

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Clerk: — The following petition for a private Bill is presented and laid on the Table by Mr. Romanow:

A petition of the Ukrainian Catholic Council for the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon in the province of Saskatchewan.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the legislature, the Consul General of The Netherlands. Baron Marnix von Aerssen and his wife, Mrs. Henriette von Aerssen, are in the Speaker's gallery. This is their first official visit to the province of Saskatchewan. We're very happy to have them here.

While in the province they'll be visiting with the mayor of Saskatoon, the mayor of Regina, and several departments and ministers, including the Department of Health, Economic Diversification, Agriculture and Food.

It's my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to welcome the Consul General for his first visit to the province of Saskatchewan, and hope they find their visit here very pleasurable. Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the Premier, on behalf of the members of the opposition, to welcome here today the Consul General. And I wonder if I might say a few words in my native tongue, Mr. Speaker, at least give it a try.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Dutch.)

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will refrain . . . stick with the English language for my introduction here.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to the members of the Assembly and to you, sir, a group of 32 high school students from the town of Rosthern and their bus drivers and teachers — Doug Willard and Phil Broten, past teaching chums of mine as it were. And I certainly hope the students from the Rosthern High School enjoy their visit here. I will be meeting with them later on for drinks and questions and I just hope you have a good, safe trip home. I'd ask all members to help me welcome the students from Rosthern High School.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise on somewhat of an impromptu introduction. I want members to join with me in welcoming and I think congratulating Ema Pratt who is in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. I won't go into the details. I see Ema Pratt and her daughter, Charlotte Pelletier. I regret I do not know the names of all of the people who are with her.

Ema was reunited with her family after a very lengthy separation and it was the subject of I think more than one television show last night. I know all members will want to join with me in congratulating Ema and welcoming her to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with my colleague from Regina Centre in welcoming to the Assembly the eight people from the Regina Native Community Awareness centre. I know all members will want to join with me in welcoming them here. They're accompanied by, as my colleague mentioned, Charlotte Pelletier and Terri Peterson. Welcome to the Assembly and we'll meet you for a coffee in the Speaker's boardroom at 2:35. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martin: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of the Family, I too would like to welcome them and say how pleased we are that you got together after all these years — something like 38 years or something. And we all know that families are extremely strong when they pull together and work together, and I'm very pleased for you, Mrs. Pratt, and for your daughter as well. So I wish to join everybody else here in saying how pleased we are that you managed to get together after all these years.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — I want to make one other impromptu introduction. I met some people this morning who are again in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, Ann and Mike Koziak, who are accompanied by their daughter Victoria Greensides.

I talked to these people for a few minutes. It just seemed to me that they're representative of the many hundreds of Saskatchewan people who come to the seat of government each summer to observe their government in action. And I wanted all members to join with me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously the best shall be last.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and to the House, 18 grade 10 students seated in the east gallery, accompanied by their teachers Mr. Paul Reist, Annette ver der Buhs, and the chaperon Sandra Twardy.

I want to extend a great, warm welcome to the students. I hope that they have an enjoyable stay here in Regina. We'll be meeting with you shortly after question period. I just want to say that you had a wonderful graduation which I attended a couple weeks ago. Have a safe trip back home.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to receive the accolades from the member from Quill Lakes. It's my pleasure, sir, to introduce to you and the other members of the Assembly today, a gentleman in the west gallery. It's Mr. Maynard Slater from the town of Unity.

Maynard is in Regina as a board member of SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation) and has been on that board for a number of years. He's a very diligent, hard-working individual from his community, and I think is a good representative of the type of people that have served the board of directors of SEDCO over the years under this administration. So I'd ask all members to please welcome Mr. Maynard Slater from Unity.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, one of the first people that I ever met in Regina when I first moved here was Ema Pratt. And I wonder if at this point I might say that I'm happy to see you here today and that you're happy and this is my joy and everyone's inspiration. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Potential Nurses' Strike

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister, in a matter of hours most of Saskatchewan's hospitals and nursing homes will be without nursing staff for all but emergency services.

Yesterday I asked you what steps you were going to take to prevent this strike and you said it was too early to get involved. Hospitals are already clearing out patients. They are on an emergency footing, Mr. Minister. What steps have you taken in the last 24 hours to help avoid this strike? And what steps are you going to take in the next 24 hours?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, the collective bargaining process is ongoing and it remains ongoing. And it's important to note that with the help of conciliation — there is a conciliator assisting at that table, a conciliator appointed by my colleague, the Minister of Labour — that process carries on and, as I said yesterday and have said publicly for a few days now, it's important I believe not to become directly involved in that process at this stage.

We obviously are concerned as are all citizens of this province when a circumstance like this arises. I assure the

hon. member and the citizens of the province that we will be monitoring this on a daily, and indeed on an hourly basis if it does deteriorate to the point where there is in fact a strike.

So that's all I can say at this stage, Mr. Speaker, but I will give the assurance that this will be monitored very, very closely by myself and the Department of Health officials as we continue in communication with the hospital administrators and others in the hospitals and the nursing homes who must carry out the duties required of them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, we are less than 24 hours away from a strike in this province — less than 24 hours — and this dispute represents a clear and present danger to health care in Saskatchewan. Patients are being put out of hospitals, surgery is being put on hold, some patients are being moved out of the province, and their families are upset, Mr. Minister. And you say you're doing nothing to prevent the situation — nothing.

Mr. Minister, why isn't the prevention of this dispute your number one priority?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the circumstances surrounding this dispute are my number one priority. For the hon. member it's easy to say: why haven't you prevented this, there is a difficult circumstance — all of which I agree with. This is not something that anyone would wish to have happen. That's not the case.

Mr. Speaker, all I can say to the hon. member: I believe the actions that I am taking, that the Department of Health is taking and that the government is taking at the present time are the appropriate actions given the collective bargaining process which is under way. The hon. member . . . it's fine to raise the question and it's a legitimate question to raise in terms of this problem being of concern to our citizens — that's true.

But there's also room here for suggestions and I would be very open to suggestions from the hon. member, the Health critic, and what she would do in my place or what she suggests should be done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, if you agree that a strike is not desirable, why did you shut hospital beds and fire nurses on the eve of collective bargaining, Mr. Minister? Have you met with both sides and offered whatever services your ministry can supply, Mr. Minister? Have you been in contact with both sides to offer to set up a conciliation board, Mr. Minister? Have you met with both sides to offer assurances about staffing levels in our health-care facilities? Have you given sufficient negotiating latitude to your representative at the bargaining table? Have you taken any steps to try to prevent this dispute from happening, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Now we . . .

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

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Now we have the suggestions from the member from the NDP (New Democratic Party) and let's be very clear of what it was. Their negotiations are ongoing with the help of a conciliator. We've said that and everyone in the province knows that that's the case. So our reports are there is some progress being made. Now but the fact is talks are continuing — talks are continuing.

And the hon. member said, have you injected yourself into the talks at that table? That's what she said. And I had to say very clearly: no, I have not; no, I have not; I will not. At this stage, we monitor this thing and I think it's the responsible thing to do. I believe that sincerely. The responsible approach is the approach that we are taking, that I am taking, as the minister at this stage.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, here's a picture for the people of Saskatchewan to remember. A Minister of Health, the man charged with the safe and effective delivery of health-care services, throwing up his hands and saying there's nothing to do when we're on the eve of a nurses' strike in this province. We are facing a crisis today, Mr. Minister, and you are doing nothing to avert it — nothing at all. Why are you sitting on your hands, Mr. Minister? Do you want a strike? Is that your game?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, as I said before, I believe that the actions taken by our department and by myself, as Minister of Health, and by the people within the hospitals and special-care home sector who are developing their contingency plans and so on, are responsible actions all through the system. The responsible actions are taking place and I believe what we are doing as a government is responsible action.

The hon. member made the point yesterday, and has made the point in the public and made the point again here today, that somehow there was an orchestration of the closing of beds, of some beds in some locations, to occur at the time which coincided with collective bargaining.

Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, the concerns and the issues around health care here in Saskatchewan are no different, frankly, than what is going on in all jurisdictions across the country.

There is no nurses' strike going on in the province of Ontario today with an NDP government. There is no strike. And yet as I reported yesterday, and *The Toronto Star* confirms, 2,600 beds closed in the Toronto area alone by the government across there, to use her logic. It's obviously the Government of Ontario that's closing those 2,600 beds. She'll say that here but it doesn't apply there.

Mr. Speaker, this country has a very complex health-care system. This province has a complex health-care system.

We are dealing with it responsibly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Decentralization Costs

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Deputy Premier but now in his capacity as the minister in charge of decentralization where, unlike health care, apparently the government has a lot of money to spend.

Mr. Speaker, according to yesterday's *Leader-Post* the government plans to pay part of real estate losses incurred by employees through relocation as a result of the government's decentralization plans.

And according to other documents which we have here, there are apparently funds being set aside, including severance package options and payment of moving expenses and the like.

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister is: how much has the government budgeted by way of fresh additional charges to the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan with respect to the proposals of decentralization which you've announced over three months ago?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the issue of the costs of individuals who work within the public service, wherever they might live, who are asked to move to another location, that issue and the benefits that are available to them is one that has been around for a long time. The changes that we have made very recently, one change which deals with covering some portion of the difference between the appraised value of a home and the actual selling price, is an amendment that was made to the regulations in this province, not just for moves related to Fair Share Saskatchewan, but for moves within the province by public servants wherever they might be moving from and to wherever they're going. So that's a point that needs to be clarified.

Mr. Speaker, as it relates to — and I have announced this as well — when specific announcements are made related to Fair Share Saskatchewan and specific announcements will be made in the very near future, when specific announcements are made, there will be a cost analysis for each of the moves at the time of the announcement.

Mr. Speaker, that will be the case. I've announced it publicly and I say that again here today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a new question to the minister and I'm still referring to the *Leader-Post* story by Mark Wyatt, plus the document which I have dated April 5, 1991.

This, Mr. Speaker, the plan that I'm referring to involves up to 2,000 civil servants to be transferred from government in Regina to decentralized locations

throughout the province of Saskatchewan. Now we know that that's going to cost money because the story says they're going to pick up real estate fees and severance packages and the like.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is this: is it not correct that you have internal studies — I wish the minister would pay attention to my question — is it not true that you have internal studies which show that there is going to be an additional cost of approximately \$50 million of new charge on the purse of the province of Saskatchewan as a result of this decentralization? Do you not have that study showing the additional \$50 million? And how do you justify that in the context of the obvious needs for funds in other areas like health care and education?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member I believe said — and there was some noise in the House, I admit — but the hon. member I believe said \$50 million. His seat mate, the deputy leader of the NDP, yelled from his seat, \$60 million.

Mr. Speaker, I have said that there will be some costs associated with the movement. There will be costs associated. There will be significant costs associated with abandoning rural Saskatchewan communities and all of the infrastructure their people have invested in for a long time. There are significant costs in abandoning that infrastructure as well. They don't care about that.

But, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the specific number, he raises 50 million; his seat mate says 60 million. They change 10 million there in about a few seconds. It relates . . . His colleague the other day said \$2.3 million for painting buses when it was something in the order of \$190,000. Mr. Speaker, you cannot take as face value any number that comes from the opposition benches in their speculative way.

I have said to the hon. member and I say to the public of Saskatchewan, when specific Fair Share moves are announced, there will be costs associated with them announced at the same time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the minister, and it's a concise question.

Mr. Minister, and Mr. Speaker, I preface my question by saying, look at the ludicrous position in which the people of the province of Saskatchewan have been placed and the members of this House have been placed. They will not accept the study by the city of Regina that says it's going to be an additional cost of \$25,000 per worker moved. They do not accept our statement that there's a \$50 million approximate cost internally. They deny that. And yet they refuse to produce the studies.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is this to the minister: do you have any studies at all about the huge additional cost for decentralization or not? Do you have those studies? If you do, then table them. Why will you not table them? Or is

the truth of the matter that you don't have those studies because you know they're going to cost \$50 million for decentralization, all the while when rural people want good, adequate health care and education services to be fulfilled?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has been against decentralization at every turn all the way along. Melville, Crop Insurance; Agriculture Credit Corporation to Swift Current — you name it, they were against it because they do not believe in a decentralized government operation. That's a fact of life.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises that the rural people of Saskatchewan want health care and education services. That's absolutely the case. And the rural people of Saskatchewan have received health care and education services from this government in spades, Mr. Speaker. They've received those services in spades.

The question for the hon. member is, the question for the hon. member who opposes decentralization, who opposes a decentralized administration of government, opposes rural Saskatchewan, in essence, the question for him is: who is going to use the infrastructure we have in both education and health care in rural Saskatchewan, tremendous investment that is needed out there, who is going to be there to use it if we don't decentralize and stabilize rural Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the minister in charge of decentralization. And, Mr. Speaker, I would preface my question by reminding you again, sir, about the position in which this legislature, the press gallery, and the public of the province of Saskatchewan have been placed by these answers given by this Deputy Premier and the government opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — They deny our figures but they refuse to table any figures, and presumably not even being pursued by anybody else in the public in terms of the press gallery after these figures.

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the Deputy Premier in this regard is very simple. Isn't it correct to say that the only thing that we can conclude as a result of your answers is that you do not have such a study, or that if you have such a study, you know that it's going to cost \$50 million more money which right now should be needed for health care?

Isn't this really, this decentralization after nine long years of waiting, a political attempt by you people to desperately shore up some political support? That's the sum and substance of what this is all about. Isn't that the case? Why don't you fess up to that situation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I have said to the

House and I said publicly before, when specific moves are announced — and they will be in short order — when specific moves are announced, there will be a cost analysis of each of those moves associated with the announcement. Make it clear — there will be cost analysis associated with the announcement in each case. That's clear and that's clear to the public, as clear as I can make it.

The hon. members says: it's straight politics. The hon. member's colleague said yesterday that the nurses' strike was straight politics. Mr. Speaker, and this hon. member, the leader, says: stabilizing rural Saskatchewan, which is extremely important in these economic times in this rural-based province, is very important.

Mr. Speaker, politics isn't associated with stabilizing the rural areas of this province and politics is not associated with our approach to the nurses' strike.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

New Government Office Space in Regina

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question too is directed to the minister in charge of decentralization. Mr. Minister, two of the major owners of an office tower which is being constructed on the 1800 block of Scarth Street here in Regina are agencies of this government. They are the Workers' Compensation Board and SaskPen.

If you are truly committed to decentralization as you say and not just for the announcement of a cynical political line for the purposes of an election, why are you spending millions of dollars for more government office space, which is going to cost all that money here in Regina, while you already have been spending \$34,000 a day on unoccupied office space which you have been leasing?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a building program in the city of Regina. The Workers' Compensation Board, as I understand it, has made an investment in a particular building. And that's the case, and they have the opportunity as well as the jurisdiction to make those investments. They've done that.

I don't know what the hon. member wants them to do, if he wants them to not invest in the downtown Regina, the city that he centralized himself to. He was once a member for Watrous and Humboldt and areas of rural Saskatchewan, but now he's the centralized member, safe in the arms of Regina, not out in a rural part of the province that needs stabilization. He's against stabilizing rural Saskatchewan. Rural Saskatchewan once abandoned him; he's abandoning rural Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, I have here an internal news release from the Workers' Compensation Board, and it says the following . . .

An Hon. Member: — An internal news release.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes, that's what its title says. That's what your title says, Mr. Minister. And it goes on to say: yes, the rumours are true — by August 1992 we will have a new home.

And it goes on to talk about 11 to 10 floors on this 20-storey building, a total of 83,600 square feet of space, which you're not going to need, Mr. Minister.

How do you explain this commitment to this vast amount of new government office space while at the same time you're saying you're going to move thousands of government employees and jobs out of Regina? There is nothing consistent here, Mr. Minister. How do you explain that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the members of the press, if you receive news releases from the member, they are confidential documents, so be careful how you use them. An internal news release — I haven't heard of that one before.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises the question about investment in downtown Regina. Yes, there is investment in downtown Regina. The city of Regina has raised concerns about decentralization of people from Regina, or positions from Regina certainly to other areas of rural Saskatchewan, and we've laid out the rationale for those kinds of moves.

There is as well, Mr. Speaker, significant discussion going on with the federal government. And the city of Regina has some involvement in that and certainly supports us, as I understand it, in our attempts . . . in our discussions with the federal government, using the same rationale for federal government positions to move from the national capital region to the regions of Canada, including the city of Regina, because that rationale applies to the nation as a whole and the same rationale applies to this province, Mr. Speaker. They cannot have it both ways — they cannot have it both ways.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Another new question to the same minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, as usual what you say does not add up. It's . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order, order. Carry on.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — What you say, Mr. Minister, does not add up. You're working from a policy of total chaos and confusion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — You say on the one hand that you're going to lay off 600 public servants; you started that. Then you say you're aiding the rural economy by moving civil servants out of Regina to other centres. And then you say

you're being responsive to needs by building a new building for the workers who are going to . . . theoretically you're going to be moving out of Regina and firing, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, will you clear up which one of these policies you're pursuing? Are you doing decentralization or are you actually building more buildings for decentralization? Are you doing decentralization or are you building more office space for the public servants in Regina? Which one is it, Mr. Minister? Clear up your policy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, we have been . . . this government has undertaken a policy of decentralization over a period of six years. We've undertaken that policy and we have moved people from the city of Regina — jobs and corporations — from the city of Regina out. Through that process, the city of Regina continued to grow. And it has continued to grow, much of it based on the policies of this government. Saskoil doubled in size, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Against the opposition again. Doubled in size, a new building in downtown Regina. WESTBRIDGE is a larger corporation now than it was, with a new building at the University of Regina. The North Canadian Oils has located in Regina, not because of them, but in spite of the opposition of them to the oil and gas field and the oil and gas patch.

Mr. Speaker, Regina continues to grow. Regina will continue to grow and we will continue to decentralize from Regina in an effort, a concerted and sincere effort, to stabilize rural Saskatchewan. And that's important to all citizens of this province, rural and urban.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPMC Office Leases

Mr. Anguish: — A question to the same minister, Mr. Speaker. I have here a copy of Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation's accommodation manual. Section 16 of this manual sets out some fairly heavy penalties for government departments that break their leases with the Property Management Corporation, Mr. Minister. And to date we know that there is not one notice of someone moving out of a government building to go into Fair Share Saskatchewan. We know that the Property Management Corporation has not taken into consideration increased accommodation costs in other places in Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister. Isn't it true what you're doing is committing fraud on the people of the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, no it is not true. The charge of the hon. member is certainly not true. We're committed to stabilizing rural Saskatchewan. We're committed to moving positions and moving the

administration of government to a larger extent than is now the case out to the people of the province. We're committed to that.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises the question of the Property Management Corporation and leases in the city of Regina. Yes, Mr. Speaker, there are leases in Regina — some of them are longer term than others — that's the case. We have taken a significant look at the length of leases, the length of time of individual leases. All of that is a part of the planning which goes into Fair Share Saskatchewan. That planning is ongoing. Those announcements will be made, Mr. Speaker. There will be cost analysis with each specific announcement. I don't know how much more specific I can be, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply (continued)

Ms. Simard: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I have spoken on interim supply before and there were numerous questions that I had been asking. And as I went through *Hansard*, Mr. Chair, I don't believe any of them were answered. Or at the best, I think there was one that a partial answer was given to. The Minister of Finance simply refused to deal with any of the questions we raised and we raised a lot of very important questions that are on the minds of Saskatchewan people.

We talked about the fact that hospital beds are being closed in this province. We've had several hundreds of hospital beds being closed and they're still being closed. We talked about the fact that health-care professionals have been fired. There's been some 400 health-care professionals, many of whom are nurses, Mr. Chair, who have lost their jobs in the last few weeks.

The health-care budget that we are dealing with in part in this interim supply Bill, Mr. Minister, is an inadequate amount of money with respect to health care. The Minister of Finance has tried to indicate it's much more than what it actually is. When one takes into consideration all the spending from last year, and as well the inflation rate over the last year, we see that on an overall basis health care is actually being cut back as opposed to increased, which is why of course our hospital institutions and our nursing homes are having to lay off nurses. And this is happening, Mr. Chair, this is happening on the eve of a nurses' strike.

And I say that's political, Mr. Chair, on the part of the government, that they would invoke policies that result in massive lay-offs to nurses on the eve of nurses going into a collective bargaining process with the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association. I don't believe that that's fair to the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association nor is it fair to the nurses, but then, Mr. Chair, this government has its

own agenda.

We have seen and we've noticed in question period here today many questions about the issue of decentralization because this interim supply Bill deals with the government's responsibility and funding for decentralization, Mr. Chair. The government claims it's going to decentralize a few thousand jobs out of Regina, but meanwhile what we have seen are dental workers laid off in rural Saskatchewan, highway construction workers laid off, teachers laid off, nurses laid off, and we're talking in terms of hundreds and hundreds of employees. Meanwhile they have a policy to decentralize jobs out of Regina.

Well let me tell you, people in rural Saskatchewan think this is absolutely ridiculous, and I've spoken to a number of them in the last couple weeks, Mr. Chair. They can't understand why the government wouldn't enhance and reinforce their health care and education initiatives in rural Saskatchewan as opposed to firing these people and trying to relocate Regina people into rural Saskatchewan. It doesn't make any sense; it's ridiculous.

This government has been unable to provide us with the study that they have done to show us exactly how they are going to achieve this and what it's going to cost. They have not provided us with this information yet they expect us to vote in favour of their interim supply, Mr. Chair, when they refuse to come forward with this information. They absolutely refuse.

This is another example of their political games, Mr. Chair, dividing communities, pitting communities against each other; trying to pit urban against rural Saskatchewan; trying to pit farmers against workers; trying to pit nurses and teachers against people working in the cities. Like this is desperation politics and it's wrong, Mr. Chair.

And it's destructive to families. And what I'm surprised is that the Minister of the Family hasn't been speaking out about the families in his constituency who are going to be divided as a result of his government's initiatives, Mr. Chair. I haven't seen him out there supporting the people in his constituency.

We've looked at the budget with respect to health-care services, some of which is being dealt with in this interim supply. We see, Mr. Chair, that home-care services are going to receive an increase in fees of some 15 per cent — 15 per cent increase in home-care fees, Mr. Chair. But this was announced outside of the budget, after the budget was released in a private press conference, Mr. Chair.

They were not forthcoming on the floor of the Assembly with this announcement for increase in home-care fees, which is another indication of this government's lack of commitment to the democratic process, Mr. Chair. It tried to sneak these increases in through the back door.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — We see chiropody, for example. The \$10 attendance fee at a chiropodist's office being an increase that's released in a private press conference with the

Minister of Health, Mr. Chair. I was contacted by home-care people in this province and by people in the chiropody field who were not aware — seniors and others working in the field — who were not aware that these increases were going to be brought forward.

And that shows that this government is not prepared to consult with the people who count. They are not prepared to engage in a democratic process to consult with respect to increases in fees. And they just go ahead and slap these high user fees because that's what it is — these high user fees — on people, on seniors and sick and elderly people and people on fixed income.

And yet this government refused to answer the question: what consultations did you have with the groups who are affected by these initiatives? What consultations? They have been unable to tell us of any consultations and yet they are here trying to ram through this interim supply Bill, ram through the interim supply Bill, and that Mr. Chair, is because this government is not committed to the democratic process.

They release information in private press conference sessions. They don't bring it forward on the floor of the Assembly. And then they try to invoke closure when we stand up and ask the questions that are on the minds of all the people in the province of Saskatchewan.

(1445)

And out of the other corner of their mouth they try to talk about democratic reform and their commitment to it, and I say that's total hypocrisy, Mr. Chair. It's hypocrisy.

We see a situation in Saskatchewan where there's an indiscriminate building of health-care facilities. We've asked the government: what is your plan with respect to building of health-care facilities? Where is your needs assessment study, the one that looks at the need for health-care facilities in various areas of the province, the overall provincial strategy? Where is it?

It's not forthcoming. We see nothing. They have absolutely no overall provincial strategy with respect to the building of health-care facilities.

And then when we ask them for their strategy, they invoke closure because they don't want to have to come forward because they don't have the study. Or if they have a study, they are doing something other than what the study recommends, Mr. Chair.

And that wouldn't be a first because what we've seen in the last two years is a Murray Commission study that came forward, was released to the public, and this government made a big to-do about the Murray Commission, and yet they have taken virtually no action on it — a few hollow promises, but no action on that study.

They say it's the blueprint for health care in Saskatchewan and I'm asking them . . . and the Minister of Finance is clapping right now, but they still refuse to take the position on the issue of regionalization, which is going to see control taken out of our local hospitals and

centralized in regional boards.

They call it the blueprint for health care in Saskatchewan and they refuse to take the position on the major thrust of that study, which is regionalization. And the Minister of Finance came very close to taking a position on that at the last session, but then he got his wrists slapped by the Minister of Health the next day, who backtracked as much as possible on that issue, Mr. Chair.

And here at this interim . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. I have to interrupt the debate at this time and put the question pursuant to the time allocation rule that was passed yesterday.

Motion agreed to on division.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman:

Be it resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992, the sum of \$834,933,100 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman:

Be it resolved that a sum not exceeding \$136,751,500 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 1992.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman:

Be it resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992, the sum of \$136,751,500 be granted out of the Saskatchewan Heritage Fund.

Motion agreed to.

The committee reported progress.

FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the resolutions be now read the first and second time.

Motion agreed to and the resolutions read a first and second time.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Pursuant to the time allocation resolution, I move:

That Bill No. 79, An Act for Granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public

Service for the Fiscal Year Ending on March 31, 1992, be now introduced and read the first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill read a first time.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Pursuant to the time allocation motion, I move the Bill be now read a second and third time.

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

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 61

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hepworth that **Bill No. 61 — An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just happened to come with a bit of preparation. Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Hold it.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I made a few comments the other day when we were discussing the Bill 61. I want to summarize those comments. I want to summarize those comments now. We have said to the government opposite that we think there are some very serious problems with this legislation.

First of all, we think that the level of taxes in this province is too high. The public, Mr. Speaker, are voting with their feet and with their wheels, I guess. The public in this province have said and are saying across this country, we're being taxed to death, and we aren't going to pay it. And, Mr. Speaker, they travel across international boundaries. They go shopping south of the border.

The members opposite must come to recognize that one of the penalties — or I suppose benefits, as one might see it — one of the aspects of free trade is that our tax system cannot be terribly different than the tax system of competing jurisdictions. And in the days when travel is as easy as it is, Montana, North Dakota, and Alberta are competing jurisdictions for the shopping dollar.

When we have the member from Regina South who thinks it worthwhile to maintain a membership in the Minot Golf Club, then we clearly have an era where we are not an island unto ourselves. The government and members opposite must realize that we cannot set a level of taxation which is wildly out of whack with neighbouring jurisdictions. At least we certainly can't with respect to consumption taxes. We have to recognize that the consumers will act in their best interests and so this government must take that into consideration. Moreover we've said and we've said time and time again, we don't think that this tax is necessary. And we certainly don't think it's a place to begin.

I doubt that the public would be as outraged with respect to the goods and services tax, Mr. Speaker, if it weren't for the inordinate — perhaps I should say obscene waste and mismanagement that has taken place with respect to their tax dollar. They see the government opposite treating their tax dollar as if it were air or water or some infinite resource.

They see members opposite doing polling all out of proportion to what is needed to run an efficient government. They see members opposite advertising all out of proportion to what is necessary to inform the Saskatchewan public about government programs. It's true, Mr. Speaker, that there is a place for government advertising. There is a place for informing the public about the programs we operate.

The Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources may find some modest program advertising changes and park schedules, changes in fees, changes in facilities worthwhile. Other ministers may on occasion want to inform the public about new programs in the department or perhaps about old programs which are not very well understood.

(1500)

But the level of advertising in this government is completely out of control. It is unconscionable to be closing down schools at the same time one advertises . . . one hires the like of Don Adams to do advertising. I made some comments yesterday about what I think to be the inappropriate nature of this person's image. But the cost is a long way beyond being inappropriate. It's an outrage. It is an outrage that schools in rural Saskatchewan are being closed at the same time that these sort of dollars are spent on advertising.

Of course the public are outraged. What do you expect? Of course the public resist paying new taxes. What does one expect? The public have said: we're not going to pay any more until you make better use of what you've got. And they're right. They are right.

The government opposite is no different than any other spendthrift, Mr. Speaker, who thinks that a little more income would be all that is needed to solve the problem. And we all know, Mr. Speaker, with respect to those spendthrifts, that a little more income wouldn't solve a thing because they'd blow that, too.

This government needs to get control of its spending. It's a fact, Mr. Speaker, that since this government took office, the spending has gone up. Let us begin first of all with inflation.

In the nine years since this government has taken office, inflation has gone up by 48 per cent, but revenue, Mr. Speaker, has gone up by 61 per cent. Their revenue has gone up faster than the rate of inflation. Their deficit, Mr. Speaker, did not occur . . . their deficit, Mr. Speaker, did not occur because of an agriculture recession; their deficit occurred not because inflation had gone up by 46 per cent or the revenue had gone up by 61 per cent. Their deficit occurs because their spending has gone up by 85 per cent — roughly twice the rate of inflation, Mr.

Speaker.

The spending in this government is out of control. And when the minister begins by these inordinate tax increases — the largest tax increase in the history of the province — he is beginning with the wrong end of the problem.

The public of Saskatchewan from one end of this province to the other have said: use the money we give you more efficiently, run an efficient and effective government, and then we want to talk about whether or not we need to cut programs or increase expenses. But we haven't yet, Mr. Speaker, reached the point where we cut programs or increase taxes. We're still well back of that.

We are still at a point where the government is using the government aircraft and not telling us when and how they're using it. We're still at a point when they're hiring Nancy McLean. And as the member from Regina Victoria said so effectively, spending tens of thousands of dollars to have Nancy McLean tell them how to blow dry their hair.

The public of Saskatchewan resent that cavalier treatment of their tax dollar. They say we're not going to pay it until you run a more efficient government, and we say that you're right. We say there's no place for this tax increase unless and until you get control of spending. So long as you waste money in the way you do, there is no place for increased taxes.

Not only does this government waste money, but it goes out of its way to avoid any kind of accountability. One would think that this Assembly was a ring for sumo wrestlers. They believe that this is a place where you avoid being tagged. And that's really the name of the game. The name of the game is not an honest discussion or even a vigorous debate. Members opposite believe that the name of the game is to avoid getting tagged and thus you avoid your opponent and you do whatever you have to.

I said, Mr. Speaker, that on an earlier proceeding before this House — but I may add, a related proceeding, the interim supply — I asked a question about the government's impact studies with respect to the goods and services tax, because we are concerned about the effect it's having on the retail sales business. We think it's very serious and we note similar comments from the CFIB (Canadian Federation of Independent Business), Mr. Botting, making comments that the cross-border trading is getting to be a very serious problem. We say, Mr. Speaker, that you should have done some studies and you should share them with us, and we should jointly determine whether or not this tax is one that we can live with because we don't think we can. We don't think we can.

What was the response to that request for an impact study? The minister didn't stand and say, we have one and I'll produce it as soon as it can be prepared. He did not stand and say we won't have one. He took almost an hour and talked about every other conceivable subject under the sun, but never mentioned an impact study.

We say that's essential. We say it is essential before you bring in taxes of this nature that you study their impact. You produce proper economic models which will tell us how it's going to affect us. We say that is an essential preliminary step. And it is becoming apparent that either you haven't done it or that the studies which were done do not support your case. There doesn't appear to be any other conclusion, Mr. Speaker, but that. But if you haven't studied it and if you don't have impact studies and you cannot justify your case, then you don't deserve to have the tax passed. It's no more complex than that.

It's obvious, Mr. Speaker, that this government is being driven by one fact and one fact only, and that's your election agenda. It's obvious that this government wants this, as they see it, sumo wrestling match over and done with and they want out.

We say, Mr. Speaker, that the function of this legislature is to call this government to account for its spending, to provide answers to reasonable and pertinent questions, and to let us, and through us the public of Saskatchewan, know what you're doing with their tax dollar. That is the age-old function of a parliament. But members opposite want to wish away, I guess, some centuries of parliamentary tradition. Members opposite simply refuse to give us any information.

We say, Mr. Speaker, there is far, far too much money being given to some very large business enterprises. We want to know, Mr. Speaker, and the public want to know, what exactly is the nature of our obligation to the Cargill Grain Company and the Saferco plant.

On the surface of it, Mr. Speaker, this government hasn't made a very convincing case for that particular expenditure of money. We say, Mr. Speaker, Cargill's gross revenues are larger than our gross revenues. Thanks to the fine management of this government, their credit rating is a great deal better. Why are we guaranteeing their debt? If their project makes sense, if it is viable, why are we guaranteeing their debt?

We are saying that this is not an intelligent expenditure of money. If indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is, if you can justify what you're doing, then give us the background data. You must have done some impact studies. Surely you must have done some impact studies on this.

The member from Weyburn seems, Mr. Speaker, very anxious to get into the debate.

The Speaker: — I'd ask the hon. member not to refer to the presence of the member from Weyburn.

Mr. Shillington: — I beg your indulgence, Mr. Speaker. The member from Weyburn was doing his level best to make his presence felt in this Assembly and . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order, order. There is perhaps from time to time . . . that does happen and perhaps even the member from Regina Centre sometimes does that. However that's not the issue. The issue is that we do not refer to the presence or absence of members. That's the issue.

Mr. Shillington: — The members opposite comment and I'll put it no higher than that. But that is being, that is being very, very kind and generous to members opposite. Members opposite comment, what would you do with the Saferco plant? Well I'll tell you one thing we wouldn't do is pick up the tab for a company the size, the wealth, and the strength of the Cargill Grain Company. We wouldn't pick up the entire tab, which is what you've done. We wouldn't give them half the plant — 51 per cent of the plant and none of the bill, which is what you've done . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Perhaps, without referring to the presence or absence of any member in the House, perhaps it might be said that some people need to take advantage of their golf membership at the Minot golf club and relax a bit and not get so uptight about subjects which apparently seem to bother some members opposite.

The Speaker: — Order. Could I ask the hon. member from Weyburn to not interfere with the member from Regina Centre.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Klein: — The member opposite has referred to a personal part of my life very often and I wonder if he'd be prepared to take a question.

The Speaker: — Would the hon. member take a question?

An Hon. Member: — Sure, I'll take a question.

The Speaker: — The member said he'd take a question.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, what my personal life and my golf-share membership in Minot — because everybody that knows me and my wife, knows that it's my wife that's the golfer, very competitive golfer, enjoys playing many courses, plays in Minot and I'm very proud of that fact — what has that got to do with the Bill that we're talking about?

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, it has everything to do with the Bill we're talking about. The business community in southern Saskatchewan is reeling from the effect of cross-border shopping and there are those who are making the argument that that is being irresponsible because you take advantage of Canadian social programs, but you go south and you don't pay the cost of those programs.

We say, Mr. Minister, that you ought to set an example. You should not sit . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — You want to know what your membership has to do? It is a very bad example, Mr. Minister. You represent a riding in Regina where a lot of business people live, and you ought to set an example by spending your money here in this city so that those consumer dollars can go to pay for Saskatchewan programs. That's what's wrong with your membership.

The answer to your next question is: no, I won't take your second question because you're wasting the time of this Assembly. Everybody in this city, Mr. Minister, knows what's wrong with your membership in the Minot golf club. It is a very bad example to set. That's what's wrong with your membership in the Minot golf club. So . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order, order, order. Order, order. I think that in the interests of good debate, that the viewing audience wants to watch with interest, that issue perhaps should be set aside and carry on.

(1515)

Mr. Shillington: — The member asked a question. I dutifully undertook to answer it. I was doing no more than that.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite, we think we need to know a great deal more than we are being given. Ah, apparently the subject has been closed. We want to know, Mr. Minister, and members opposite, we want to know what our commitment is along these lines.

It's a fact, Mr. Speaker, that we have never been given the agreement for the Weyerhaeuser pulp mill. We never have got that agreement . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, you haven't. No, you haven't. By mistake you gave us part of the agreement. You gave it to us by mistake. You've never given us all the details.

Mr. Speaker, it happened I think six years ago. We have never got the complete agreement for Gainers plant in North Battleford.

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. The hon. member has risen on a point of order. What is your point of order?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, in second reading of this Bill I was quite precise on what this Bill was accomplishing, broadening the E&H (education and health) tax base in the province. Not once did I refer to Weyerhaeuser or those kinds of things, Mr. Speaker. My remarks were very specific. Probably took no more than five or six minutes, Mr. Speaker. And I would ask that you rule that the debate he's engaging in is out of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I have listened to the hon. member's point of order. The issue he raises is a dispute between members; therefore, the point of order is not well taken.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — The issue is certainly relevant. This government has spent inordinate sums and committed inordinate sums on industrial development. The last people . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well one of the members opposite says it's good. It's not good in the eyes of everyone.

The last time Salomon Brothers in New York . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now I'm going to interrupt,

and I'm warning hon. members that I'm going to continue to interrupt. It's not possible to carry on debate with constant interruptions. It's not a good forum.

Quite frankly, we're getting a very, very poor reputation for doing things like that. I'm going to ask hon. members to keep that in mind, because you are elected representatives.

Mr. Shillington: — The amount spent on industrial development isn't good in the eyes of everyone. The last time Salomon Brothers in New York lowered the rating of this government, the reason they gave was because of the sums that had been committed to industrial development. This government has spent enormous sums of money and has very little to show for it — very, very little to show for it.

If you had . . . if members opposite had given a fraction of the same amount of resources to indigenous Saskatchewan businesses, you'd be a lot further ahead. Instead you have neglected Saskatchewan businesses and you have instead provided obscene sums for outsiders. And that's one of the reasons why this government thinks it needs this size of a tax increase.

We say you don't need it. We say what you need to do is to repriorize your spending. You need to stop the give-aways. Even businesses themselves are calling upon you to stop the give-aways. We say stop the give-aways. Begin to spend in accordance with what the public of Saskatchewan are asking for you. They're asking you to cut the frills, provide the basic essential services.

They do not want inordinate sums spent on Cargill or Weyerhaeuser or other groups. What they want, Mr. Speaker, is they want their school in their own community. They do not want their children — small children of six years of age — bused down the road some tens of miles. They want a school in their community.

And members on this side of the Assembly say they're entitled to that. They're entitled to have their children educated within a reasonable proximity to their own homes. And in parts of Saskatchewan, that's not happening. And that is a very warped set of priorities.

When we have some \$20 million, by our estimates, for advertising through a clown who speaks in his shoe but we have nothing to keep schools open in riding of members opposite, we've got a government that's gone very, very badly off the rails.

Saskatchewan people are saying, we want hospitals in our community. We recognize the role that Regina and Saskatoon play, but there is a need for a health centre in our community. We want our young treated here, but more important I think, we want our aged treated and looked after in our own community.

They don't particularly want the Workers' Compensation Board moved to their community. What they want is their hospitals and their schools maintained. Current spending and priorities of the government has the schools and hospitals closing and new offices going up. That's insane. And everybody in this province recognizes it's insane.

And we say, Mr. Minister, if this government were to repriorize its spending, cut the nonsense — and it is nonsense — cut the nonsense, get back to the basics, you've got enough money to do the job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — The revenue which this government has is adequate to provide a reasonable level of basic services for this province. It is not adequate when you fritter it away on every hare-brained scheme which crosses your path. And this government's track record is that you have missed very few hare-brained schemes you've heard about. If it wasn't GigaText, translating English to French — something a first-year computer student could have told you is an impossibility with current technology — if it wasn't GigaText, it was something else. It was the shopping carts or an endless number of other hare-brained schemes which this government's got involved on, and it's frittered away large sums of money.

And one of the problems with the tax increases is that we just simply don't have the bill yet for all the damages. We don't entirely know what the extent of the damages are. We think this government has large sums . . . has a huge overhang of debt in the Crown corporations which is going to fall. Just as surely as that snow is going to avalanche, so this debt is going to fall.

We think, in addition to other things, it is premature now to be talking about increased taxes until we know the full extent of the damages, and we certainly don't. We don't know . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member opposite is lending me assistance again.

I say to members opposite if you think there's nothing untoward, why won't you call Crown Corporations so that we can ask these problems, so that we can satisfy ourselves as to whether or not there is a huge overhang? We think there's an enormous overhang of debt and we think your attempt to deal with these tax Bills are premature.

The first thing we need is an accounting of your stewardship. And I'll tell you members opposite, if you think you're going to be ignored after the election when this accounting comes, you are sadly mistaken. You will be called upon to account for your stewardship. And we believe . . . Members opposite have all of a sudden developed a real interest in the . . .

An Hon. Member: — They're starting to practise for opposition.

Mr. Shillington: — No, I think it's not that they're trying to practise for opposition. I think they recognize that the members on this side of the House have some real financial acumen. They know what they're talking about. And they're trying to get a little assistance in dealing with the financial problems which so beset them.

So I say to members opposite, this tax Bill is premature. You need to begin by giving us a full accounting and then you need to cut the waste and mismanagement. People need to see their government operating in a reasonably

efficient fashion. They're not going to tolerate tax increases until they do.

And then and only when that process is complete, then we need to engage in a true dialogue with the public of Saskatchewan, not the charade which the minister has engaged in over the last few years. We need to engage in a true dialogue with the public of Saskatchewan as to where we should go from there.

Do we cut programs? Do we increase spending?

An Hon. Member: — It all starts with changing the government. There's a good first step.

Mr. Shillington: — I have come to the conclusion that that is probably true, that this government is not going to be able to get a handle on its spending pattern. It is not going to be able to get a handle on the problem at all or quantify it. And nothing, Mr. Speaker, but a new broom is going to clean up the mess. Nothing but a new broom is going to clean up the mess.

I think many of the Saskatchewan public have come to the same conclusion. Some, a great many, have their doubts about members opposite. Some, to be honest, have some doubts about members on this side of the House. But I think the Saskatchewan public have come to the conclusion over the last few months, and perhaps the last couple of years, that nothing but a new broom is going to begin to clean up the mess. And begin to clean up the mess, we must start. We must begin to do that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — When members opposite refuse to answer questions, when they used closure on an interim supply Bill none the less, when they treat this Assembly as if it were, as I said, a sumo wrestling match, which the whole name of the game is to avoid the tag, not to answer the question — when they are so derelict in their duties, then all members opposite are doing is reinforcing that by now I think deep-seated public view that nothing but a new broom is going to clean up the mess, and that the current occupants of office are simply incapable of doing it.

Some believe that members on this side of the House are inherently better than members on that side of the House. Some believe members of that side of the House are inherently better. But I think a very large number have come to the conclusion that the mess must be cleaned up and that cannot be done by the people who created the mess.

I think therein lies the key to the next election. And I think that's why members opposite may whistle past the graveyard and there may be some show of bravado by members opposite. I, for my part, am going to be pleasantly surprised if an election is called within the next month. I am going to be very pleasantly surprised. Because I think members opposite are going to look at the polls and they are going to say, oh my heavens, what have we done? What have we done wrong? Members opposite are going to look at the polls and they're going to flee for a further few weeks.

I can only say with respect to members opposite, you can run, but you can't run much longer. Never mind hiding; you can't run much longer. The difference between an election in the immediate future and an election at the very end of their mandate is now only a few weeks. The difference is now only a few weeks.

An Hon. Member: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The hon. member has a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I find the hon. member's comments relative to elections straying far away from the debate in principle on Bill 61, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I listened to the hon. member's point of order and the hon. member has indeed spoken on this issue at some length. I believe he has to directly relate it to the motion itself. However, I think you will agree with me that he has spoken at some length on that issue.

Mr. Shillington: — I am in fact concluding my remarks, Mr. Speaker. I don't expect to go on very much longer.

I simply want to make the point to the members opposite that you've got a real big problem. We say you don't need the money and you need to clean up the waste and mismanagement. The public say, we aren't paying the tax. And you say, boloney; we're going to put the tax through anyway and we're going to use closure and we're going to ram it through.

I say to members opposite, members opposite have a real big problem. And you'd better start to deal with it, because if you don't, you're going to deal with it in the midst of an election. You will not hear the end of this subject — you will not hear the end of this subject — until after the election unless you begin to deal with your problem.

With that, Mr. Speaker, it must be evident that I will be voting against this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1530)

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to take part in this debate on Bill 61, one of the largest tax increases in the history of our province. And after nine years of financial mismanagement, Saskatchewan just simply can't afford, Mr. Speaker, another four years of the high taxation that we're seeing in this province today. The Conservative government has failed to provide fair taxation to control the deficit, to control waste and mismanagement, to improve the economic base of small towns or to provide sufficient job opportunities for our young people.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, that what I have just indicated here, you are seeing what has come about because of the high taxation. The mismanagement of the province has just created a terrible situation in this province where we face a debt of approximately \$5 billion. And I will just touch on what that really means to this province and to

the young people who are leaving in droves to find opportunities in other parts of this country because of the high taxes that we have in our province today.

What has contributed to this, Mr. Speaker, is the Conservative government has given too many favours to big corporations, and I will touch on that and how that has created this situation . . . we are now debating Bill 61 in the House.

The new provincial GST (goods and services tax) is the result of a Conservative government's wasteful spending and mismanagement and I want to touch on that also, Mr. Speaker. The government has no right to impose this new tax without letting the people vote on an election in this province. And I want to touch on that too, Mr. Speaker, because here we are debating today Bill 61, this large increase in taxes and a government that's in the fifth year. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the members opposite in all fairness, that their mandate has run out. They have no mandate to bring this type of a tax in here for debate today.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I think in all fairness to the constituencies that are not represented here — some of the constituencies that have not had a member and have not had a voice in this legislature for almost two years . . . and I think of the citizens up in Kindersley and other areas of this province. There's four constituencies that have no say as to this massive increase in taxes. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the members opposite, that the citizens in those constituencies have every right to be represented here when the decision is made to increase such a large tax in this province.

The new provincial GST will be a disaster for Saskatchewan economy, will reduce consumer spending, and will mean lost jobs and even more business bankruptcies. And I want to touch on that a little later on in my speech, Mr. Speaker, as to how this major tax is going to affect the citizens of Saskatchewan.

I think that one thing we have to take a look at, Mr. Speaker, is why are we in here debating this large increase in taxes and revenue that the government needs. And I think that most certainly the only conclusion that we can reach here is that it's the type of waste and mismanagement that has taken place in this province up to today under a Conservative government.

When you just stop and think, Mr. Speaker, that the citizens of this province are paying just interest alone on the debt that has been accumulated by the Conservative government of Saskatchewan — \$500 million a year — that's just on the interest of the loan and the debt that they have created. Five hundred million dollars a year.

And you know, if you put that in perspective and you go back to 1982 when the Conservative government took over from the NDP we had a surplus of \$139 million. And the Minister of Finance has indicated that and confirmed that that is true as he stood up in the House — \$139 million surplus in this province — and now we see a massive debt of over \$5 billion, and the citizens of this province picking up the tab for interest on that to the tune of well in excess of \$1 million dollars a day. If we had that

money to create jobs and economic stability in this province things would be a lot better. But this is just a terrible waste of money that we're using.

And I just want to quote what has been said by the Premier. And I'm quoting, Mr. Speaker, and this is what the Premier of Saskatchewan said in 1982, the present Premier that we have right now: deficits are just a deferred tax that must be paid by future generations.

And how true that is, Mr. Speaker, how true that is — the tremendous amount of interest that we're paying on the debt of this province — how true that is. It is a burden on every man, woman, and child in this province today. And it also is a burden on every man, woman, and child for generations to come. Young children who are not even born yet are going to suffer from this tremendous mismanagement that we have had by the Conservative government in Saskatchewan.

And you can just see, as I indicated, how this debt has grown and I think that's a good indication. In 1982, as I said, we had a surplus of 139 million — that's what the Conservative government took over with. Then they have worked that surplus into a massive debt in this province, and I just want to indicate how that debt has increased through the Conservative government's — and I will get onto that a little later, Mr. Speaker — what I consider, waste and mismanagement by the Conservative government opposite.

In 1983, that's one year after taking office . . . and I remind you that in 1982 they had a surplus of 139 million, so in their first year they ended up with a deficit of \$227,175,000. Then in 1984 they went to \$331 million in deficit. That's only . . . and they just keep working up: '85, 379 million; 1986, 578 million, and all the time the taxpayers of this province, Mr. Speaker, have been paying the interest on that debt — just wasted money, just wasted money.

Deficits, as the present Premier says, is just a deferred tax that must be paid by future generations. And I say to the Minister of Finance, that is what has been taking place. And that is why in Saskatchewan the situation is the way it is right today. That's why I say to the Minister of Finance that that's why the polls are showing the New Democrats at 57 per cent and the Conservatives at 19 per cent.

It's what I'm trying to explain to this government and that's not wishful thinking, and that is a fact. Just read *Hansard* tomorrow and you'll have it. But I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that is why the situation that we have in this province is as it is today.

Then in 1987, they finally reached the billion dollar mark, 1987: \$1,232 million debt — deficit — and then it continues to go on. And, you know, that was the year that the Minister of Finance was out by \$1.2 billion on his estimates, and I see the present Minister of Finance hasn't been out that much, but I suggest this year that it just may turn out to be as severe as it was in 1987, or '86. That was the election year.

Once again, the minister, he brings in a deficit this year of 365 million, and I suggest it's going to be a lot higher than

that. And I suggest that the interest rates that we are paying, as I indicated, is about \$500 million a year and that's what this new tax is in here and being debated for today, to pay off that debt.

And here's some of the statements that I want to indicate. The members opposite, they believe in increasing taxes.

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order, order. I wish to inform the Assembly that Her Honour is here for Royal Assent. When we reconvene and the debate continues, the member from Athabasca will continue.

ROYAL ASSENT

At 3:41 p.m. Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took her seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bill:

Bill No. 79 — An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Year ending on March 31, 1992

Her Honour retired from the Chamber at 3:43 p.m.

(1545)

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 61 (continued)

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I was indicating, I wanted to give you some quotes from some other Finance ministers who were talking about the deficit, and what it really meant to this province. And I say, as I was saying before, I don't really believe that the members opposite really realize just how much of an impact that the deficit has in this province and as a result, the tremendous tax that we are discussing here today — tax increase.

This is a minimized and manageable deficit; and that was in the budget speech of 1982 and that was by Bob Andrew. He considered that as minimized and a manageable deficit. But as we progress, I'll get onto some of the other statements.

Then the Premier, he indicated also in 1983, and he said and I quote the present Premier of the province: Saskatchewan has so much going for it that you can afford to mismanage it and still break even. Now that was a statement that was made by the present Premier. He said, and I quote: Saskatchewan has so much going for it that you can afford to mismanage it and still break even.

Well we can just see what the effects are of that terrible mismanagement, and what the effects are of it today. Because here we are, debating Bill 61, a Bill that will create the biggest tax grab in the history of this province. And that goes to show you how far he was out when he made that statement.

And here's another one I want to quote, Mr. Speaker, to indicate just how serious this is and how the

mismanagement has occurred with that government opposite: we believe that all governments must work in concert to reduce budget deficits. Failure to accomplish this will force harsh financial penalties on our children.

An Hon. Member: — Who said that?

Mr. Thompson: — That was said by Bob Andrew in 1984: harsh financial penalties on our children. Most certainly we see the effects of that today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, more so than we have ever seen in this province. As the debt grows and we pay more interest and we have to have more taxes, this is why we're in here debating this today. And this is why we say this is a tax that has to be stopped.

It is inevitable that mounting deficits will result in unwanted reductions in government services and tax increases; and that was said by Bob Andrew in his speech in 1984. Tax increases, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's what we hear today. That's what we're discussing in Bill 61, a massive tax increase.

Here's another quote by the present Attorney General of the province when he was the Finance minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker: This government is confident that a balanced budget can be achieved within the next five years. And he said that in 1986. And, Mr. Speaker, that most certainly indicates just how wrong they were and how they have mismanaged the finances of the province of Saskatchewan.

And I just want to make one other quote and then I will continue on into my speech: We all want a lower deficit. We want a lower deficit because deficits add to the provincial debt which in turn leads to higher interest costs. In 1991 interest on the public debt will be 493 million. And that's the statement by the present-day Minister of Finance.

And he adds to provincial debt, which it most certainly did, and it leads to higher interest costs, which it most certainly has, and now we see us in here debating today a Bill to increase the tax grab in this province.

I now want to turn to some other items, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as to how this debt has really grown in the nine years. I have indicated some of the reasons why it has, and I want to now turn to how it started off so that we got into this terrible mess that we are in the province — a terrible mess that I say to the hon. members on the Conservative side of the House has got them into a rut. And that's why we're not going to the polls, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the polls are telling them they're at 19 per cent and the New Democrats are at 57. That's why they're not calling the election.

I will touch a little more on that a little later in my speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I talk about some of the famous nominations that the Premier was talking about that were going to happen. And he indicated three years ago in this House about those interesting nominations that would be held that spring, especially in Saskatoon.

I will touch on that a little later, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I want to talk about how we got into this terrible mess that we are, why we're in here debating Bill 61, the largest tax

grab in this province. Well it started off, as I indicated, by mismanagement of our economy. They started off very fast. Early on in their mandate, they sold a drag-line in Estevan. They sold that drag-line and then leased it back from Manalta Coal up in Calgary for 30 years. Well anybody could have done that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And one of their friends, Manalta Coal, I believe . . . the former premier of Alberta is involved with Manalta Coal. And then they turned around, they turned around, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they sold the whole coal-mine, the whole coal-mine, and leased that back for another 30 years.

Now that's the type of management and business management and ingenuity that the Conservatives have on that side of the House. They always talked about being good business individuals, how they could run this province. Well we see now how they can run the province. And they can run it into the hole so bad that it could take generations for us to get back out of it.

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to call quorum.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. The member has called quorum. Would the sergeant secure the doors. Order. Order, order. Member for Regina Elphinstone, I ask you to be quiet when the Speaker is on his feet. I'd ask members to return to their seats and rise, and sit down when their name is called.

Deputy Speaker	Britton
Hodgins	Toth
Meiklejohn	Gleim
Petersen	Swan
Hopfner	Lingenfelter
Neudorf	Thompson

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The Assembly adjourned at 3:53 p.m.