. This province has a history of four-year terms. The legal term may be five years, but the tradition has been four years.

Mr. Speaker, this government is desperately clinging to office trying to avoid the passage of judgement, trying to avoid facing the music. I say, Mr. Speaker, the time has come for this government to face the music. The time has come when this government has got to start listening to public opinion and got to stop treating the public with disdain, which is the way they've been treating the public.

It is no wonder that the public of Saskatchewan and Canada want something like the referendum Bill. The reason why they want it is because governments in Regina and governments in Ottawa treat them with disdain.

The editors of the *Maclean's* magazine rightly describe public attitude towards the governments in this country. They believe governments in this country have become elected dictatorships. And that indeed is the way Conservative governments in Regina and Ottawa have behaved. Once elected, no matter what you said, no matter what you promised, no matter what the public may think, you arrogantly proceed on a timetable which they don't want.

Well the public of Saskatchewan have said the time has come to draw the line. And time indeed, Mr. Speaker, has come to draw the line . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I know that the comments of the member from Wilkie will be startling in their brilliance when he gets to his seat. Regrettably I can't . . . when he gets to his feet . . . regrettably I can't hear them when he's on his seat. I'm sure I'm missing some real pearls of wisdom and I am sure that the public are much poorer because the member from Wilkie is not on his feet.

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member from Meadow Lake, order.

Mr. Shillington: — Seem to have hit a tender spot with the member from Meadow Lake . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, the member from Meadow Lake, I should have said.

Mr. Speaker, this government was elected on a platform of lower taxes, more efficient government . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's a new way to leave the Assembly, I must say; to yell shame, shame, shame as you back out the door. The member from Wilkie is introducing a new

tactic to this House.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill represents a betrayal of all that this government has promised. This Bill represents a betrayal of everything that the people thought this government was. This government was elected with perhaps . . . in some ways, the largest mandate in the history of the province nine years ago. It seems like nine centuries ago, but it was nine years ago.

What were the public looking for when they elected this government with an unprecedented number of seats? Well they were looking for a government which would reduce taxes. They had thought they had a political party which would run a sound businesslike administration. They wanted someone who would reduce taxes, run a sound businesslike administration, and generally carry on good government.

(1115)

Indeed, I happen to have with me a series of clippings from the 1982 election. This is what the public thought they were getting. And this Bill is a betrayal. This Bill marks the ultimate portrayal . . . betrayal, rather, the ultimate betrayal of this government's original mandate.

What did this government promise? Well I see a picture of a youngish Premier with no grey in his hair, promising . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . no bags under his eyes, no, actually looking as if he were going to enjoy the job — what a surprise that has been. He promises to eliminate the 5 per cent sales tax on clothing and utility bills. Now we should just run that one past again. The then member from Estevan, the now member from Estevan, promised to eliminate the 5 per cent sales tax on clothing and utility bills.

An Hon. Member: — And what happened?

Mr. Shillington: — What happened? Well nothing ever happened with that promise. Pretty soon it was up to 7 per cent. And now it's going to be extended from 7 per cent on clothing to 7 per cent on all clothing, including children's clothing. That I may say, Mr. Speaker, represents a fair expense for anyone who has children. I suspect that members opposite who have children at home will know how rapidly children go through clothing. Children's clothing is a major expense.

It is also a tax which is very regressive. No matter what your income, you really have to spend the same amount, Mr. Speaker, on children's clothing. No matter what your income, you spend a significant amount of it on children's clothing if you have children who are over six and under 18. Yet this government thinks that that is a fair thing to tax.

The Conservatives in 1982 promised the following. They said it's time for a change. They said a PC government will reduce gasoline taxes by 40 cents a gallon.

An Hon. Member: — Oh well, there wasn't 40 cents a gallon on then.

Mr. Shillington: — But the facts didn't bother the Premier

then; the facts don't bother the Premier now. The facts never get in the way of the Premier's responses when he's dealing with this tax Bill or anything else in the Assembly. As I say, I don't know why we should have been surprised — I don't know why we should have been surprised.

Oh, here's another one, just funny, just . . . This also, it seems to me, has some bearing on the minibudget of February 20 which gave birth to this abortive Bill. They also promised to reduce mortgage rates. What did this budget do? What did this budget do on February 20? Well it stripped the Saskatchewan public of almost all the protection for high mortgage rates.

They promised — here is one that would amuse rural people if it weren't so tragic — they promised to protect the family farm. They promised to loan all farmers \$350,000 at 8 per cent for 5 years. They promised to eliminate the sales tax on clothing. They promised to freeze utility . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well, I'll tell what we didn't promise them. The member from Saskatoon . . .

An Hon. Member: — Mayfair.

Mr. Shillington: — Saskatoon Mayfair, thank you. The member from Saskatoon Mayfair says, what did we promise them? I'll tell you what we didn't promise them. We didn't promise them free money. We didn't make a lot of foolish promises which no one could have kept. We did not buy our way into government in 1982. Whatever mistakes we might have made in office, whatever mistakes we might have made in office prior to 1982, they were honest mistakes. There can be nothing honest about a platform such as this and nothing honest about a government which gets elected on this sort of a mandate and then brings a Bill such as Bill 61, this particular Bill.

This is the ultimate betrayal of your mandate. This is the ultimate betrayal of what people thought they were getting when they elected the Conservative Party. They did not elect a high tax, high inefficiency government which is what they've got.

I see another promise, Mr. Speaker. They promised to improve medicare. Did they ever. Did they ever. Now see what else happened on February 20? I'm missing something in the budget? Now what . . . ah, the prescription drug plan. One of my colleagues assists me with that. Prescription drug plan, this I guess, represents an improvement does it, on medicare?

The member from Shaunavon shakes his head — nods his head, rather. Well I say, if you think that this is an improvement on medicare, then you better try convincing the Saskatchewan public, because not many are convinced.

An Hon. Member: — An improvement to the . . .

Mr. Shillington: — Yes indeed. The budget of February 20 also touched upon hospitals and the funding with respect to hospitals. I guess it represents an improvement of medicare, Mr. Speaker, to have hospitals from one end of this province to the other, from Carnduff to Meadow Lake, from Nipawin to Shaunavon, closing down beds

and closing down wings. Is that the concept that the member from Shaunavon has? Is that your concept of improving health care? Is that . . . Well the member from Shaunavon, in a voice which is clearly audible, says we're not closing them.

No, you're not closing them; you're leaving the dirty work to the hospital administrators. You're parading around this province saying that three and a half per cent is an adequate increase, knowing full well it is not, knowing full well it is not.

The member from Shaunavon asks me, how much is enough. I say to members opposite, if you had some dialogue with those involved, with the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association, with SUN, if you had any dialogue with the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses except through the media and across the picket lines, you might have some idea of what is needed to maintain services.

But, Mr. Speaker, and the member from Shaunavon, you've long since ceased to listen to the public; you've long since ceased to talk to them; you act in a vacuum. And this government has started to act in a vacuum. They acted in a vacuum with this Bill. They consulted with no one.

Mr. Speaker, I got a call the morning that this Bill was introduced by the member. I got a call from my staff at the Legislative Building. I did not then happen to be in the Legislative Building. I got a call and they said, you'd better come on over. So I came over. When I read the minister's press release, I was just speechless. I have never expected the best from this government, but I never expected Bill 61. I was just speechless.

And when I regained my calm — I will not repeat my precise comments because the Speaker might find them unparliamentary — but I will tell you that I was shocked at this particular Bill, shocked at this Bill because it wasn't what . . . Even after nine years, even after watching this government break one promise after another; after watching you come in promising to reduce taxes; promising to improve medicare; promising to freeze utility rates — now there's a dandy, freeze utility rates — you promised . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Yorkton is anxious to get into the debate. No doubt when your turn comes . . . no doubt the member from Yorkton will provide a sparklingly brilliant contribution to this when I sit down. I'm sure he'll be the first one on his feet. I'm sure he will want to participate.

Had there been a little less patronage in the operation of SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation); had there been fewer things such as the sale, the virtual give-away of the mine at Coronach, then perhaps the utility rates wouldn't be rising as fast as they did. I wonder if the member from Yorkton has any remembrance of who might have been responsible for the virtual give-away? I might be outside the Bill just a tad, so I'll return to the Bill. Although I may say, Mr. Speaker, there's going to be a wide-ranging debate because this is the government's centre-piece of its taxation.

They say it's necessary to assist farmers. We say it's only necessary because you have run the most inefficient,

corrupt regime in Canada, bar none — bar none.

The member from Saskatoon says it's a very taxing regime. Indeed it is a very taxing regime. And the public of Saskatchewan would dearly appreciate the opportunity, the public of Saskatchewan would dearly appreciate the opportunity to pass judgement on this taxing regime. They would like indeed, Mr. Speaker, to levy some of their own taxes; at least levy some sort of a penalty on this government.

That's what this government . . . that's what people thought they were getting when you first elected. They never dreamed that what they were electing was a government which would allow patronage to run rampant, as it did from the very beginning.

Mr. Speaker, we say that this Bill is necessary because this government is corrupted by patronage. I was trying to think of a phrase which was a bit less pejorative, but nothing else but the word corrupted seems to be appropriate. And this government has been corrupted by patronage.

From the very beginning, Mr. Speaker, that has been the case. Colin Thatcher . . . The seeds of this Bill, of Bill 61 were sewn in the first days you went into office. The seeds of this Bill were sown the very first day this government went into office. Somehow or other, members opposite believe that all governments acted in the way they do. Well no government has ever acted in the way you do.

Colin Thatcher, the former member from Thunder Creek who had many gifts — came to a tragic end, Mr. Speaker, but had many gifts — described the salaries and the number of executive assistants in the minister's office as being obscene — I think was the phrase he used — the obscene number of executive assistants. This from one of their own members.

The inefficiencies that led to this Bill, Mr. Speaker, began in your own offices. You set the example. It never seems to have occurred to members opposite, Mr. Speaker, that in government, as in any other segment of life, we must set an example. We know that we cannot expect our children to follow the moral guide-lines which we lay down, we know we cannot expect them to be responsible and honest, we know we cannot expect them to be sober and upright, if they see us cheating, if they see us avoiding our responsibilities, if they see us abusing substances. Well it's no different in government.

If the public service and the public of Saskatchewan see the ministers who . . . it is hard to believe with the way this current regime is discredited, but the ministers are supposed to set an example. If you set an example of hiring far more staff than you need in your office, at salaries which were the highest in Canada, bar none . . .

An Hon. Member: — Bar none.

(1130)

Mr. Shillington: — Bar none. If that's the sort of example you set, what do you expect to happen to the government but to follow suit?

I say, Mr. Speaker, this tax Bill, Bill 61, was . . . the seeds of this Bill were born the day this government was elected: (a) because those in charge do not appear to have been fundamentally honest. It appears that you viewed public office as a licence to rifle the treasury. That appears to be your view of public office, a licence to rifle the treasury, and you did.

Nine years later we have a province which is the highest taxed in Canada. I'm going to go on, Mr. Speaker, at a later time to discuss the level of taxes in Saskatchewan. But this province is now the highest-taxed province in Canada. At one point in time, Mr. Speaker, one could have made the argument that it also has the finest range of public services in the province. And this is a province, Mr. Speaker, which believes in public services. This is a province which has put higher value on public services than private services.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, the public of Saskatchewan were prepared to fund a dental program. Because the public in this province believe that public health plays an equally important role with private health, and that public health can contribute to the well-being and the good health of Saskatchewan citizens. The public of this province believe in public services, more so than most other provinces.

And a former government used to go . . . the Douglas government was in office for 20 years and they went to the public with a message which was something like this: yes, we're a high-tax province but we're a high-service province. Yes, you pay more taxes than Alberta but they don't have a hospitalization scheme. And they used to say that in the '50s and the public re-elected them for 20 years — the longest unbroken stretch in the history of the province.

You could do that. You could go, Mr. Speaker, and say we are a high . . . Well the member from Wilkie is now making an additional contribution. He's showing us he can whistle. That's useful. That's useful. It's no less intelligent and no less useful than the other comments you've been making so I don't know why I should complain. It's a new way of contributing to a Bill on taxes, to whistle in the House, I must say . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I think I know — the member's whistling past the graveyard.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — The member from Wilkie didn't hear me. I said I think you're whistling past the graveyard. I think I understand why you're whistling. I was confused for a moment.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 61 rounds out this province's, not just reputation — this province's status as the highest taxed in Canada. And that really I suppose represents the ultimate betrayal of the mandate which they gave these people back in 1982.

The one thing they didn't expect was to become the highest taxed province in Canada. I suspect people back in 1982, some of them might have said to themselves,

well you know the NDP services are Cadillac style, they're expensive, I don't know if we can afford them all. They might have said that to themselves. They might have said, I don't know if we can afford all these very rich array of public services. But they never said to themselves, we're electing, hey, hey, we're electing the highest taxed government; we're going to be the highest taxed province in Canada. Elect these people; we're going to be the highest taxed province in Canada.

I don't recall the public of Saskatchewan anticipating that we would have the fastest growing deficit in Canada either. I don't recall anyone who's . . . I guess there's no one left on the opposition benches who actually was a candidate in 1975, who I guess was an elected member in 1975. Sorry, there's no one on government benches who was a . . . there's no one there now who was a member in 1982 to 1986. I guess there's no one who was there prior to 1982, I'll put it that way. The pre-1982 group of Conservative MLAs are all gone, I believe . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Ah, I overlooked the, I may say, the considerable contribution of the member from Rosetown, both as Speaker and as a minister. Yes indeed that's accurate.

The member from Rosetown, particularly as a Speaker, established a reputation of being honest. Didn't always agree with his comments, and sometimes our opposition was made known in some ways with the benefit of hindsight, perhaps weren't entirely parliamentary, but no one ever thought the member from Rosetown anything but honest. I really therefore cannot understand how members such as that can be a part of this betrayal. I really do not understand how the member from Rosetown rationalizes this sort of behaviour.

An Hon. Member: — He's resigning.

Mr. Shillington: — And I'm going to look forward to . . . Well that may be. Perhaps the answer is he doesn't rationalize it and is therefore leaving, and is leaving. And perhaps that explains why so many members opposite are leaving government, leaving this Assembly.

An Hon. Member: — Say it like it is, leaving a sinking ship.

Mr. Shillington: — Leaving a sinking ship — well maybe that plays some role in it too. I have many vehement disagreements with the member from Yorkton, particularly when he was Labour minister. I never accused that member of dishonesty, but I may say that I really don't understand how the member from Yorkton, as he did, could run on this platform and now vote in favour of Bill 61, which as I say, it rounds out this province's status as the highest taxed in Canada.

I do not . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well that's true. Someone reminds me that the member from Yorkton is in fact leaving as well. It may be that he's not just leaving a sinking ship. It may be that in addition he is finding himself increasingly unable to support a government whose direction he thinks has gone awry.

Well the member from Yorkton cautions me not to put too many words in his mouth. I won't do so. I will simply say

that this sort of betrayal was not what I saw in the character of the former minister of Labour.

1982 — Ha! Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just discovered another one which no doubt members will want to be reminded of: promise to extend the drug plan coverage back in 1982. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the budget of February 20 which gave rise to this monstrosity also gave rise to some detrimental changes to the drug plan. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we calculate that the increased prescription drug costs on the average will cost the average family \$28 a year.

I guess if averages meant anything, that wouldn't be so bad. The problem is it isn't average. The problem is that the drug costs are borne by that group, largely by that group which is least able to pay it. I don't know what our drug bill is a year, but I'd be astonished to learn that we spend \$28 a year on drugs, but it's a young family. My mother, I would be surprised to learn that she I'm sure spends two or three times that a month.

The point is, Mr. Speaker, that the changes to the prescription drug cost do not fall equally on the Saskatchewan public. The changes to the drug plan which are part and parcel of this minibudget out of which this Act was borne, are in fact borne by the elderly who are least able to pay it. And that is the real tragedy of the drug plan.

I frankly don't understand what the rationale is for making the old pay for their drugs. It's not as if they could abuse them if they wanted to — prescription drugs, prescribed by a doctor. The Premier may say that the elderly are abusing drugs, but apparently does not understand the system because doctors prescribe them. Presumably if he's accusing the elderly of abusing drugs, of being drug addicts, he's accusing the doctors of . . . he must be accusing the medical profession of somehow or other aiding and abetting this drug abuse.

Bill 61, Mr. Speaker, Bill 61 did not give rise in the strict sense to the call for an election. The public have wanted an election for many months. But it's with Bill 61 that the cry, let's have an election, has reached a deafening crescendo — deafening to everybody. I guess deafening to the government because the government does appear deaf. The government appears to be unable to understand the public opinion.

It's an interesting thought, as I was standing on my feet just now, Mr. Speaker, the government is introducing a Bill providing referendums. Let's suppose . . . I just had a thought. Let's just think, Mr. Speaker, supposing some group, the book sellers, book retailers, with what I think was a minimum of effort in a collective sense, collected 55,000 petitions. It seems to me with another 35,000, they'd have 15 per cent of the public.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the book sellers came up with 90,000 petitions the government would consider putting this to a referendum. That's an intriguing thought isn't it, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Isn't that an intriguing thought?

An Hon. Member: — I bet you they'd call a referendum just like that.

Mr. Shillington: — I'll bet they would. I'll bet they would. I'll bet you if they come up with 90,000, which I understand to be not 15 per cent of the electorate, I understand, if they come up with another 35,000 names, this government would call a referendum. Well I assume they would. I assume they would. I mean, they said that they believed . . . I assume they would. Democratic reform is their centre-piece. Democratic reform, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the centre-piece of this government's session. This is what they're presenting in this session — democratic reform.

You see democratic reform, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is based upon the principle that one ought to pay some heed to public opinion; that he who pays the tax bill ought to have some say in what's done with it. That's the very simple principle. It's the principle the public believe in.

So they introduce a referendum Bill. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if members opposite would be prepared to put the GST (goods and services tax) that this whole tax structure, to a referendum. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if they would. The members opposite will . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well now that's interesting. We have the member from Melville who happily volunteers to put this matter to a referendum. I'm wondering if there are other members opposite.

I'm wondering if there are other members opposite, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who would be prepared to put this Bill to a referendum. The member from Melfort, say what you like about his, some of his . . . Melville. Say what you like about the member from Melville, some of his approach . . . antics is the word. At least apparently he has the courage of his convictions. Some of his humour is a bit barnyard at times, but he has the courage of his convictions.

I wonder if any others opposite have the courage of their convictions. I wait for the hands to rise. Does the member from Yorkton have the courage of his convictions? Do I see the member from Yorkton's hand rising when I ask for those who are prepared to put this to a referendum? Does the member from Yorkton — I give him an opportunity — do I see his hand rising? The member from Thunder Creek, did I see the member from Thunder Creek's hand rise? Did I see his hand rise? Yes, the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake will keep a list. We will not let this contribution to democratic reform go unnoticed. Those who volunteer will be duly noted.

See, this Bill, the member from Thunder Creek might be interested in supporting it, you see. This Bill was initially designed, so they said, to provide money for farm aid. The member from Thunder Creek comes from a riding which is as purely rural as any in the province. So I expect the member from . . . I saw the member from Thunder Creek's hand rise because he's confident the public will pass this. Did I see that?

It's funny. The member from Thunder Creek has suddenly become . . . It's funny. The member from Thunder Creek, whenever I ask about his hand, he becomes terribly interested in that paper in front of him. I don't think he's read it, and I don't think he could tell me . . . it's upside down, just for openers. I don't think he has any interest in

it, but he has an interest in avoiding the question. He obviously has an interest, Mr. Speaker, in avoiding the question as to how many members opposite would like to see this put to a referendum. How many, besides the member from Melville, have the courage of their convictions?

(1145)

It would be improper of me, Mr. Speaker, to ask the Deputy Speaker. That would be an abuse of the parliamentary rules so I won't do it. But no doubt the member from Shellbrook will want to voice his opinion as soon as the Speaker gets back and he's no longer occupying that important chair.

We will duly report those who are prepared . . . The member from Shaunavon has another riding which is not purely rural but close to it. Now the member from Wilkie has been active in giving us the benefit of his views. Does the member from Wilkie's hand rise? Is the member from Wilkie prepared to put this to a referendum?

I'm sorry; I can't see the member from Wilkie. He's holding a paper in front of his face. I'll refrain from commenting on any motivation for that, but I say to the member from Wilkie, if you have the courage of your convictions, put up your hand.

An Hon. Member: — Like the member from Melfort did.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes. Like the member from Melfort did. Well the member from Wilkie wants to know if we're going to rescind it. I say to the member from Wilkie, you're not going to pass it, so your question's academic.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Five months from the absolute, thank heavens, terminal end, thank heavens, of this government's mandate, you aren't going to get this thing passed. And that's our position . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh are you? After the election?

Either the member from Wilkie has some . . . The member from Wilkie says that after the election they're going to do something different. All I can say is, either the member from Wilkie has some polls that I'm interested in, or there's something in his water that I wouldn't mind experiencing as well, because he is not making a lot of sense. So whatever it is, I would be interested in knowing more about it. I want to put it that way.

Does the member from Shaunavon raise his hand? I wasn't specifically watching the member from Shaunavon. Did the member from Shaunavon raise his hand? I cannot follow the members. Oh, the member from Shaunavon raises his . . . oh no, he didn't raise his hand. He holds up a press release.

That would be unparliamentary wouldn't it, if I called him by his . . . no, I wouldn't do that. The so-what member from Wascana who had so much to contribute to question period, he's just in the . . .

I have said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that one of the reasons

why this is necessary is because patronage has just run amok with this government. Perhaps the symbol of that is Chuck Childers's salary. Perhaps to many people the most outrageous example of a government which has looked after themselves and their friends and cared not a wit for the public is Chuck Childers's salary. Perhaps that is the symbol more than anything else which has come to symbolize patronage. What was the response of the member from so what? — the Minister of families none the less, that's right; the minister of families none the less. He says, so what?

I say to the minister who has turned his back to me so that I speak to the back of his head, I say to the back of the head of the minister for Wascana that the minister of families, so what, is that his salary is larger than your budget. You have, Mr. Minister, the responsibility for the department of the families. Presumably some of this goods and services tax which this is raising will go into that budget. Are you at all concerned, Mr. Minister, that a larger portion of this tax is going to pay Chuck Childers's salary than is going to pay your budget? Is your response still, so what?

Mr. Minister, you've made some comments about hungry children. You at least pretended to show some empathy for what has become a provincial disgrace — the hungry children. It has just become a provincial disgrace. There's a time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the public of this province took pride in living in a province which showed compassion. This was a more compassionate province than others. We looked after . . . there was a day when we took pride in looking after those who, for whatever reason, were not able to look after themselves.

In any era there was some impatience expressed by some people. I'm not saying this is my view, but some impatience expressed by some people with respect to adults who may find themselves on social assistance. I always felt much of that criticism was unfair. The vast majority of them would dearly like to get off and would like to get into the work-force. But there was always some impatience expressed by those who did not take the time to understand.

But no one ever expressed any impatience with the children. Now we have hungry children. Teachers' reporting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, children who go to school who are unable to function, unable to function . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, they had . . . the member from Melville is anxious to have me expand on the situation in Ontario. I'm going to get to that, don't worry. Don't worry, the province of Ontario will get its full portrayal in my comments. The province of Ontario will not, I promise you . . . I promise the member from Melville I'll take all the time he wants to talk about Ontario in my comments. The province of Ontario will be fully reported on before I sit down.

An Hon. Member: — You have another point he's on right now.

Mr. Shillington: — But I'm not on that point and I'll get to that point if not today, next week, if not next week, next month, if not next month, the day before the election.

An Hon. Member: — Sometime before the election.

Mr. Shillington: — Sometime before the election I'm going to get to Ontario, so the member from Melville . . . just stay tuned and I will get to the province of Ontario in due course. The member from Melville need have no fear; the province of Ontario will be fully discussed. The . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Actually, I don't want to talk about the province of Ontario, I want to talk about the province of Saskatchewan.

We're having some trouble talking about the province of Saskatchewan because the member from Melville keeps interrupting me and asking me to talk about the province of Ontario. Perhaps I ought to ask the Chair for the ruling . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I'm just going to let the member go ahead.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Allow the member for Regina Centre to make his comments.

Mr. Shillington: — There was a day when the people of this province took pride in the fact that there weren't hungry children. Hungry children were something we saw on the television in Mexico City or in Africa or Biafra or Korea, to go back another couple of decades. That was something we saw on television. It didn't happen in the streets of Regina. Now we have to live with that; we have to live with the fact that we have not looked after our own children. This is not a Third World country; this is a country with an enormous richness of resources. There is no reason why children ought to be going hungry in Regina.

The reason why children are going hungry in the streets of Regina is because this government has warped priorities. This government gives more money to a single head of a corporation than it does to hungry children. Moreover this Bill is going to make the plight of hungry children worse.

Let's just think about what a 14 per cent tax does. Let's just think about what a 14 per cent tax does to the families at that level. Let's just think about that for a moment. Children who belong to families with marginal incomes, they think they're supposed to have the same clothes, the same fancy jeans and the same fancy boots as other kids. They think they're supposed to be dressed the same.

The member from Saskatoon has been an educator for a long time. I'm sure he'll concur. The children come to school expecting not to be different, expecting not to look poor and deprived. And I may say — the member from Saskatoon will probably also agree with me — that if they do, it interferes with their ability to learn. They are not as good students. Probably . . .

An Hon. Member: — Even the Deputy Speaker will agree with that.

Mr. Shillington: — I'll refrain from putting thoughts in the mind of the Deputy Speaker, for a variety of reasons, including the fact that it may be unparliamentary. It's risky for a number of reasons, including the fact that it's unparliamentary.

An Hon. Member: — But it would be a bit of an adventure.

Mr. Shillington: — A bit of an adventure, but a high-risk one in terms of your ability to be accurate.

We now have hungry children who roam the streets of Regina. And that comes about . . . and this Bill isn't going to solve that. You know, if I honestly felt that the result of passing this Bill would be that the hungry children would disappear from the streets of Regina and Saskatoon and Moose Jaw — I know because I am through Moose Jaw regularly — if I thought this Bill would eliminate that, then I would frankly have some second thoughts. But of course it won't, of course it won't, Mr. Speaker.

The situation, Mr. Speaker, is no different than . . . all of us have friends. We have sons, daughters, relatives, friends, it may be yourselves, can't quite live within our income. These people never get their bills paid on time, always getting called by the bank to get in and make the payment. That person thinks that another 5 per cent more income is all that that person would need to live comfortably. You and I know better. You and I know that that person would blow the 5 per cent raise the same as they did the rest.

Well governments are no different. When a government, like a person, becomes a proliferate spender, then no tax increase is going to solve the problem. This money is just going to disappear into the black hole of this government's inefficiency and patronage just the same as everything else has.

The only solution, Mr. Speaker, is to begin with waste and mismanagement, to begin to eliminate that, to begin to say that people who occupy senior positions are entitled to be paid for their contribution and their skill, but they are not entitled to \$750,000 plus. They are not entitled to that.

The child on the street in Regina is entitled to a meal, and it means that some of their friends have got to take a little less than what they think they're entitled to. But as long as this government's priorities are its friends and not sound administration, then, Mr. Speaker, the problem is never going to be solved and Bill 61 isn't going to make any sort of a contribution.

Mr. Speaker, as one goes about the province, one sees and one knows, Mr. Speaker, that the public have come to realize this. The public have come to realize that a government which does not control its spending will not be able to manage with this additional revenue — that this isn't going to help.

You know what the ultimate end, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is of a government which does not manage its spending? Eventually it gets so you can't borrow money. That's the ultimate end of a government which continues to run up deficits. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're not a long way from that.

Mr. Speaker, just because it is germane to our whole approach to dealing with our financial problems, I want to review what has happened to this province's credit

rating. In July of 1985 and prior to that . . . Prior to 1975, I might say, we didn't have a credit rating. That's a fact. It had been so long since we had borrowed money that in 1975 we didn't have a credit rating.

As it turned out, we did not borrow any money to take over the potash mines. We financed that in other ways. But at one point in time back in the '70s we thought we might have to borrow money to finance the potash mines. When we went to the brokerage houses, the large national brokerage houses . . . Just as a matter of historical interest, Michael Wilson was one of the people we met with at Dominion Securities. The whole thing succeeded, perhaps in part because we never did use his services; we never did borrow . . . never did use the advice.

(1200)

An Hon. Member: — Is he related to the Michael Wilson who brought in the federal GST?

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, he is related. He's very closely related actually.

An Hon. Member: — He's not one and the same?

Mr. Shillington: — One and the same person indeed. We didn't have a credit rating.

An Hon. Member: — The Minister of Finance seems to find this a bit irritating.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, the Minister of Finance is going to find these comments irritating because this Bill represents an indictment of this government's financial management. That's really what this Bill is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — This Bill is a direct indictment of your patronage, your waste, your mismanagement, your inability to manage. Mr. Speaker, the plummeting credit rating chronicles this government's inability to manage. We had a AA plus in 1985. That in fact was what we got in 1975. That went down: AA in July '85, January '86 went down to AA3, went down to AA1, went down to AA2.

Well the members find this boring. I heard a loud yawn. I recognize that . . . I thought it came from the "so what" minister; I thought that yawn came from the "so what" minister from Wascana. And of course one can understand his irritation. Of course. This is time to get to the golf links. Today, this is 12 noon. What is the sense of a person doing working at 12 noon?

An Hon. Member: — Hard-working guy like that with a big budget for families.

Mr. Shillington: — That's right. Right. I mean he's solved all these trifling problems of the family.

An Hon. Member: — Have you any idea how stupid you sound on TV?

Mr. Shillington: — Well the member from Wascana is an expert on appearing . . . on looking stupid on television. If

anyone can recognize the condition . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — If anyone can recognize the condition of looking stupid on television, then the member from Wascana can.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — The member from Wascana renders that kind of advice, Mr. Speaker. It's advice that ought to be listened to, because the member from Wascana knows what it is to look stupid on television.

An Hon. Member: — As he leaves the House.

Mr. Shillington: — As he leaves the House.

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Now the hon. member realizes that he's breaking the rules of the House. He's been here a long time and I ask him to not refer to the absence or the presence of members.

Mr. Shillington: — It was a breach of the rules, Mr. Speaker. The rules would be broken less often if members opposite did less catcalling from their seats.

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order. I think that sometimes making a comment like that is like the pot calling the kettle black. We have all . . . to make those kinds of accusations, I think all hon. members should search their hearts and refrain from those kinds of accusations.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, Bill 61 is a damning indictment of your ability to manage. Does it ever occur to members opposite to ask themselves why we are the highest-taxed province in Canada? Did that question ever occur to you?

Whenever you ask members opposite to think about that, they say with that arrogance which has come to be associated with Conservative elected members, they say with disdain, ah, don't you know there's a recession? Don't you know agriculture's had a problem? Of course we know that. No one could live in this province and not know that. But the statistics don't support that point of view.

It is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that since this government has taken office, the inflation has gone up by 48 per cent. But your revenues have gone up by 61 per cent. I refer not to expenditures but to revenues. Since you took office, inflation has gone up by 48 per cent. Your revenues have gone up by 61 per cent. Your revenues have gone up faster than the rate of inflation.

The reason why the fiscal affairs of this province are in absolute shambles is, Mr. Speaker, because spending has gone up by 85 per cent. Spending has gone up by almost twice the rate of inflation at a time when public services have deteriorated. Spending has gone up by 85 per cent at a time when the highways in this province are the butt of an endless number of jokes. I rarely go into rural Saskatchewan but what someone doesn't have a new

joke about the highways.

Spending has gone up by 85 per cent at a time when municipal revenue sharing has virtually ceased to exist. Municipalities aren't getting anywhere near the revenue that they used to, and one can see that in the services which municipalities provide.

You don't need this goods and services tax. What you need to do is to manage the money which you have. And everybody in Saskatchewan but, apparently, the members opposite know that. Your revenue has gone up by 61 per cent during a period of time when inflation has gone up by 48 per cent, during a period of time in which you have ceased to provide quite a number of public services which once cost the treasury a good deal of money.

We have a drug plan which is a shadow of what it once was. We have a dental program which doesn't exist at all . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the member asked me to wipe the tears out of his eyes in a sarcastic tone. Within five months, somebody's going to get an opportunity to wipe something out of the member's eye. And I say if the member from Wilkie thinks that the abolition of the dental plan is something to make light of, then . . .

An Hon. Member: — Why do you pick on me, Ned?

Mr. Shillington: — Well, because you've done the most talking. That's why I'm picking on the member from Wilkie, you've done the most talking . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I haven't said a thing. I haven't had to comment once to the member from Moosomin, not once, because he's a gentleman, because he's a gentleman. I will stop just short of completing that comment.

An Hon. Member: — There's a natural progression to it.

Mr. Shillington: — There's a natural progression which apparently is unparliamentary, so I won't get into it.

Your revenue has gone up by 61 per cent since you've been elected. You don't need additional taxes; you need to learn to manage what you've got.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, this Bill represents a complete betrayal of what the people thought they were electing back in 1982. If through the fluxion of time your mandate had not expired, if through the fluxion of time your mandate had not expired, then your mandate would have expired simply because you've ceased, long since ceased to behave in the fashion in which you promised people you would.

This government bears no semblance, no semblance whatsoever of what the public thought they were getting back in 1982. The public thought they were getting — they might have thought they were getting — the public back in 1982 might have thought they had a high-tax, high-service government. In fact they didn't. The level of taxes borne by individuals prior to 1982 . . . the member from Regina South looks astonished . . .

An Hon. Member: — Aw, come on, I'm reading. For crying out loud, if you're going to charge somebody, make sure you're accurate.

Mr. Shillington: — I apologize to the member from Regina South. He said he wasn't listening to the debate; perhaps that's accurate.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I would just ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the Bill. Those kinds of comments will just create further tensions and it isn't necessary.

Mr. Shillington: — This government doesn't need more taxes. You need to manage better what you have.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Apparently, Mr. Speaker, apparently this bit of double-dealing . . . I'll get over my anger about this bit of double-dealing but I'm not going to do it very quickly. But apparently this comes about because the member from Regina Victoria had the temerity to speak yesterday on the Provincial Auditor's Bill. Well the two are related. They are directly related. We say you don't need the extra revenue; you need to manage the money you have.

Central, absolutely central to the proper management of an institution as large as the Government of Saskatchewan is an auditor which functions effectively. Absolutely central to the functioning of a proper system of controls is an auditor.

And what has the auditor had to say about this government's management? Well in the beginning the comments were rather tame, part of a rather small book. The comments now have ballooned into a thick volume. If they get any thicker, there's going to be two volumes. And the prose is as lurid as you would find in any auditor of any government in North America.

I am quite certain, Mr. Speaker, there's no auditor in North America which uses the kind of language that our auditor uses. And it isn't just the former auditor who was at all times professional, but had he been less than professional he had every reason to be so.

He was criticized unfairly by the former member from Kindersley, criticized unfairly by the former member from Kindersley, notwithstanding that he maintained a professional approach. But his language was as lurid as you'd find in any provincial auditor's report. He stated in summary terms that the books of this government were so bad that he could not prepare proper financial statements.

What happened? What happened was that the Premier had a deathbed repentance, as he so often does. It appeared to him to be close to an election. He associates elections with deathbeds so he had a deathbed repentance. He said he would do better. But is he doing better?

I'm not going to get into the debate yesterday — although I do intend to have some remarks on the Provincial

Auditor's Bill when it's returned — but it's germane to this tax Bill to state that the problem hasn't been resolved with the Provincial Auditor, and you can't manage a government effectively without a proper, functioning auditor's office.

What's happening? Well we have the member from Meadow Lake, the minister standing up and saying that he has a dispute with the Provincial Auditor over SaskEnergy accounts. You don't dispute with the Provincial Auditor. The Provincial Auditor is appointed by this Assembly to provide us with the financial information which we need to exercise proper control over the government. You don't argue with the auditor.

What would happen, Mr. Speaker, to a company listed on any stock exchange in North America which got a, first of all, which got a qualified financial statement? What would happen is they'd be delisted. Anybody with an ounce of sense would dump the shares, whatever you get it at. But then — it doesn't just get a qualified financial statement — then the president of the company goes on to argue with the auditor. It's just unthinkable.

And what is going on here is in some ways unthinkable. It's unthinkable that the government stands in this House and argues with the Provincial Auditor. He is the financial policeman. We appoint him to provide us with the statements . . . with the information which we need to exercise proper control over government spending.

And we don't have proper statements; he has said that. Not just the former auditor who, as I say was professional but had every reason not to be, but the current auditor who — touch wood — has not yet been insulted. But of course he will be. We'll know this government will get around . . . This government leaves no one uninsulted in due course. So if it's in office long enough, they'll get around to insulting the current auditor.

(1215)

But the point is, Mr. Speaker, if members of this side of the House wanted a reason not to vote for this Bill, it is that we do not have the financial statements which we need to properly vote money. We don't need any further reason than that to never vote this thing into law.

We are elected by the public of Saskatchewan to vote money for the government to spend. We don't have the financial information which we need to make an intelligent decision on that. The Provincial Auditor has said so. We don't need to go beyond that. We don't need to go beyond that very point in our reason not to pass this Bill. Until this government comes up with financial statements which are useful and usable and accurate, then we don't need any further reason not to pass this Bill.

So I gather that the pique which the member from Melfort got into this morning has to do with the comments made by the member from Regina Victoria yesterday. Well I say that the problems with the Provincial Auditor are central and germane to your inability to manage this government. And what the member from Regina Victoria said yesterday is going to be repeated by others. If the Government House Leader thinks he's heard the last of

the Provincial Auditor's Bill then you're dreaming in technicolor because that is key to this problem.

It is key to this problem, and that's why, Mr. Speaker, when I rose in my place expecting to speak on the financial administration Bill, when I got up to speak on the financial administration Bill which I did, I was half up expecting to speak on something different. The speeches really aren't very different. It's the same problem. It is the very same problem. You cannot manage this government's financial affairs unless you have proper financial statements.

I ask members opposite to think of your own farm. They are different sizes, different complexities, but you need information to manage it. You got to know what the fertilizer's costing you. You got to know what the spray's costing you. You got to know what your inputs are. You got to know what you're getting back. You got to know whether you're making or losing money. That's germane to any business — germane to farming, germane to running a law office.

I run a law office. I want to know what everything's costing me: what secretarial time's costing me, what papers are costing me, what telephone's costing me, what fax is costing me. That way I know if I'm making or losing money. If I'm losing money I'm not practising law very long.

Now government's no different. You got to have that information. You might be able to run a small business in your head, although it's a darn small business these days you can run in your head. But you can't run . . . But for anything beyond the very smallest of businesses you need proper financial statements, and we don't have them.

And we are being asked to vote a major tax increase, the largest tax increase in the history of the province without proper financial statements. We don't need any further reason than that to vote against this Bill. Until this government brings into being a proper set of financial statements which are complete, accurate, and timely, we don't need any further reason to vote against this.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — We say that you need this because you are mismanaging. I don't know what you say to that, but I know what you ought to do about it. You ought to give us the financial statements which will prove or disprove it and give us all that information.

So I say to the Government House Leader, if this whole pique, if your pique developed because of what the minister . . . because of the comments of the member from Regina Victoria, well then think again, because his comments were very germane to this subject. They are germane and his comments . . . I don't know if he finished his comments or not but . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . He says he hasn't, but when he does, his aren't the last comments you're going to hear because I have some comments I want to make on the Provincial Auditor's role and the way that office has been treated.

And I want to make some comments about the kind of

financial statements he has been able to prepare. And I want to talk about the staff, the staffing problems in that office — all of which is germane to the preparation of financial statements which will allow us to make some decisions about whether or not these taxes are needed.

The editors of the *Maclean's* magazine, Mr. Speaker, describe — I said this a little earlier — the editors of the *Maclean's* magazine do a year-end sounding. They call it the soul of the nation. It tends to be somewhat Ontario orientated, but it's still a very useful indication of where people are at.

The last one I found very interesting. The one that was published in December, the editors describe the mood of Canadians with respect to their governments. They believe their governments have become elected dictatorships. You elect them and then they do whatever they want for four years. Well we, Mr. Speaker, are determined to return government to the Legislative Assembly.

My colleague from Saskatoon, my colleague from Saskatoon has done a lot of work on a good democratic reform paper with one thought in mind — to return the legislature to the . . . the government to the legislature, so that the government's accountable to the legislature. And that's what that paper, an excellent paper by the member from Saskatoon, has done.

An Hon. Member: — Could he table those papers?

Mr. Shillington: — They're in the Premier's office. I don't know if the member from Weyburn has got a telephone, but if you . . . I'm going to ask one of my colleagues to get a copy of the paper. Perhaps the pages will. I'm going to get it for the member from Weyburn. He seems to be badly in need of it. The whole purpose of that paper is to return to the legislature, control of government, and particularly government spending.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — This whole process flies in the face of that. The whole process by which this Bill has been introduced has meant that from the beginning this Bill has been bathed in illegitimacy. First of all it was announced outside the House in a manner which is unprecedented. And let's hope it remains unprecedented. Let's hope never again do we have budget by press release. Let's hope that never happens again.

The most charitable I can be to the Minister of Finance is that he didn't expect this session to ever occur. He thought there was going to be an election, and he thought with this tax increase he could drive a wedge between rural and urban Saskatchewan and carve off for himself the largest portion of the electorate. That is exactly what the minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Did the minister say it worked?

Well I want to talk for a little bit about the political strategy then since the . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I ask the hon. members to refrain from comment from their seats, and

the member speaking, to direct his remarks to the Bill rather than at every member who might say a word or two. As you realize, our system works that the member does make a comment or two, but if you become involved with debate with each member, you're certainly not on the Bill.

Mr. Shillington: — Well the minister's comments for once were germane to the Bill.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I'm just reminding the hon. member again that if he becomes involved with debate with every member, he is not always on the Bill. And I'd ask him to refrain from doing that and to speak to the Bill, and at the same time ask hon. members not to be constantly interrupting.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — This Bill from the . . . this tax from the very beginning was born in illegitimate circumstances and has continued to be handled in the same fashion. The most charitable I can be to the government opposite is they never expected this session to occur. They thought they were going to announce this tax, drive a deep wedge between rural and urban Saskatchewan, and carve off for themselves the largest portion of the electorate.

One of the redeeming features, Mr. Speaker, about that process is that in creating a Frankensteinian — and they have; the government has created a monster for people in rural Saskatchewan — in creating a Frankensteinian monster, the monster has turned on its master. And the rural-urban split is coming back to haunt this government. It is coming back to haunt this government. This Bill was to be the ultimate wedge between rural and urban Saskatchewan, and it's coming back to haunt the government.

Many rural people in Saskatchewan are realizing that the rural-urban split is not to their advantage. It may be to the advantage of members opposite, but it is not to their advantage, Mr. Speaker. Rural people do not like coming into the city and finding themselves the subject of criticism and worse, nor should they. But that's what this government intentionally created. That is the most charitable I can be with the minister opposite is that's what he intended. That's the most charitable interpretation I can put on his behaviour with respect to this Bill, was this was to be the ultimate wedge between rural and urban Saskatchewan.

And I may say it was after this Bill was introduced that the problem really burst into flame. I don't remember seeing — I remember hearing about it but I don't remember seeing articles in the newspapers as being the subject of constant comment. But it is now.

Rural people realize that it is not in their interest to have a significant group of people angry at them, the urban people. It may be in the interests of this government to have urban people angry at rural people, but it's not in the interests of people in rural Saskatchewan. They realize it. Their anger is directed at the government where it well ought to be. This was an intentional creation of a monster by the government, and as was the case with

Frankenstein, he eventually turned on his master. And this is now in the process of turning on its master.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — I have a copy of our democratic reform paper. It is this document which the member from Saskatoon has published with a view — the member from Saskatoon Eastview — has published with a view to returning to the legislature control of government and particularly control of government spending so badly needed. A government which issues a budget by press release clearly has a long way to go in terms of returning to the legislature proper control of its spending.

Mr. Speaker, this democratic reform paper we think will go a long way to solving the kinds of problems which bred this Bill. This Bill was conceived in the crassest possible atmosphere, the crassest possible atmosphere. The government conceived this Bill, not in an attempt to deal with the fiscal problems of this province. They don't know what the fiscal problems of this province are. The books of this province are in such sorry shape, this government does not know what the extent of the fiscal problems are. All the more reason why we shouldn't vote this Bill until we know.

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, has stated that it is his intention to — after the election if elected — to do a comprehensive audit of the books of this province. We really need to know where we stand because quite frankly we don't know where we stand at the moment. We do not know what the entire amount of the debt is.

(1230)

The member from Weyburn is assisting me again in my comments. I'll refrain from commenting on his comments for the moment. If I were, however, without commenting on what he had to say, if I were however to assume that the debt were \$4 billion plus, I have the uncomfortable feeling I'd be wildly optimistic. I have this uncomfortable feeling that the actual debt of the province is a good deal higher.

How can one sensibly deal with a major reform of the tax Bill without knowing what the state of affairs in the province are? There is, Mr. Speaker, only one solution to this. The solution is to call an election. If you are elected, do what you will. If we are elected, we intend to do a comprehensive audit of the books of this province. Then in consultation with the public of Saskatchewan, we're going to design a tax system which is fair and progressive, and we think this is neither.

So if you want to know . . . If the members opposite want some sort of an insight as to what's going to happen after the election . . .

An Hon. Member: — Call it.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, call it. That's the best way to find out. But I can tell you we are going to do a comprehensive review of the books. We're going to get an idea of where we're at. Then in consultation with the public of Saskatchewan, we're going to design a recovery plan.

If I had to characterize in one word what the next government, the job of the next government is going to be, it's going to be a government of reconstruction. That's what the next government's going to be. We're going to be reconstructing this province after the shambles in which you people have left it.

The member from Morse seems to find that amusing. I may say that you're the only person in the province who finds the fiscal situation of this province amusing, if you do. There is nothing amusing about the situation in which we find ourselves.

There is some degree of bad luck involved, but there is an enormous degree of bad management involved. It is true that . . . I'll give you one small example. I can give you one small example, bits of which you might have heard. Yes, it's a good one. It's not a large amount of money. In and by themselves these bits of waste and mismanagement do not create a crisis, but when you govern in this fashion, it does create a crisis. It's a style of government, but it's a good example. You close down the ski hill at Cypress. In the same breath, almost in the same ministry, indeed I think it was the same ministry, you do a study on tourism in the Cypress area none the less, in the Cypress area. Now perhaps the member from Canora will just assist me with this. The member from Maple Creek may want to assist me with this as well.

What is the sense in closing down the ski hill and paying a good price to have a study on tourism in the area done? If you could just, in 25 words or less, give me the rationale for that one.

An Hon. Member: — What did the study recommend, Ned?

Mr. Shillington: — Ah, the member from Canora wants to know what the study recommended. The study appears to have recommended that we have a ski hill. Isn't that what it recommended? I may be breaching the prohibition of the Chair in engaging with debate; it is just so tempting, Mr. Speaker. I am trying to think of an example and the members opposite give them to me.

We have the situation, Mr. Speaker, where a government closes down a ski hill in Cypress Hills. Then after closing it down, they commission a study. What does the study recommend? The study recommends there ought to be a ski hill in Cypress Hills.

Perhaps the minister will want to table the study. We're going to table our democratic reform paper at the end of my comments. Perhaps the minister might want to table that study and all the background material to it. I see the minister is thinking about that. You might want to table that study.

It's just an example of a style of government. It's confused, it is confused, it is ridden with patronage. I am not a hundred per cent certain who commissioned the study, but I am told that the person . . . I'm sorry, I'm not entirely certain who did the study, but I am told that the person who did the study had links with this government. And that may just be an unfortunate coincidence, but the

problem is that this government is littered with unfortunate coincidences.

You know, if you didn't want to pass the GST, I think I could solve your fiscal problems with a single Bill, at least come a long way towards it. And that is introduce a fair . . . tender a Bill which provides fair tendering in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — If we had a Bill which provided for fair tendering, you wouldn't have me accusing you of giving a contract to a Tory friend because presumably the lowest bidder would have got it. And it would save this province a good deal of money. One of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, why we have revenue outdistancing inflation at the same time you've got a deficit ballooning out of control is because you don't have a fair tendering policy.

Every contract which this government lets out is seen as a licence to rifle the public treasury. That's what you saw when you came into office and you're still behaving in the same way. That's why I said at the beginning of my comments that the seeds of this Bill were sown the day you were elected in the style in which you've governed.

I'm going to at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, table the democratic reform paper and perhaps I could have the page as requested. Perhaps I could have a page. I'll just table this.

Now I know that the member opposite will want to get the copy of it. I know the member opposite will want to make copies of it, distribute copies to all your colleagues. All I can say is if you implement the democratic reform paper, truly implement it, you're going to have a lot of co-operation. If you do what you have been doing with democratic reform, and that's play games with it as you have been doing, then you're going to get a lot of scepticism and scorn from the public and opposition from us.

It might occur to members opposite that in our intransigence with respect to this Bill — that's a fair way to characterize it — in our intransigence with respect to this Bill, we are not off on an agenda of our own. We are following the demands of the public that this Bill will be stopped. We are following the public agenda.

I could cite any number of examples, but members opposite probably don't particularly want to hear them. I'm sure that members opposite don't want me to get into the litany of hare-brained schemes which you've indulged in, absolutely hare-brained. How else would you describe GigaText but hare-brained? How else would you describe that whole process.

The public thought they were electing a government which would provide sound business-like administration. They might have been voting for low-tax, low-service government. They might have said to themselves — I don't know, I don't always understand what goes on in the public mind — they might have said to themselves, we can't afford this high-tax, high-service government of Allan Blakeney. What they didn't vote for

was low-service, high-tax which is what they've got. They've wound up with steadily deteriorating public services and taxes which are the highest in Canada.

If members opposite had actually done anything real and substantial to solve the problems in rural Saskatchewan, I think everyone would have more patience with you. But you have played games with rural Saskatchewan, played games with every other conceivable issue. Members opposite are just incapable of being honest on any issue with respect to any group. No matter what happens you've got to play games.

Well when you start reforming the tax bill, when you introduce by press release the largest tax increase in the history of the province — never intending to bring it before the Legislative Assembly before an election, never intending to do that — then I say the games stop. The only thing that prevented . . . the only thing that stood in your way of avoiding this entire session was a decision by the Court of Appeal that attempted and, I think in my view, did bring some fairness into the drawing of constituency boundaries.

Mr. Speaker, we say that this Bill, this tax is not necessary. Time might prove us wrong. It is conceivable that time might prove us wrong. But certainly, Mr. Speaker, it isn't necessary now. This Bill should not pass; instead we should have an election, Mr. Speaker.

I was interrupted earlier by some of the more charming comments of the members opposite, but I was talking about the effect this tax has on poor families. Let us consider the plight of a family living on minimum wage. Let us consider the plight of that family.

Clothing, children's clothing represents for average families a pretty fair burden. I wince when I see my son's running shoes wearing out because their replacement costs far more than my shoes cost me. Children of families that live on minimum income, they also think they ought to have those running shoes. They want to be treated the same. If they feel different, they don't learn properly. I wish that were not the case, but that's the case. If they are to be given an equal opportunity, in so far as possible they need to be given equal status within the four walls of the school house.

How do we do that when we impose an additional 14 per cent tax on children's clothing — a major item in raising children. What does that say to the equality of the child with the status of a child who's a son or daughter of a member of cabinet? It makes the parent's role more difficult; it makes the children's life just a little bit shabbier.

What does it say, Mr. Speaker, with respect to tax on books? That also is not an insignificant item. And again the child of the family of modest means should have the same access to reading material, should be surrounded by the same books, the same magazines as the child of a cabinet minister. But if you make them 14 per cent more expensive, as they're going to be, there'll just be that much fewer of them.

No question, Mr. Speaker, but what children who are

surrounded by a literary environment have a better chance statistically, have a better chance of succeeding in school than those who are not. To be surrounded by books, magazines, is an essential part of a child's intellectual development.

What do we do to that child when we impose additional 14 per cent costs on the *Owl*, which I see coming into our house, or novels. *Chickadee* is another example of an excellent children's magazine. What happens to the cost of those? Well a certain percentage of families are going to have to drop them because what used to cost — and I have no idea what the cost would be — what used to cost a hundred dollars now costs 114; and the extra \$14 is more than the family can afford.

So this Bill, Mr. Speaker, aggravates the problem we have with children of families of modest means. It makes it much, much worse. Mr. Speaker, we think that if this government were to do some of the things we have asked, you wouldn't need to pass this tax bill.

(1245)

If you provided us in a timely way with the *Public Accounts*, it would assist somewhat. As I have said, Mr. Speaker, we have reasons to vote against this Bill and I intend to spend some time discussing that. But one of the things we don't have is *Public Accounts* in a timely way.

I rose, Mr. Speaker, expecting to speak on the financial administration Bill, found myself speaking on a different Bill, but the two issues are related. The two issues are related, Mr. Speaker.

We say that the *Public Accounts* are an essential tool to legislators in scrutinizing public spending. They're a necessity. The sooner we have those *Public Accounts*, Mr. Speaker, the better job we can do of scrutinizing the spending of any government.

What has this government done? This government has tabled the *Public Accounts* at the latest conceivable time in every single session. Well to be as charitable as I can to the member from Weyburn, he has a look of disbelief on his face. I just want to give you the times when *Public Accounts* were tabled, and I won't abuse the rules of the House. I will start when I was first elected in 1986. In '86 they were tabled in January — sorry, '76 — tabled in January; '77, March 7; '78, March; '79, March; '79, December; '80, December; '81, December.

What happened the first year the government was elected? June, then April. The time you get up to 1980 . . . well some of the members opposite express impatience with my comments. All I can say is if you had played by the rules, if you had tabled the *Public Accounts* on time, you wouldn't be listening to this.

You people are incapable of playing by the rules. Even at times when the rules would serve you better, you've got to break them; you've got to work your way around them. Mr. Speaker, by the time recent years roll around, you are tabling on May 19 in 1988; in 1989 you tabled them on May 8. This year you tabled them in April.

The members want to know what that has to do with the Bill. What that has to do with the Bill is that this Bill is necessary because you can't manage, you cannot manage the public affairs of this province. Everybody in this province from Carnduff to Meadow Lake, from Nipawin to Shaunavon, is saying that. You can't manage the affairs of this province; that's why taxes have gone out of sight.

An essential element, Mr. Speaker, in managing the affairs of this province is to provide timely, accurate information to this Assembly. This Assembly has the pivotal role in controlling public expenditures. When members intentionally withhold *Public Accounts* as they have, and it has been intentional, then I say that members can expect some rather stiff opposition when you introduce tax increases of this magnitude.

There was one year, Mr. Speaker, when the government did table the *Public Accounts* early. That was February 24, 1983. The then member from Regina South, Paul Rousseau, tabled the *Public Accounts*. When the media and others went through the *Public Accounts* and found some items which called for some explanation and publicly called for an explanation, Mr. Rousseau accused everybody of playing politics with the *Public Accounts* and said, well if you're going to criticize us, we're not going to give you the *Public Accounts*. And that was the last year we ever got them. And that's what he said.

What he actually said was, if you're going to play politics, we aren't going to give you the *Public Accounts*. But put in another way, one can say with equal accuracy, if you are going to criticize us, then we aren't going to give you the information you need to criticize us. That is putting it the same way. How do you expect members of this Assembly to react when you don't give us the information we need to scrutinize spending, and then you come forth with tax Bills which extract a thousand dollars a year from the average family.

This tax Bill is staggering in its magnitude. It is just simply staggering. This is not some . . . this is not a penny on a package of cigarettes. This is a tax Bill of appalling magnitude, and it is a regressive tax. It hits those hardest whom this government claims to be trying to help.

On rare occasions, when sufficiently embarrassed, this government will admit to having some concern for hungry children. Now it takes a lot of embarrassment, and they don't admit it very often, and today they didn't. And indeed for many years the minister of Social Services, Gordon Dirks, denied in this House there was any hungry children, notwithstanding the food banks. For some period of time, so did the member from Wascana. But they then admitted there are hungry children.

What does this Bill do to those hungry children? It's obvious what it does. It makes their life harder. But so what, says the member from Wascana. Well so what is, that in a compassionate society — and we believe that Saskatchewan people want a compassionate society — you seek to alleviate the plight. You seek to alleviate the plight of those who are suffering, not make it worse.

So what? Well so what, Mr. Minister, is that you face the

fight of your life with this Bill. That's so what.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — So what, Mr. Minister, so what. When you give more salary to a single friend of your government than you spend feeding hungry children and then come into this Assembly with a tax increase of this magnitude and say so what, you can expect members of this Assembly to be outraged.

But what ought to give you even more concern is your relationship with the electorate. Mr. Minister, I wonder if you've thought of going through your riding with respect to this tax Bill and saying to the restaurateurs, the bookholders, the househusbands and fathers who are trying to make a budget balance, so what. Perhaps the minister might like to start a so-what petition. People might sign his petition if they believe that this . . .

An Hon. Member: — So-what Saskatchewan.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes. Start a new organization — so-what Saskatchewan. So they're introducing a tax Bill which levies an appalling thousand dollars a month, on the average, for Saskatchewan families. That's what this tax Bill does So what, the minister says. The minister might like to try a petition, a so-what petition. All those whose reaction to this tax Bill is so what can sign his petition.

The member from Regina Wascana has a reputation for being a touch unorthodox. I won't put a finer point on it than that. But I doubt that he would take through his riding a so-what petition. His comments are appalling. His comments reflect the way this government has grown distant and arrogant and disdainful of public opinion.

When a minister says so what, it's worth recalling the atmosphere in which that question was asked. The member from Saskatoon Fairview said, if you're giving \$750,000 to a single person, that's more than you're spending on families in Saskatchewan. He said, so what. The member from Wascana said, so what. Well all I can say is, if the member from Wascana doesn't understand, so what, the public understand, so what, and they have communicated so what to us with clarity. It would be just desserts if when the member knocked on the door, saying I want your vote, they responded, so what.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Indeed if the member from Regina Wascana has the nerve to canvass in his poll . . .

The Speaker: — I ask the hon. member to once more refrain from carrying on debates with members. I ask him to stick to the debate on Bill No. 61. I allow him to continue now.

Mr. Shillington: — I will keep the debate out of the . . .

An Hon. Member: — To a bare minimum.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, to a bare minimum. The member from . . . that's getting into debate. The . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Now the member from Regina Centre, I've asked you several times this morning not to enter debate with each person or whoever you chose to from their seat who makes a comment. I've asked you that several times. And if you're going to treat it, my request, in a frivolous manner, we'll have to enforce the rules more strictly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Just a word of explanation, Mr. Speaker, I wasn't treating your ruling in a frivolous fashion. I'd actually lost my train of thought. I was not treating either your ruling or your office in a frivolous fashion. I don't do that.

Mr. Speaker, this government doesn't need a goods and services tax. This government needs a lesson in management.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, this government doesn't need a GST Bill; it needs a lesson in compassion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — This government needs to learn what it means to be on minimum wage and have 14 per cent added to your costs of buying virtually everything. But most of all, Mr. Speaker, this government doesn't need a GST; it needs a lesson in fair and honest play. It needs to understand that you cannot treat the public with disdain, as they have, and expect not to have a first-class opposition as this Bill has engendered.

I don't know what this government expects when you treat the public with the disdain you have. What do you expect? We, after all, just reflect public opinion. That's all we do. We are not some sort of a group of monsters who by chance got elected to office. We are here, we are here reflecting public opinion. They feel cheated by the way you have behaved in office, by the way you have ignored your mandate, and it continues unabated.

You continue with the same sort of despicable behaviour this morning. It just doesn't come to an end. You can't keep your word, you can't follow the rules. Well this, Mr. Speaker, is the culminating point of the anger of the public of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — It being 1 o'clock the House stands adjourned until Monday at 2 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 1 p.m.