

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the legislature, Her Excellency Mary Madzandza Kanya, High Commissioner of Swaziland, who is seated in the Speaker's gallery. And with her is Mr. Leo Kanya, spouse of the High Commissioner.

This is Her Excellency's first official visit to Saskatchewan, and while here she will be meeting with the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker, officials of the Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation, and officials on international development with the University of Regina.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of the legislature to please welcome the High Commissioner of Swaziland to Regina.

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

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise actually to introduce a school. I want to, however, join the Premier in welcoming the High Commissioner from Swaziland.

I am impressed by the fact that Swaziland, they're apparently appointing female high commissioners. In some ways you're further ahead than we are. My congratulations to your country as well as to you, madam.

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

**Mr. Shillington:** — I actually rise, Mr. Speaker, to introduce a school which I believe is seated immediately behind Her Excellency. It's the Monseigneur De Laval school.

There are 17 students who come with their teacher, Edna Chabot, and a chaperon, Miss Suzanne Abdulla. I'm not sure I've done that name justice. The handwriting is not quite . . . I gather by the amused looks on the children's faces, I haven't done that name justice. I will make my apologies and get the name right at 2:30 when I meet with the students for a discussion of today's proceedings.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to other members of the Assembly on behalf of my colleague, the member for Cumberland, a group of 17 Churchill High School students from La Ronge, Saskatchewan, who are visiting in your gallery today. Mr. Speaker, they're accompanied by their teacher, Miss Martina Cain, and the chaperons, Mr. and Mrs. McCartan.

And I might say, Mr. Speaker, that my wife had the opportunity some years ago to teach at Churchill High

School. And I look forward to meeting with the students at 2:30 for pictures and for refreshments. And we can discuss the activities going on in the legislature here today. And I'd ask all members to welcome these students who have taken a long ride down from La Ronge, and ask them all to welcome them here.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Costs of Decentralization

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the minister in charge of the decentralization program of the government. Mr. Speaker, today it becomes very apparent why the government is hiding its studies on decentralization and the cost/benefit analysis from the public.

In Saturday's paper — I'd like to quote, Mr. Speaker — in an article titled, "Highway dept. next to go," I quote:

According to an internal department study, the cost of the moves is estimated to be about \$50,000 per (person).

The total cost of relocating 250 jobs could top \$12 million, a far higher figure than that announced for similar decentralization moves.

Mr. Minister, I would like to ask you why is it that you are misleading the taxpayers of Saskatchewan and hiding the true cost of your political program to decentralize the civil service? Why are you doing that?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the appropriate response, and particularly from an academic point of view with respect to decentralization and Fair Share and costs, come from an academic himself like Dr. Leo Kristjanson who talks about decentralization and Fair Share as the sensible thing to do for smaller communities in the province.

And I refer to an interview that he had, Mr. Speaker, because we have had management consultants go through the costs. And they've said that the costs are in the neighbourhood of 8 to \$12,000 per employee, but it's an investment, Mr. Speaker, in the infrastructure and in the people and with the taxpayers in smaller communities, Mr. Speaker, from Humboldt to Canora to Yorkton.

Dr. Kristjanson goes on to say that:

There are so many urban institutions that are so centralized that people making the decisions with the best of intentions can't be sensitive to the needs of rural populations.

And I think that applies to both the private and the public sector (he says) whether it is Farm Credit Corporation or the university or a chemical

company.

Mr. Speaker, he encourages all of them to decentralize to rural Saskatchewan and indeed to rural Canada.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, new question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, you stand in your place and ignore the question of why you have this kind of overrun and what you estimate the cost of decentralization to be. You stand there and you say, take my word, trust me. Well I say to you, Mr. Premier, the people of this province are sick and tired of your promises and your lack of commitment to the people of the province.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Premier, isn't it true that you've underestimated the cost of decentralization by about 80 per cent and that the decentralization to date won't cost \$8 million but will cost in the area of \$42 million, and isn't this why you have refused to give us the cost analysis on what this is going to cost the taxpayers of the province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I think it's a fair comment to ask the opposition to join me in remembering that we've been doing this since 1984. We have moved the Crop Insurance Corporation to Melville and we have all of the experience that is consistent with the research that has been going on that says it's going to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of 8 to \$12,000 per position. We've moved the Water Corporation to Moose Jaw, and the research is very similar, Mr. Speaker. We've moved ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan) to Swift Current. We've been doing that since 1984, Mr. Speaker. And all those positions have been allocated.

The members could have stood in their place and said they're against it or the studies weren't right or any of this other stuff, but they didn't say that, Mr. Speaker, at the time. I'll say from our vantage point, our past experience shows that our research and our national consulting firm's research is absolutely accurate, and we will live by it. And if you look at the situations in Melville, Swift Current, Moose Jaw, Kindersley, Kamsack, Mr. Speaker, over the last five to six years you'll find that that information substantiates itself, Mr. Speaker. It's absolutely accurate.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, new question to the Premier. I notice in the *Estimates* for this year's budget under Sask Property Management Corporation, you've estimated that the total decentralization bill for this year will be \$2.2 million. Mr. Premier, that is laughable in the face of the reality that the move of the Highway department is going to cost far in excess of that. In fact you've promised that you would move 2,000 people — 2,000 government workers — out of Regina. Your own internal studies say \$50,000 per job. That's a \$100 million that you're going to spend on decentralization.

Why don't you come clean with the people of the province, Mr. Premier, and tell them that the reason you jammed through — using closure — the provincial goods and service tax has nothing to do with GRIP (gross revenue insurance plan) and NISA (net income stabilization account) and everything to do with this madness you have of decentralizing and moving 2,000 people out of Regina? Isn't that the truth?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Well, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's very, very clear that the NDP (New Democratic Party) opposition doesn't care about rural Saskatchewan, and they don't even care about farmers. They're back into their political agenda, Mr. Speaker, their political agenda.

It's about time, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I'm not sure who is stupid or who isn't or what the policy is, but I'm sure that that kind of unparliamentary language by the member from Saskatoon Nutana . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — People use more stronger words than that about him.

**The Speaker:** — Well, nevertheless, I think bandying around words like that in the legislature is unparliamentary and I ask hon. members to keep that in mind.

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, when you hear remarks like that in the legislature and you're in a democratic forum it says something about their own agenda, Mr. Speaker. We can talk about decentralization; we can talk about agriculture, and we can do it with respect, mutual respect. That's the way it should be.

When I was involved today with decentralization, I announced, Mr. Speaker, that this would take place over the next three years. And the hon. member, he lumps it all together and he says, how could this be the case? Why doesn't he get his figures straight?

I mean, they don't care about the facts, Mr. Speaker. They don't care. They're out in Humboldt, Mr. Speaker, and the NDP member from Humboldt says, oh we'll do exactly the same thing. Then when they come back in here they're against it, Mr. Speaker. When they're out in Canora they said, oh it's really just fine, but when they're back in here, Mr. Speaker, they say, oh no, they're against it.

I wish they'd come clean, Mr. Speaker — come clean with the people, tell them their plan, tell them their strategy, and say the same thing in the country as you do in the city.

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

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, this is yet another example of your waste and your mismanagement

because you're not able to justify what you're doing on a cost/benefit analysis.

You took a surplus in 1982 of \$139 million; you've turned it into a total debt of \$14 billion. And the Minister of Finance who sits on your right, Mr. Premier, prior to the last election underestimated his deficit by \$800 million at 217 per cent. And isn't it true that that's exactly the process you're using here today? You're being dishonest with the Saskatchewan people in order to try to get you by an election, Mr. Premier.

Show some honesty; show some integrity, and tell them the truth.

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Our estimates, Mr. Speaker, our estimates on this goes back from our past experience and is absolutely correct. Our estimates are a lot closer than that member from Regina North East who's the NDP minister of Finance, who is only 450 to \$500 million out on his estimate.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the NDP in Ontario, Mr. Speaker, the NDP in Ontario have so far out, they're \$10 billion in the first six months — 36 times our deficit, Mr. Speaker, the first six months of an NDP administration in Ontario. That's why they hide. That's why they won't come clean. In the country they're for something; in the city they're against it. In the country they say this; when they're some place they say something else, Mr. Speaker.

Those people. Those people. All they can think about is politics. They won't stick up for the farmer. They won't stick up for rural people. They won't stick up for jobs, Mr. Speaker. They just stick up for themselves.

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

#### Meeting of the Crown Corporations Committee

**Mr. Solomon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, we want to give you and your government an opportunity to be open and honest to the people of this province. Since the legislature was reconvened on April 11, I have written to your chairman of the Crown Corporations Committee, the member for Pelly, on four separate occasions, asking that he call regular meetings of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

In addition to that, Mr. Premier, I've spoken to him on two or three occasions verbally requesting a call the committee meet. Since this session began, the Public Accounts Committee has been meeting on a regular basis and I see no reason why the Crown Corporations Committee cannot do the same.

My question is this: will you today, Mr. Premier, instruct the member from Pelly to schedule meetings of the committee immediately so that we can get on with doing the public's business?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Speaker, as Government House Leader, I will certainly commit to the opposition that very soon, I will take this up with the member from Pelly. The member opposite all of a sudden wants to get down to work. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be very fair to say that this session has been anything but a normal and a working session in many, many ways. Members opposite have obstructed the general business of this Assembly. They have turned the normal proceedings into what is commonly referred to as a circus.

But, Mr. Speaker, in light of the opposition's new-found desire to actually do some work, I will indeed deal with the member who is the chairman of Crown Corporations, and indeed we will have some meetings.

**Mr. Solomon:** — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, everyone knows that you and your House Leader establish when the committee meets. The Public Accounts Committee has been meeting for the last 35 days, and you've failed to call the Crown Corporations Committee to meet.

What are you trying to hide from the people of this province? Why are you not calling this committee to meet immediately, after repeatedly being asked to do so?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite once again, I will give the member my commitment that very soon, within the next very few days, I will discuss the issue with the chairman of Crown Corporations; we will set forth a proposed agenda. And I would ask the member opposite to co-operate in that regard and remind the member opposite that with respect to the opposition, with all respect, you do not set the agenda; but the government will set the agenda on which day which committees will meet, and what Crown corporations will be called forth. And if you're willing to deal with it on that basis in a gentlemanly and business-like fashion, I can assure you that that committee will meet.

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

**Mr. Solomon:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, a new question to the House Leader. Mr. House Leader, you're absolutely right. You set the agenda. We've had unprecedented bankruptcies in this province. We've had thousands of people, 80,000 people leave this province. We've got \$14 billion in debt. That's your agenda, Mr. House Leader.

And my question to you is this: what are you trying to hide? Why haven't you called the Crown Corporations Committee to meet? What are you hiding? It's over half of the expenditures in this province. What are you hiding? Are you hiding the STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) scandal, Mr. Minister?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Speaker, I remind the member again that this session has been anything but a normal session. Members opposite only have a new-found

interest in working. Up until a very short while ago, Mr. Speaker, members of the NDP were much more interested in ringing bells, walking out when the day was half over, reading petitions, dealing with things in a less than satisfactory or business-like manner. And if indeed they are sincere about getting down to work, we will indeed, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Effects of Government Policies on Small Business

**Mr. Lyons:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Premier. And, Mr. Premier, I had the opportunity late last week of being in your constituency in the city of Estevan. And I noticed that Estevan looks like the economic disaster zone that the rest of Saskatchewan has been.

Today I pick up the paper, Mr. Premier, and I see that the owner of the Estevan Country Motor Lodge closed the doors of his business today, throwing 25 people out of work. Mr. Len Strobel, the owner of that business, says:

I'm just another victim of the Conservative governments . . .  
They've cost me my business and my livelihood.

Mr. Premier, I ask you: why have you followed an economic policy that not only kills small businesses and loses jobs in your own constituency, but kills small businesses and kills jobs throughout Saskatchewan? Mr. Premier, are you even going to run in your own constituency come the next election?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I was in my constituency on the weekend, Mr. Speaker. We had the Saskatchewan Mining Association had its annual awards for mine safety and there was several hundred people there, and it was very positive, Mr. Speaker.

And then we had the oilmen's golf tournament there at the same time, Mr. Speaker, and we had over 200 people in from across the province. They were involved in the oil patch in my constituency, Mr. Speaker. I went to a local hotel, I believe it was the Beefeater, Mr. Speaker, and you could hardly get in the door; it was packed with people.

And they were talking about economic activity and the plans and water projects. And, Mr. Speaker, what I hear more often than not is that when I mention the . . . or somebody mentions the name of the member from Regina Rosemont and they know how he really fought Rafferty and Alameda, that great project in south-eastern Saskatchewan, they are really upset, Mr. Speaker, because they know we need to save water. It's important that we have our own power, we create our own jobs.

And then, Mr. Speaker, when I mention that they are against projects no matter where we do them, whether it's a Safarco project or its paper mills or its operators, Mr. Speaker, the NDP are against them all. Every time we try to diversify, whether it's in Estevan or whether it's in Prince Albert or any place else, Mr. Speaker, and that

member's against every single one of them.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, new question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, you may be able to attract people to Estevan by providing them with free food or free liquor. The point is, while you're out playing golf and enjoying the sunshine, you have small-business operators in Estevan and throughout Saskatchewan who are closing their doors, and you have workers throughout this province who are losing their jobs.

My question to you, Mr. Premier, even though you put the Rafferty dam at the wrong end of the stream, won't you get something right, call a provincial election. call a provincial election so that the people of Saskatchewan can judge your own economic record in terms of building jobs and building this province. Won't you have the guts to do that?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — If you look at the wreck that Ontario is in today under the NDP, Mr. Speaker, and how the business community and the co-operatives and everybody else are taking on the NDP administration, there are now more people leaving Ontario than in the history of Ontario, Mr. Speaker.

As you know, there's more people living in Saskatchewan now under difficult times than there was under the NDP under good times, Mr. Speaker. We went right up to a million people. We're 30 or 40,000 people more now than when we took office in 1982. The Investment Dealers Association say that we'll lead the nation again in economic diversification and development, Mr. Speaker.

And the NDP said no, we're going to turn this into Ontario. We're going to run it just like they do in Ontario — huge deficits, duck all the questions that really matter, don't take a position on anything, Mr. Speaker, go into every corner of the province, be against this, be against that. Mr. Speaker, we've heard all that before; it's the same old rhetoric, Mr. Speaker. The people in Estevan or in the rest of the province will not be fooled, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Premier, now you can talk about deficits in Ontario, right? But it seems to me you don't talk about the deficit here in Saskatchewan, which is your record. Why do you want to talk about everything else under the sun or the moon? And I understand you can see the Rafferty dam from the moon now, even though there's no water in it. Why don't you talk about things that are real to real people in Saskatchewan?

Mr. Strobel, the owner of the hotel in your constituency that closed down, says he believes unfair taxation, cross-border consumption, which your members support, and free trade with the United States have combined to force him to close his doors.

Mr. Premier, you have supported each and every one of those economic initiatives. Can't you stand in the

legislature here today, say we want to put that record — your deficit, your support for the GST (goods and services tax), your support for free trade, and your support for cross-border shopping — put it on the line and call a provincial election. Never mind the BS, let's get on with it, okay . . .

**The Speaker:** — The hon. member in the course of his question has, in my opinion, made quite a clear, unparliamentary statement. I'd like to ask him to withdraw it.

**Mr. Lyons:** — I will withdraw it.

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I will apologize to the guests and to the members of the gallery and the students . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Order, order, order. I'd like to, with due respect, ask the hon. member to leave our guests out of the debate and ask him to continue.

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I made the point to the hon. member that all of the promises made by the NDP and all of the positions that they took finally came to pass in Ontario, and the whole country can watch them run a province. And it's an absolute shambles — \$10 billion deficit the first six months. And they have businesses leaving, businesses coming out here, businesses closing down, and it's all because of the NDP administration.

Mr. Speaker, all I'm pointing out to the hon. member is if he'd take a position on how we would build economic activity, diversify, how we'd build water projects or paper projects or various kinds of things like fertilizer, upgraders, new colleges of agriculture . . . We have an opportunity now to balance the budget, Mr. Speaker, have the largest tax break in the history of Saskatchewan, sales tax free in this province for co-ops, businesses, farmers. And the NDP now said no, they've got a better plan. They're going to raise income tax by 23 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, if the NDP would happen to get in power like they are in Ontario and raise income tax 23 per cent, Mr. Speaker, it would be disastrous for the people of Saskatchewan.

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

#### **Policy on Judicial Appointments for Former Politicians**

**Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Justice. Some years ago the Canadian Bar Association passed a resolution urging that Canada's governments not make appointments of people who hold political office until they've been retired for two years.

My question to the Minister of Justice is whether or not . . . And I say by way of background, that I believe I asked your predecessor in office this same question with respect to an earlier judicial appointment and was told that the government generally subscribes to it, but with some exceptions, I think was Mr. Andrew's comment.

The question to you, Mr. Minister, is does the

Government of Saskatchewan still subscribe to and support the Canadian Bar Association policy that people in political office should not be appointed directly to a judicial office?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — The hon. member may recollect that Canadian Bar did not ultimately make that recommendation.

Secondly, I would remind the hon. member that it is the desire of our government, and I gather the national government, to appoint the most qualified people to office. I hope that that continues, and I do believe, the hon. member, that appointing the most qualified people is the appropriate way to go.

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

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Minister, the . . . Wait till I have the minister's attention. Mr. Minister, the concern of the Canadian Bar Association — and I say to the minister that I have read at least a summary of the proceedings from that convention — the concern of the Canadian Bar Association was that when politicians appoint their own numbers to the bench, the public have no assurance that the most qualified people are appointed. And judicial posts are some of the most important in the land; they define our institutions and our laws.

If, Mr. Minister, governments appoint their own members directly to the bench, what assurance do the public have that the most qualified people are appointed to these offices which are of the utmost importance?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — I'm going to tell the hon. member, because he obviously doesn't know, that those being appointed to the Provincial Court go through a process called judicial council, the Saskatchewan judicial council, and they review the qualifications of those to be appointed.

On the federal level there is a national judicial council with judicial councils in each province. That process is also followed at the national level. Those judicial councils make ratings as to whether the individual, amongst other things, is qualified or not. And the appointment process is one, in my view, that assuming the individual complies and passes the judicial council, that that is a fair and traditional manner of vetting and clearing the individuals that leads, in my view, to a system whereby in Canada that I believe that generally the most qualified people are being appointed.

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

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

#### **SECOND READINGS**

#### **Bill No. 73 — An Act to amend The Oil and Gas Conservation Act**

**Hon. Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today and move second reading of The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 1991. This Bill amends various provisions of The Oil and Gas Conservation Act which was last amended in 1988, Mr. Speaker. The Oil and Gas Conservation Act establishes the basic framework which governs the exploration and development and production of the province's oil and gas resources.

The main elements of the Bill address the requirements for horizontal drilling, the establishment and operation of the Oil and Gas Conservation Board, the introduction of a mechanism to facilitate joint government/industry funding of the board and certain oil and gas services, activate activities provided by Saskatchewan Energy and Mines, and the licensing of wells.

Mr. Speaker, horizontal drilling is recognized as one of the most significant technological advancements in the petroleum industry in recent years. It has the potential to increase recovery rates and improve the economic attractiveness of developing many oil reservoirs in this province. This technology holds considerable promise for the industry and the province.

Since the drilling of the province's first horizontal well in late 1987, a further three wells were drilled in 1988, 13 in 1989, 77 in 1990, and 28 to date in 1991.

A dispute over a horizontal well drilled in south-east Saskatchewan last year led to a legal challenge of the province's authority to approve certain horizontal wells. The court ruled the province's authority to approve these wells was limited under current legislation and quashed the order approving the horizontal well in question. This has created considerable uncertainty for the industry, Mr. Speaker, and has resulted in several horizontal well projects and considerable industry investment being postponed.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that the provisions of this Bill, which provide the flexibility and authority needed to accommodate and encourage the expanded use of horizontal drilling technology in the province . . . It also provides greater flexibility to accommodate other new technology which may be associated with the implementation of EOR (enhanced oil recovery) projects.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill will also update and enhance the provisions in the Act dealing with the establishment and operation of the Oil and Gas Conservation Board. As noted in the budget speech this year, the province intends to re-establish the board to deal with problems and issues that can arise due to the size and complexity of the province's oil and gas industry.

The province has not had an active board since the mid-1970s. The board would respond to the issues or matters referred to it by the Minister of Energy and Mines. The board could hold hearings, investigation, and inquiries in addressing issues referred to it. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the board would be reported to the minister for a decision.

Mr. Speaker, the board could be used to review any

further issues relating to horizontal wells, adjudicating pooling, unitization, and other disputes, review appeals to the minister's order or approvals, review proposals for major enhanced oil recovery projects, review policies pertaining to pipeline prorating, production allowables, and waste disposal. And review any matter referred to it where the minister considers it advisable to have an arm's length review of that matter.

Mr. Speaker, during these difficult economic times, it is a challenge to maintain existing oil and gas related services in the department, let alone add new services such as the board. These kinds of services, however, are essential to the development of our oil and gas resources and the diversification of the provincial economy.

For that reason we are creating a mechanism to facilitate joint government/industry funding of the board and other oil and gas services provided by the department. The mechanism of this joint funding is the establishment of an oil and gas revolving fund.

Industry contributions to the fund will be made by way of an annual assessment on oil, gas, and service wells in the province. An average fee to be assessed under the new legislation for the 1991-92 fiscal year is approximately \$125 per well. This will generate nearly \$2.5 million in revenue for the special fund.

The mechanism for this joint funding is the establishment of an oil and gas revolving fund. Industry contributions to the fund will be made by way of an annual assessment on oil wells in the province.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill will also amend the provisions respecting the licensing of wells in the province. The current drilling licence will be amended to become a licence to drill, operate, and produce a well. A valid licence will be required for all phases in the life of a well. The licence can be used more effectively to ensure the responsible operation of wells.

A requirement for the prior approval of the transfer of a licence is also being added. This will ensure wells are being transferred to responsible operators. We must protect Saskatchewan taxpayers from the potential costs which can be associated with orphaned wells left by irresponsible operators.

A number of other housekeeping items are also included in this Bill, such as clarification regarding the overall authority and jurisdiction of the minister under the Act, limitations regarding the liability of the minister in the department for anything in good faith done under the Act, and changes to penalty provisions.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, I am confident the provisions of this Bill will greatly enhance the ability of the province to manage our valuable oil and gas resources. With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 73.

**Mr. Solomon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I rise to make some comments with respect to Bill 73, An Act to amend The Oil and Gas Conservation Act.

Mr. Speaker, I have been in communication with a number of representative organizations in the industry as well as a number of individual companies who operate in the oil and gas business in Saskatchewan over the past number of months. I just want to commence my remarks this afternoon by saying that the industry officials and the industry players and many of the employees in the business support the amendments that are put forward by the member opposite. The amendments, in many cases, will resolve some important questions that have been really . . . in essence, holding up large amounts of expenditures, capital expenditures that oil companies have wanted to make with respect to horizontal oil-well drilling.

The concern that I have and the New Democratic Party caucus has, Mr. Speaker, is the method by which this government has introduced this Bill. Last October, last fall of 1990, the courts decided that the two companies involved with the dispute with respect to horizontal oil-well drilling — Gulf Oil and Kennebar — they made a decision that the regulations which existed in Saskatchewan could not resolve that dispute easily. Therefore, a number of capital expenditures that were planned by oil companies in Saskatchewan and those that operate in the province were put on hold. They've been on hold, in essence, since last October.

However, the problem we've got with the introduction of the Bill at this time is very simply that this government has made a commitment to the industry last fall to introduce the Bill last fall, to resolve the disputes last fall with respect to horizontal oil-well drilling. It is now June 10, 1991 — fully seven, eight months since they made that commitment to the industry with respect to resolving disputes.

I've met with a number of the associations last fall and they told me this: that the government had made the commitment to introduce these amendments in the fall session of the legislature. As we have seen, Mr. Speaker, this government has failed to call a session last fall. They failed to call a quick spring session or an early spring session. They ragged the puck. They delayed. They refused to bring to the people of this province any kind of commitments with respect to accountability and responsibility of government.

Finally, on April 11, 1991, they reconvened the legislature — April 11, Mr. Speaker — after they told, not just the oil and gas industry, but many other organizations and associations in every social and economic field in this province they would call a fall session to be held accountable, to put forward amendments to certain Bills and Acts which many of these organizations and associations had been promised they would do.

Well we see now, Mr. Speaker, June 10, 1991, the government finally introducing second reading of this Bill. They have refused to come forward on a matter which the industry considers very important with respect to horizontal oil-well drilling and on a matter which the opposition considers very important. But they refuse to bring this Bill to the Assembly for consideration in a timely fashion.

This is another example, Mr. Speaker, of the arrogance of this government, of the insensitivity of this government in all matters which concern the people of this province. And this amendment, this Bill No. 73, in essence would have freed up, if it was passed last fall as was promised by the government to the industry, a significant amount of money — 10 to \$20 million, depending on who you speak with, but perhaps even more. And what that means is that 10 or \$20 million of oil and gas sector capital commitments have not been spent in this province because of the hold-up by this government.

And, Mr. Speaker, we find as an opposition this move on behalf of the government to come June 10 as unacceptable. It is consistent with the way they've dealt with people in the past, however, Mr. Speaker. They always make a commitment and they never ever keep the commitment. They have failed on every occasion to keep commitments they've made to the people of this province, whether it be taxpayers or senior citizens or young families or oil and gas companies.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is really, really a situation that we find has to be resolved fairly quickly. And with that, I want to make a few comments with specific relation to the Bill and will allow it to proceed into committee.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that on more than one occasion during the time when the opposition were reading petitions opposing the unfair and unnecessary harmonization of the provincial sales tax in this Assembly, we offered to allow any other business to come before the House which was of a sensitive or an important nature — as a matter of fact, anything but Bill 61, which dealt with the tax. We made this offer in writing to the House Leader of the government on more than one occasion. The House Leader of the government has refused to bring forward the legislation, including Bill 73 and other matters, until today, June 10, 1991.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have made the commitment in writing to consider this Bill. We have also in the . . . I believe it was on May 30, I rose in this House and I read the following motion into the books, Mr. Speaker. I moved that:

. . . with leave I would like to move a motion that we interrupt the presenting of petitions this afternoon to consider second reading of Bill No. 73, An Act to amend The Oil and Gas Conservation Act.

That's page 3552 of *Hansard*, May 30, 1991.

And with leave, the only way we could have considered Bill 73 at that time, Mr. Speaker, was with leave of the Assembly. And the Minister of Energy and Mines said no. He said we couldn't consider the Bill. He's telling the industry, on the one hand, this is a very important Bill; it's very sensitive, that his government supports it, and they will with haste and with expedience have the Bill brought to this Assembly for consideration by the opposition and by the government to make into law.

So we've asked them; yet he in every case, every opportunity we've put forward for him to bring this Bill

forward for consideration, has refused that consideration. And there's no excuse for that other than, Mr. Speaker, that this is another consistent move on behalf of the Conservative government opposite.

(1445)

They're incompetent; they have no concern. They have no sensitivity to what is happening in this province, unless it's to fill their own pockets or to fill the pockets of their friends. And, Mr. Speaker, we believe that that has to cease and desist. We've made that premise clear in the last number of thousands of hours of debates in this Assembly since 1982.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 73 does two things, as the minister says. It sets up an Oil and Gas Conservation Board — or restructures it because it did exist in the province in the '70s — and it sets up mechanisms to settle disputes. And it will resolve the horizontal well-drilling backlog that has been in existence since last October.

Mr. Speaker, I have communicated with all of the associations that are involved in the industry in Saskatchewan — the Canadian Petroleum Association, which represents the larger oil companies that have oil production in Saskatchewan; I've raised the matter with the Independent Petroleum Association of Canada, who represent medium-sized oil companies that operate in Canada, in particular in Saskatchewan; as well as the Small Energy Producers Association of Canada; PSAC (Petroleum Services Association of Canada), and the Federation of Saskatchewan Surface Rights Association which represents the landholders.

And, Mr. Speaker, in every case the associations do support this Bill. Some of them have reservations with respect to some of the details, and I'd like to raise those during the committee stage, and I'll do that with the minister and his officials. And I want to say that, almost unanimously, they felt that this would only work if it was done without political patronage and political appointments that this government is so well known for in every other economic initiative in the province.

And this is quite interesting, Mr. Speaker, because as you know the oil industry is an industry which runs their business very professionally. It's not surprising they do that, but it's surprising that they would say this to an opposition, knowing that the opposition is not in government. But perhaps some day we will be, and I would predict, Mr. Speaker, that our sensitivity will be far more responsive than theirs.

Mr. Speaker, the associations had some specific concerns which I'll raise in committee; therefore I would allow the Bill to proceed to committee stage at this point, and I'll raise those questions at that time. Thank you very much.

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

**Bill No. 83 — An Act to amend The Medical Profession Act, 1981**

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of An Act to amend The Medical Profession Act.

The amendment to The Medical Profession Act deals with the regulation of locum tenens physicians, that is physicians who provide temporary services in the province. Typically these locum physicians provide services in rural areas by filling in for local physicians who may want to take some time off to further their education. They also provide services to communities who may have lost their local physician and are in the process of recruiting a replacement.

The existing Act limits locum physicians to a four-month permit, which does not meet the needs of local communities or physicians. Often it takes more than four months for a local community to find a permanent replacement. In the interim, another locum physician must be found to provide temporary services. This frequently results in gaps where the community has no physician, and sporadic care due to the turnover of locum physicians.

Our government and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan recognize the difficulty rural communities face in this area as well as the need to effectively regulate locum physicians. This amendment will allow the college to specify the qualifications, length of locum permits and conditions of permits in the by-laws pursuant to the Act. An important feature of the new locum physician by-law will be longer terms for permits, up to two years in many cases.

Another important feature will be a requirement for the locum physician to practice in a specific community for the length of the permit. This will also allow locum physicians sufficient time to meet the college's requirements for full licensure, should these physicians want to remain practising in Saskatchewan. And that's really the goal that many of the rural communities have.

The amendment is fully supported by the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Saskatchewan Medical Association, by rural communities, by rural hospital administrators, rural physicians and locum physicians. The efforts of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan to ensure competent, stable, medical services in rural areas are supported.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act respecting an amendment to The Medical Profession Act.

**Ms. Simard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill will provide some help and some relief to rural hospitals and rural Saskatchewan with respect to the provision of medical services in the country. And I must say that this is long overdue, Mr. Speaker.

This government has simply had no plan and no strategy to deal with the very serious problem that we face in rural Saskatchewan, and that is getting medical doctors to practise in rural Saskatchewan. It is a problem. It's been a long-standing problem, and this government has had absolutely no will to take measures to correct the problem.

in the last nine years.

In fact the Murray Commission report that talks about centralizing the administration of hospitals and health care in regional centres, and putting the ownership of hospitals in the regional, the centre board as well as making funding a central issue with respect to small rural hospitals, would very respectfully, Mr. Speaker, detract from getting doctors to many of our small hospitals.

And this is a policy of course that the Minister of Finance has indicated that he approves, that the Minister of Health has said he supports. With respect to the Murray Commission report, just the other day I heard him saying that the Murray Commission report was going to be their plan, which is centralization of service in regional centres. And there are a number of things that this government has done in the last nine years that detracts from the provision of services to rural Saskatchewan — the cutting back with respect to public health in northern Saskatchewan where we find it very difficult to obtain medical help, doctors' help, and community health workers. We've seen government cut-backs with respect to community health workers for example, Mr. Speaker.

And so with respect to even the provision of health services in northern Saskatchewan where we need more doctors, what we have seen are policies that have detracted and have actually hindered the provision of services in northern Saskatchewan and rural Saskatchewan.

We have noticed hospital bed closures throughout the province just this spring as a result of government cut-backs, hospital bed closures, and nursing lay-offs. The government came out with a policy that trustees on hospital boards would not be paid the honorarium, and I'm not sure where that's at now.

But all of these policies by this government are seriously hindering the provision of health care services in rural Saskatchewan and in northern Saskatchewan.

The policies with respect to home care, we've seen a moratorium on home care for a number of years now by this government. Last year however, the associate deputy minister of Health indicated that maybe it was time to start expanding home care. Well where have they been since 1982? That was the policy prior to 1982 and has been put on hold for a number of years.

So I wish to say, Mr. Speaker, that it's very clear to the people of rural Saskatchewan and to the people living in urban Saskatchewan that this government's commitment to rural health care services has simply not existed. It has been shaky and it has simply not existed.

Now I believe that the Bill that's coming forward is a step in the right direction, but it's coming too late, Mr. Speaker. And the government has failed to put forward any sort of detailed strategy with respect to getting doctors out to rural Saskatchewan; notwithstanding, it has been an issue for years. And there are studies on the matter with proposals and suggestions. And this government has failed to implement those proposals and those suggestions. And I say has been negligent, Mr. Speaker,

with respect to dealing with the health care problems of people living in rural Saskatchewan.

And once again I want to reiterate my very serious concern about the government's proposal to centralize the administration of hospitals and nursing homes in large regional centres. I want to express my concern about that. And the people of rural Saskatchewan, right across this province, are expressing concern about that, because they believe it takes away community control and it detracts from their local hospital which will make it even more difficult to get doctors and medical professionals to work in rural Saskatchewan.

And so I urge the government with respect to its health care policy to maintain the base that we have in rural Saskatchewan for providing services at a local community level and to enhance and expand on that, not to cut back on public health nurses, not to fire nurses, not to lay off dental therapists, not to close hospital beds. Because that's what they've done this spring with respect to their cut-backs to hospitals, Mr. Speaker, their funding cuts — I think it's a \$40 million shortfall in the hospital and institutional sector — a \$40 million shortfall.

Well what happens when these administrators are faced with that shortfall? They have no alternative but to close hospital beds and lay off nurses. And that has an effect on the medical profession, the doctors practising in rural Saskatchewan. And then this government wonders why it's having trouble getting health care professionals out to rural Saskatchewan, and attempts to come forward with a piece of legislation, speaking as though it's doing some wonderful thing.

Well it is a step in the right direction, but it's inconsistent. Its other policies and health care with respect to bed closures and lay-offs are inconsistent with the overall goal, or which should be the overall goal, in health care in Saskatchewan. And that's taking health care services back to the people, not taking people to health care services, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Simard:** — And this is the policy of the New Democratic government and I would like to know what the Minister of Health's plan is with respect to getting doctors to rural Saskatchewan. What is his detailed plan? Is he familiar with the rural medical practice study? What has he done to implement that? So we will have many questions which we will be asking the minister when this comes up in Committee of the Whole.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are a couple more people that I wish to speak to with respect to this Bill before I close off second reading, and so I would like to adjourn this debate at this time.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 82 — An Act to Implement Certain Provisions  
Respecting Pension Benefits and Annuity Plans for  
Teachers Agreed to in the 1990-91 Provincial Teachers'  
Collective Agreement**

**Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to give second reading to the Bill to amend the teachers' collective agreement. And I want to begin by outlining for all members, the purpose and substance of this Bill.

Last October, Saskatchewan teachers ratified a new provincial collective agreement for the years 1990 and '91. The most significant feature of the collective agreement is the provision that the existing annuity pension plan for teachers is to be eliminated.

The annuity plan is to be replaced on July 1 this year by a new pension plan for which teachers themselves, through the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, will have full legal and administrative responsibility. This is in accordance with the proposal put forward by the federation during negotiations. The new plan will cover current members of the annuity plan and all teachers who begin teaching in the province in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I should explain that there are currently two pension plans for teachers in the province. There's the old formula plan in place for teachers who began teaching in Saskatchewan prior to July 1, 1980. Then there's the annuity plan for all teachers who began teaching since that date.

All terms and conditions of both these pension plans are currently included in one piece of legislation, The Teachers' Superannuation Act. A number of legislative steps were required to bring about the changes to teachers' pensions specified in the provisions of the collective agreement. This is what the Bill before us is designed to accomplish.

(1500)

First, Mr. Speaker, there are provisions to authorize the transfer of funds associated with the annuity plan to the Teachers' Federation for use in the new pension plan. In addition, all teachers and retired teachers who belong to the annuity plan are transferred to the new STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) pension plan.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the Bill includes amendments to The Teachers' Federation Act. At present, STF has no authority to be involved in the operation of a pension plan. The amendments give the federation the required authority and define various terms and conditions of the new pension plan in accordance with the provisions of the collective agreement.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, this Bill provides for the amendment of The Teachers Superannuation Act. The amendments specify that from July 1, 1991 onward, the Act will apply only to the old formula plan and its members. This plan will continue to be in place under the administration of the Teachers' Superannuation Commission.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial collective agreement includes several other new provisions related to the formula plan and also the group life insurance plan. These new provisions require legislative amendments and are therefore included in this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill is being developed in full consultation with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, and the Teachers' Superannuation Commission. All parties are satisfied that the Bill accurately incorporates those provisions of the collective agreement which require legislative authority.

As I indicated earlier, Mr. Speaker, the change from the annuity pension plan to the new STF pension plan is scheduled to occur on July 1 this year. However, in order for the change to be legally possible, the necessary legislation must be in place.

I am therefore pleased to move, Mr. Speaker, that Bill No. 82, An Act to Implement Certain Provisions Respecting Pension Benefits and Annuity Plans for Teachers Agreed to in the 1990-91 Provincial Teachers' Collective Agreement, be now read a second time.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, teachers in this province have been waiting since October for this legislation, and I am happy to say that the members of the opposition have been able to consult teachers in the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and that we are fully in agreement with the legislation that is being presented here today.

This is one of the rare occasions in the legislature, Mr. Speaker, where both government and opposition can jointly endorse a piece of legislation that will be of some benefit to teachers in this province. And we recognize that teachers have been lobbying and negotiating for this kind of legislation through their collective agreement for some time.

So I'm happy to say, Mr. Speaker, that we have no difficulty whatsoever with this legislation. This legislation simply will provide the legislative authority for the collective agreement for the 1990-91 year, negotiated between the Government of Saskatchewan, the School Trustees Association, and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, to be put into effect. And I would not wish to adjourn debate, Mr. Speaker. I think that we can now go to Committee of the Whole.

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

#### **Bill No. 84 — An Act respecting the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents**

**Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure as well to move second reading of a Bill respecting the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents.

I first want to explain the background of this Bill and its major provisions. The League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents, commonly known as LEADS, is an organization of educational administrators employed in our school system. These individuals all have teaching certificates and teaching backgrounds, but because they work in

administrative positions they belong to LEADS rather than to the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. LEADS has operated under its own statute since 1984. However, under its existing legislation, the league has lacked the ability to function in the full role of a professional and regulatory body.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, the league currently has no control over the criteria for membership or the registration of members. And it has only limited ability to enforce high standards of professional competence and conduct. The new Act represents a thorough revision and updating of the existing statute. It incorporates the provisions now being included in all our professional legislation, most notably a detailed discipline procedure designed to meet today's requirements for due process and fairness to all parties.

The key provisions of the new legislation are as follows. The league will now have the authority to establish qualifications and procedures for membership. At present any person hired as an educational administrator by a board of education is automatically entitled to become a league member.

Qualifications will be specified in law for all categories of educational administrators employed by school divisions. At present there are no minimum qualifications except for directors of education.

The legislation will define offences and penalties for non-members who accept or retain positions for which membership in LEADS is required by law. The current Act does not enable the league to enforce these legal requirements effectively. As part of its disciplinary powers, the league will be authorized to recommend to the Minister of Education that the teaching certificate of a LEADS member be suspended or cancelled.

A grandfathering clause is included for individuals who are currently members of LEADS but who would not meet the new criteria for membership. The Lieutenant Governor in Council will appoint a public representative to the league executive. This person will also serve on the discipline committee. The discipline committee will also include one member nominated by the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association.

Policy by-laws made by the league will not take effect until they have been approved by the Minister of Education and published in the *Saskatchewan Gazette*. This provision is consistent with the requirements included in many professional statutes over the past several years.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation has been developed in close consultation with the league. The LEADS executive has reviewed and approved this final version of the Bill. The Saskatchewan School Trustees Association has also indicated its support for the principles incorporated in the Bill.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill represents a major step forward in the development of LEADS as a professional and regulatory organization. It will help to ensure that only well-qualified individuals work as educational

administrators in our school system. It will also protect the interests of parents, pupils, teachers, and our school system as a whole by ensuring high standards of professional conduct among educational administrators.

Mr. Speaker, I'm therefore pleased to move that Bill No. 84, An Act respecting the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents, be now read a second time.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm pleased to indicate to the Assembly that the opposition will be supporting the amendments to the Act.

And I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that I've had the opportunity to meet with representatives of LEADS to discuss fully with them the Act that has received the endorsement of the provincial government. We believe that there is nothing in this Act that other professional groups don't now have in terms of powers and authority. And LEADS is simply coming into its own in terms of other professional groups that have their own legislation and have their own ability to discipline their own members, Mr. Speaker.

I should point out to the minister, in Committee of the Whole I will be wanting his assurances that the principle of natural justice will apply when members of LEADS are being disciplined by the LEADS executive or the governing body, Mr. Speaker.

But once again we are ready to proceed with this legislation and we could move into Committee of the Whole right now, if the minister would like to do that. We could get this Bill well on its way. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we are prepared to pass this legislation today.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and, by leave of the Assembly, referred to a Committee of the Whole later this day.

**Bill No. 60 — An Act respecting Certain Payments to the Meewasin Valley Authority, the Wakamow Valley Authority and the Wascana Centre Authority (No. 2)**

**Hon. Mr. Wolfe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Urban Parks Financial Arrangements Act, 1991. This Bill will establish the level of funding from the participating parties for the Wascana Centre Authority, Meewasin Valley Authority, and Wakamow Valley Authority, for the 1991-92 year.

In the context of the current fiscal environment, the province's statutory contribution to urban parks funding will be maintained at the same level as last year, Mr. Speaker. While it might be desirable to announce increases, this is just not possible at this time. These payments to the urban parks are statutory in nature, and the level of funding defined by this Bill applies to all their participating parties. Other participating parties may of course choose to contribute more to the Authorities.

The urban parks are important features of our major cities, Mr. Speaker. While they have faced budget challenges in the past, the essential activities and the role of each has

continued with the ongoing support of the provincial government.

Other types of valuable assistance, financial or in kind, from the provincial government departments and agencies have been made available in the past to the urban parks to reinforce the funding.

Our commitment to Saskatchewan's urban parks remains. I therefore move second reading of this Bill to amend The Meewasin Valley Authority Act, The Wakamow Valley Authority Act, and The Wascana Centre Act, and trust other members will join with the government in contributing to the support of these organizations.

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would say right at the outset that I will not join the minister. We will not join the minister in supporting this Bill. We oppose this Bill very, very strongly.

This Bill . . . or I might say another year, another freezing of the funds for these three urban parks. These funds have now been frozen since 1986-87. The government has decided to not make any more money available for these urban parks. I won't speak for the park in Saskatoon or the one in Moose Jaw, and my colleagues will be doing so. I do want to make some remarks about Wascana Centre and what this government's policy has meant for the Wascana Centre Authority.

Mr. Speaker, Wascana Park in Regina is not just a Regina park but it's a park that's there for the whole of Saskatchewan to enjoy. This is a park that has won awards across the country and across North America because of the facility that it is and the benefits that it is able to provide for all of the people of Regina and of Saskatchewan. And although the government has cut its funding, has frozen funding to the park, the park is still green, is still well groomed, still well cared for in many ways. And that's apparent by a cursory inspection.

But if you begin to look more closely at the park you can begin to see the beginnings of a crumbling decay which needs to be arrested and turned around. If this park is to continue to serve as a model for urban parks throughout North America, if this park is to continue to be something that all people of Saskatchewan can point to with justifiable pride, you cannot allow this thing to crumble.

If you begin to look closely at the roads and at the sidewalks in the Wascana Centre, you'll see that decay and deterioration setting in. One doesn't need to go much further than a hundred yards from this building today, Mr. Speaker, to recognize that. To see on the east side here, the Lakeshore Drive right by the lake is a pot-holed, rutted roadway which has no place in a park of this repute.

(1515)

The money just doesn't seem to be there to fix that. We've brought this to the government's attention I don't know how many years now, but the money just doesn't seem to be there to fix that. And you can't fix that unless the funds are there. So you cannot continue to freeze funds and hope the park can be maintained.

More importantly, the Wascana Centre hasn't been able to keep pace with developments around it. We have seen a remarkable increase in the number of tour buses visiting the Legislative Building and visiting the grounds. Yet the government refuses to make the money available so that there can be some proper parking space for these tour buses as opposed to parking space for vehicles. You know, the changes just aren't being made.

And this is the government, on the one hand that's spending I don't know how many dollars on Get Smart, to advise people to come up here. And we're getting all kinds of tour buses coming to this building because they want to see this wonderful building which belongs to all of the people of Saskatchewan, yet the government and Wascana Centre doesn't seem to have the money to provide the proper facilities for those vehicles.

We've seen a tremendous increase in the number of joggers and bicyclers making use of the park, yet the government refuses to make the money available to Wascana Centre so that the proper facilities can be put in place to facilitate these people. There are no bicycle paths which are being developed in the park. The joggers seem to be finding their own park across the green grass and beating their own path across the grass. The government refuses to recognize that there's a need to upgrade facilities to accommodate these people. It just isn't taking place.

Lately we've seen the development, the expansion, of the Wascana Rehab Hospital within the confines of the park. I have seen myself, Mr. Speaker, on recent occasion, we've seen people pushing other people in wheelchairs down pot-holed roads in the Wascana Centre because the facilities aren't available to have these people wheeled so that they can see and enjoy the park. The facilities just haven't been available. And the facilities haven't been available because the government has not made the money available to Wascana Park.

And we say on this side of the House, this starving of the funding to the Wascana Centre must end and it must end soon if we are to have a park that not only accommodates the needs of the people in Saskatchewan, but also is something that can continue to be pointed to with pride by the people of Saskatchewan as a foremost urban park in Saskatchewan.

This is a great park, Mr. Speaker; it's a wonderful park. As I indicated earlier — a park that has won awards because of the kind of facility that it is and what it has to offer to the people of Regina and Saskatchewan. And the government, I fear, is taking the wrong approach by taking an institution such as this — one of the few in Saskatchewan, one of the few things that we can point to and say, this is world-class, this is something that we are recognized for throughout the whole world, something that we can point to with great pride — and the government is taking the approach that it can starve it for funds.

And that is not something that we can support. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, on the basis of the Wascana Centre alone, we will oppose this Bill and oppose it

strongly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me. I listened very carefully to the minister's remarks. The minister's remarks were designed to leave an impression with the public. The impression would be, if you listened to the minister's remarks and didn't know the history of the three urban parks and their funding since 1982, the impression the public would gather that this government in its wisdom and support for these parks is maintaining the funding at a certain level, when in fact this government, since 1982, has made its constant objective to restrict the funding of these parks to a lower level than it was prior to 1982. The minister, in his remarks, attempts to deceive the people of Saskatchewan about what the true stand of this government is.

I want to take an opportunity to comment on some of the inconsistencies of this government with regard to the urban parks, Mr. Speaker. There's been an inconsistent stand with regard to the urban parks in the bureaucratic treatment of those parks since this government came to office. Consistency is only evident, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the bottom line, which is reduced funding. There they've been consistent with all the parks, and the message is the same year after year. These three large urban parks, Wascana Centre in Regina, Meewasin Valley in Saskatoon, and Wakamow Valley in Moose Jaw, are admired and appreciated by Saskatchewan people, not to mention people from outside of the province of Saskatchewan that visit these parks as well.

All three of these parks came about as a result of co-operative and sensitive leadership by a provincial New Democratic government and three different municipal governments, in Regina, Saskatoon, and Moose Jaw.

Former premier Allan Blakeney, under the Tommy Douglas government, led off with this innovative, bold experiment in Regina in Wascana Centre when the Authority was created. After that project began to mature, it was again time for a New Democratic government to move ahead with step number two.

Under the Blakeney government, the present member for Riversdale, Saskatoon constituency, the Leader of the Opposition now, put together another partnership in Saskatoon, among the province, the city, and the university, later to be called the Meewasin Valley Authority. The Wakamow Valley Authority followed soon after in Moose Jaw. Since that time this government, the present government, has demonstrated time and time again that it views the three urban parks as unwanted stepchildren — unwanted stepchildren.

Let me illustrate, Mr. Speaker. At the very first legislative opportunity, this PC (Progressive Conservative) government in 1982, reduced the matching statutory funding to the Authorities. For my part I have reported in the past that the Meewasin funding formula was reduced from 5 mills to 4 mills in 1982 and has remained at that lower level ever since that time.

I've stated, Mr. Speaker, that this government treats the three Authorities as unwanted stepchildren. Mr. Speaker, go with me back to 1987, only recent history. In 1987 the minister from Regina South piloted Bill No. 82 and 83 through the legislature to continue reduced funding to Wascana Centre, Wakamow Valley. At the same time the minister from Saskatoon piloted Bill 84 through the legislature, which accomplished the same end — in other words, reduced funding — to Meewasin Valley Authority. Then in 1988, the same two ministers piloted Bill 22 and 23 and 36 through the legislature to accomplish the same end — again reduced funding to these valuable public Authorities.

In 1989 a different minister, Colin Maxwell, the MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly) from Turtleford, piloted three Bills — 57, 58, and 59 — dealing with the three Authorities through the legislature, again to maintain reduced rates for another year.

In 1990 a different minister, the member from Canora, managed to bring in one Bill, Bill No. 14, dealing with reduced funding for all three Authorities. This year, 1991, this government has again changed ministers, and with Bill 60 seeks to maintain the reduced level of funding to all three Authorities.

Also, Mr. Speaker, keep in mind at the same time the minister who brought in Bill 60 is not the minister for any of the Authorities, since each of the Authorities has a different minister who reports separately for each of them.

At the same time it's interesting to note that the minister reporting for Meewasin Valley Authority soon after 1982 was Mr. Paul Schoenhals. This is really a side-note, Mr. Minister, and I'm sure you'll be interested in this. In 1982 it was Mr. Paul Schoenhals. Mr. Paul Schoenhals was defeated. Thereafter Mr. Rick Folk reported for Meewasin Valley. Mr. Folk was defeated. Now my MLA, the minister for Mayfair, reports for Meewasin Valley. Soon, I suspect, a new minister will be reporting for Meewasin Valley, and I think the public awaits that with anticipation, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, to state that statutory funding has been frozen at a reduced rate since the government came to power is not altogether accurate. If the declining value of the dollar is taken into consideration by dealing in constant dollars, then each Authority has suffered an even greater loss of funds than is apparent on the surface.

You see, Mr. Speaker, they, the government, have reduced funding every year. They have not kept up with inflation. They have constantly juggled ministers who handle the legislation with regard to these three Authorities. They have often shifted ministers who report for the Authorities. Mr. Speaker, it's time this government treats the three Authorities as wanted stepchildren, if that's the way they must view it.

I dare say, Mr. Speaker, if this government had saved all the money they spent on fancy cabinet shuffles and creating and discarding departments of government, they could have funded all three Authorities at the higher level, which our government originally set the funding at, for the total nine years that they've been in power. That,

Mr. Speaker, demonstrates a colossal amount of waste and mismanagement by this PC government.

It takes hundreds of thousands of dollars to discard one department and create another one — money for new stationery, new listings, new advertisements, new signage, etc., all costly, Mr. Speaker. At the same time it would be necessary to scrap unused stationery, outdated signage, shift staff and records location, and many other costs that are hidden on the brief, surface examination of the treatment of these Authorities by this government.

Mr. Speaker, these Authorities perform a valuable function to the people of Saskatchewan. They provide a valuable service to the tourist industry in Saskatchewan. They deserve the undiminished support of the government for their financing. I think if the government was to examine the creation of valuable jobs in all three of these cities that are involved in these Authorities, one of the less expensive ways of creating jobs would be to fund the Authorities up to their original level. Then the municipal authorities would also fund them up to that same level, which would be responsible for creating and sustaining more jobs in these three centres.

So I think the government has missed the opportunity — and I say by design, Mr. Speaker — has missed the opportunity to support these valuable public, urban parks. And for that reason I cannot vote to support the continued restriction of funding to these three Authorities. I do not approve of that, and therefore, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support that.

(1530)

**Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased, I guess would be the word, to enter into debate, but not very pleased with the recommendation of the government in Bill 60 before us now.

Let me say first of all in outline why I say that, Mr. Speaker. It's because of a record of history behind the government's handling of the funding for the three municipal parks. And I want to direct my comments most specifically to Wakamow as they relate to the Wakamow Valley Authority in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me say that I find the ministerial handling of the funding for Wakamow Valley Authority to be absolutely appalling. In 1988 the Bill came to this House, as my colleague the member for Westmount has just said, came to this House piloted by the Minister of Urban Affairs. And we were told at that time that he was bringing this Bill to this House because this had to do with municipal funding and these were municipal parks, he said.

Well then in 1989 it came to this House, I was very pleased to see — and I entered my comments on the record at that time — being piloted by the minister of Parks, the Hon. Colin Maxwell, who has now seen fit to go on to other duties.

And I complimented the government on its decision at that time to transfer this authority for the funding for

Wakamow Valley Authority to Parks, because perhaps at long last it was going to indicate that the funding for Wakamow was going to assume some kind of priority for the provincial government, for the provincial PC government. And I think the minister of Parks at that time, Colin Maxwell, was very pleased to have as one of his responsibilities, responsibility for Wakamow Valley and the other Authorities.

Well then along came 1990, the former member of Urban Affairs was out of the picture, Colin Maxwell was out of the picture by that time, and the new Minister for Parks was in his place and introduced the legislation for the funding of Wakamow.

And I said again at that time how pleased I was to see that at long last the PC government had decided for two years in a row to make this an item which came under the authority of the minister responsible for Parks. Maybe it indicated that at least they believed that as a park it had a place to play in the province of Saskatchewan. But how disappointed I was that the funding had not changed. The funding formula was still the same tired, old formula.

We were also told last year that the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority had now become not the minister of Urban Affairs, not the minister responsible for Parks, but the Minister for Energy and Mines.

Well here we are, 1991, and here we are again, Mr. Speaker. And I simply have to ask — I think inspired by that old Abbott and Costello routine, Mr. Speaker — who's on first? Here we are again. Now we're back. Now we're back again to the minister for Urban Affairs; I think he calls himself community affairs . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Community Services, he said.

Well we can stand in our place and debate what he's the minister for, but I note very, very specifically, Mr. Speaker, that it's not the minister of Parks.

Here we are back to Urban Affairs again with the minister, we're told, still the Minister for Energy and Mines, still the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority. And as we debate in this Assembly the funding for Wakamow Valley Authority, the minister responsible, we're told, the Minister of Energy and Mines, is not even in his place in this Assembly. That's not because he's not here; he was earlier this day. And I find that reprehensible.

I think we should be hearing, when we're in second reading on this Bill, we should be hearing from the minister responsible for the Authority. And I will await debate, because I assume we're going to conclude second reading debate in this Assembly today.

Now it's not our intention to hold up deliberation of the Bill, but I will wait to see if the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority funding will stand in his place and defend the Bill. And I suspect that we may not see that.

And so who's on first? It seems to me that there is absolutely nobody on that side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, who cares to hold, in any kind of priority, consideration for the funding of these parks and

specifically for Wakamow Valley Authority.

Well let me just outline my anger, Mr. Speaker, by tracing history, specifically to do with Wakamow Valley Authority. 1991, Wakamow Valley Authority this year is celebrating its 10th anniversary — its 10th anniversary. Wakamow Valley Authority was established in 1981. And at that time the government of the day, the New Democrat government of the day, had committed for funding from the province for the operation of Wakamow Valley Authority the equivalent of 2 mills — 2 mills of funding.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker, it was made abundantly clear to absolutely everybody who was involved at that time that it was only 2 mills when it was starting because Wakamow Valley was just in its start-up stage. And obviously in its early stages there would be some capital costs, but as time went by, Mr. Speaker, those costs of operating the park would continue to increase.

And very, very clearly, Mr. Speaker, I remind this House that the commitment was made by the government of the day that the funding for Wakamow Valley Authority would start at the equivalent of 2 mills of funding in 1981 and then would gradually increase over time to a point where it was up to 5 mills, the equivalent of 5 mills of funding from the province, putting it on par, approximately, with the funding from the province for Meewasin and for Wascana Park.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what's happened? What's happened? The government changed in 1982, and in 1983 the minister of the day responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority funding came into this Assembly. Did he say it's now time to increase the funding from 2 mills to a higher amount because Wakamow Valley Authority is up and running and has greater ongoing maintenance costs to keep the park going? Mr. Speaker, he did not. Not only did he not say that it was going to increase, what he did say was it's going to decrease, if you can believe it or not.

In 1983 the minister responsible said it was going to decrease to the equivalent of 1.6 mills, a funding from the 2 mills that it had been at.

I mean, let's just stop and think about this for a moment. We've got a brand-new urban park that is being developed and as each step of development that takes place, the maintenance has to apply to it in order to keep it going. I mean, it just blows your mind to think that some responsible government — and I use the word "responsible" in quotation marks — would come along and say, well now that you got up and running you're going to cut the funding.

Well not only that, Mr. Speaker, in 1984, in 1985, in 1986, in 1987, in 1988, and 1989 and 1990, and here we are in 1991, and what has the minister just stood in his place to say? He's just stood in his place to say — let's translate this into reality — he stood in his place to say that for the eighth consecutive year, that the PC government is going to restrict provincial funding to the Wakamow Valley Authority to 1.6 mills.

Well who is on first? Who's on first? Who in the world is in

charge over there? Does anybody care, I wonder? It doesn't seem to matter whether we've got the minister of Urban Affairs, whether we got the Minister for Parks, the Minister for Energy and Mines, and the minister now for community whatever, it doesn't matter who's in charge over there. The message is the same — sorry, folks, we're going to have to cut the funding from the 1982 level once again this year. That's what they're saying. That's the reality.

Well very, very clearly, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that funding for the urban parks and specifically funding for Wakamow Valley Authority is low, low, low on the totem pole of priorities for the PC government.

Well, Mr. Speaker, is this because we've not brought this little issue to the attention of the ministers opposite? Clearly not. Every year since I've been in this Assembly — since 1986 — either the member from Moose Jaw South, soon to be the member for Wakamow, I mean in many ways is that . . . it was a pleasant time for the member from Moose Jaw South to know that come the next election he will become the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow. What an attractive name. Wakamow Valley Authority will be in his . . . is in his constituency now and it will be in his constituency after the next election. And in many ways it's with pride that he can come into this Assembly following the next election and be referred to as the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Well each year since the future member for Moose Jaw Wakamow, current member for Moose Jaw South, and myself will come into this Assembly, one or the other, and on many occasions both of us, have stood in our place in this Assembly and asked the minister responsible, whoever that might be — if they could get that figured out — what in the world is going on? Is this under review? Is there any hope for change?

And each year they say, oh, well gee, we've got tough times. Yes, yes, we know that the NDP government was funding to the equivalent of 2 mills and that was just start-up time, but now that it's up and running, we can't afford, we can't afford to carry through that original commitment made to the people of Moose Jaw, they say.

And it's recognized in this House by both sides that the Moose Jaw Wakamow Valley Authority has done a fine job of fund-raising, private fund-raising, both corporate and individuals — many individuals, in fact hundreds of individuals in the city of Moose Jaw who have personally made significant financial commitments to the operation of Wakamow Valley. And we've recognized this. But the government opposite has tended to say — and so that's an excuse for not funding them — because they've done such a fine job of raising money from local citizens, they don't need funding from the province.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I remind the minister opposite that people in Moose Jaw are in Saskatchewan too. And Moose Jaw people have the same right to expect the same support for their Wakamow Valley Authority as for the other urban parks in this province. And I'm getting a little sick and tired of hearing the lame-duck excuses from whoever it is that claims to be responsible this year on the other side. When is this going to end?

Last year in this Assembly, putting the question to the minister of Parks at that time, who was responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority, asking him on June 6 in *Hansard*, I quote from page 1851 of *Hansard* of June 6 last year in Committee of the Whole. The minister at that time said that the funding formula was under review — still under review. What did he say? Let me quote. He said, and I quote:

The options identified for discussion during those November meetings were presented to a meeting of the urban park executive directors in January — January 23, 1990 to be specific.

January 23, 1990. That's over a year and a half ago.

And as well, an executive summary of the review paper as well as the feedback of the urban park executive directors was presented to a meeting of the three relevant ministers who look after the specific authorities.

I assume that includes the Minister for Energy and Mines.

I go on and I quote:

And we work quite closely within that framework, or within that information, and were not able of course to complete the review at this time, in time at least for the submission of any sort of a change in time for (the) budget.

And then he went on, and I'll quote just one more paragraph; Mr. Speaker, I don't wish to be lengthy. The minister said, and I quote:

We are still in a process of reviewing those options with the individual ministers.

I remind the House this was said on June 6, 1990; today is June 10. This was said a year ago in this Assembly.

We are still in a process of reviewing those options with the individual ministers. There's still not a definite resolution as to how it will be resolved, but to assure the member that it is still very much a part of my concern and that we are working towards a resolution of this review progress with the hopes of completing it just as soon as we possibly can.

Well the minister stood in this House a year ago — a year and four days ago to be precise — and said the funding is under review and they're taking up it with the ministers, the three ministers responsible, including the Minister for Energy and Mines, the member from Thunder Creek.

Well then he goes on to say on page 1852 of the same day, Mr. Speaker, that the study is ongoing. And again I quote from the minister of Parks at that time who said:

The study — I wanted to emphasize the study is still not complete. We still have not resolved the details at all of this review process.

And he goes on later to say:

And if I could assure the member that we have a target date in mind and it's this fall (it's this fall, he said, the fall of 1990), if that would suffice . . .

He goes on, I quote again:

. . . if that would suffice (he goes on to quote again) if that would suffice, I would certainly like it to because when you deal with so many different interest groups, it's so hard to predict just how things are going to work out in your negotiations.

Now this was, Mr. Speaker, I remind the House, when I had been asking the minister the same line of questions the year before that, in 1989, he said they were going to do a review of the funding formula.

So we come back to this House a year and four days ago and the minister says it's still under review and we've got to make sure that there's opportunity for interest groups to have their input. But the Minister for Energy and Mines, he's on top of this. But he says, and I quote: "And if I could assure the member that we have a target date in mind and it's this fall" . . .

And it's this fall, fall of 1990. That's when the minister last year expected the review to be complete, fall of last year, of 1990.

(1545)

Well, Mr. Speaker, then what happened? Here we come back to this Assembly again, having raised the question of equitable funding for Wakamow Valley Authority in this Assembly, equitable for Wakamow as compared to Meewasin and Wascana. What did the minister say last year?

He said much the same, Mr. Speaker, as the minister for Parks had said the year before when asked about the matter of equitable funding for Wakamow Valley Authority.

And let me refer, Mr. Speaker, to first of all my question, to put it into context, and I quote again from June 6 of *Hansard*, page 1853, the conclusion of my question, and then I'll quote the minister's response. My question was:

I have no difficulty whatsoever, Mr. Minister, going on record as being fully in support of funding for 2 mills, 1991-92, and then increasing the funding level after that point with an objective of arriving in the equity position for funding from the province of Saskatchewan, putting Wakamow in an equity position with Meewasin, Chinook, and Wascana, taking into consideration that some of those have other funding inputs from other sources as well.

Mr. Minister, can I ask then whether that approach to funding is something that you would find objectionable or that you would see as being worthy of your support, and I guess through you, to the Minister of Energy and Mines. Although I do hope, as I said before, that the authority will come

back to you. Do you see that as being worthy of support as a long-term plan for the funding of Wakamow Valley Authority?

End of question. The minister stood on his feet in this Assembly a year ago, a year and four days ago, and what did he say? He said:

I think I understand what the member is saying, and equitable treatment of the parks is something, I think that we can both agree on (he said).

That we can both agree on. I go on to quote:

I think that's only fair, if I can use that word once more. And certainly I intend to take the member's comments under advice.

So what's happened? What's happened? Zippo — that's what's happened, Mr. Speaker. Nothing. Nothing. For the eighth straight year, nothing has happened. It doesn't matter who's on first over there. They all get the same results when it comes to funding for Wakamow Valley Authority — nothing.

They inherit a park, the funding responsibilities for an urban park. In 1982, their first opportunity to trot in this Assembly and state their priorities for funding is to cut it, to cut it by 20 per cent. And then for eight straight years bouncing around year after year with a different minister every time, for eight straight years to hold it there.

Well, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the constituents of Moose Jaw North, the constituents I represent in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I say I am appalled at the lack of responsibility being exhibited by the government in funding for Wakamow Valley Authority. We can only assume . . . and I wish somebody over there, I wish the minister responsible for the park would stand in his place today and tell us just what happened.

The minister for community whatever, when he introduced this Bill, made no reference to the funding formula review, no reference whatsoever. I'm not even sure that he knows that we talked about in this Assembly the last two years. He made no reference whatsoever, not a single word.

The minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority doesn't even stand in his place. So who's on first? It looks like nobody's on first over there.

**An Hon. Member:** — He's already hit a home run.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Yes, the minister says he's already hit a home run. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd say it'd be more accurate to say he's long lost in deep right field and he's looking for a place in the dug-out.

So we simply have to ask. And there will be some pressing questions. I asked the minister responsible for community whatever, when we come back to Committee of the Whole, to request that the minister responsible for Wakamow Valley Authority at least have the decency to be in this Assembly when we're considering the Bill and to be here to answer questions. Because it would seem to

me that somebody has to be prepared to answer questions. The minister for Parks is no longer responsible.

We've got a new minister again, and so . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well there goes . . . Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you would ask the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster to withdraw his remark that he shouts across from the floor. Mr. Speaker, would you ask him to withdraw that remark. Did you hear that, Mr. Speaker? Would you ask him to withdraw that remark, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Has the member got a point of order?

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. As I'm speaking in my place, the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster shouts across, there are the women-beaters. And I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you would ask him to withdraw that remark and apologize to the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I was paying attention to you on your feet and I didn't hear it, but I don't . . . Order. I ask members on both sides, I ask members on both sides of the House to watch their unparliamentary language that I hear going across the floor from time to time.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I simply conclude my remarks by serving notice to the minister for community whatever that when we deal with his Bill in Committee of the Whole, we will have some very specific questions to ask as to what happened on this funding formula review that took over a year, well over a year, and which we were assured in this House one year and four days ago that would be completed by the fall of 1990; and which somehow has led to him coming back to this House in this budget presentation then, Mr. Speaker, and saying that the funding — there's no more money. The funding is still the same as it's been. It's being held again for the eighth straight year.

And I would ask that as well, that when he comes to this Assembly to defend the funding, that he would also bring — the minister for Energy and Mines — the minister responsible for the Wakamow Valley Authority into the Assembly with him so that he can be asked to defend the funding decision of this government.

I'm getting sick and tired of ministers saying: I'm not in charge, I'm not in charge; nobody seems to be in charge. Would they please bring in the ministers, whoever they are, who are responsible for these three urban funding . . . the funding for these three urban parks. Would they bring them all, if that's what it takes, into this Assembly so that the opposition can ask some questions and get some straightforward answers to those questions.

So I take my seat in this second reading debate, Mr. Speaker, saying very, very clearly that I strongly support the work of the Wakamow Valley Authority, of the board and the staff of the Wakamow Valley Authority. I strongly want to express my appreciation on the record for the volunteer work and for the financial contributions, the donations that have been made by Moose Jaw citizens

and corporations.

But I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I very clearly — because I support the Wakamow Valley Authority and the fine work that it does — I will very clearly be voting against Bill 60 because I think it is reprehensible that for the eighth straight year the funding is being limited to the amount that was reduced from the actual funding that was received in 1982.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to add just a few remarks to this debate, because as the member from Moose Jaw North pointed out eloquently only moments ago, I have a very particular interest in the Wakamow Valley, Mr. Speaker.

In fact at the outset of my remarks, I'd almost want to admit to the House some conflict of interest, given that the Wakamow Valley Authority falls in its entirety within the constituency of Moose Jaw South, and because I and my family and so many of my neighbours and friends in Moose Jaw spend a great deal of time in the Wakamow Valley Authority enjoying its facilities.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is an important debate to the constituency I represent, to the community I represent, and to myself as an individual member. And I want to put a few remarks on the record.

Mr. Speaker, I have a certain sense of *déjà vu* as we approach this debate yet one more time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Each and every year since I've had the privilege of serving in this House, we have engaged in a very similar debate as the debate we are now engaged in, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Each and every year since I've had the privilege of serving here, the government opposite has come into this House, one more time frozen the funding to the Wakamow Valley Authority in spite of all of the protests from the community that I represent — along with the member from Moose Jaw North — in spite of the many presentations made by the board of the Wakamow Valley Authority and members of the Authority, in spite of commitments made by ministers in this House. Year after year, the government returns in the legislative session to freeze the funding to the Wakamow Valley Authority and also to Meewasin and to Wascana, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And so there's a certain sense of *déjà vu*. We have seen this Bill before and many of the arguments are not new arguments, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What changes each year, as my colleague from Moose Jaw North has just pointed out, all that seems to change is the minister who brings the bad news into the House. That's all that seems to change. The news is the same; all that changes is the messenger.

And this year we have the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg bringing the news even though he is not the minister responsible for any one of the urban valley authorities, and not the minister for Parks, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He's minister for some new branch of government that no one seems to be able to understand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my colleague from Moose Jaw North was reminding yourself and members of the House that a year ago in this House . . . and I sat here in my place

and heard those commitments being made by the then minister of Parks, referred to today by the member from Moose Jaw North. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was not the first occasion on which commitments had been made by ministers regarding both the lack of funding to the Wakamow Valley Authority and to the inequity which affects Wakamow particularly — the inequity of the funds, Wakamow at a much lower rate than the other urban authorities here in the province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will be interested to know that on June 8, 1988, the then minister responsible said right here in the House, admitted there is an inequitable situation to the formula. The minister responsible at that time admitted right here in the House that there is an inequity. Here we are these many months and years later and there is no change in the inequity, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we can go to 1989. And at that time the member from Melfort . . . why he was speaking to second reading on the Wakamow and the urban park authority funding is beyond me, but anyway it was the member from Melfort that day speaking to the issue. And he announced that it was the intention then of their government to carry out — and I quote from *Hansard*, page 2427, July 6, 1989 — the member from Melfort announced that it was the intention of his government to carry out a “. . . comprehensive review of the funding formulas for all of the urban parks. This will be done over the next several months . . .” That was in 1989, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

If I turn then to August of 1989, page 4197 of *Hansard*, August 18, 1989. And I remind you again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 1989, not a year ago but two years ago.

The member from Moose Jaw North puts a question that day to the then minister of Parks, Mr. Maxwell. The member from Moose Jaw North asks the minister or says to the minister:

. . . (we're) not asking for preferential treatment, but simply that Wakamow receive funding to a level that is equitable with the other authorities. That's the nub of my question.

To which the then minister of Parks, Mr. Maxwell, responded:

Mr. Chairman, we'll do our level best . . .

He committed in the House, we'll do our level best to address the inequity in funding to the Wakamow Valley Authority.

Here we are, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these two, three years later, nothing has been done to address the inequity in funding, and yet one more time this government comes to the House and freezes the funding for the urban park authorities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is tragic here is that this decision in many ways reflects the priorities of this government. When this government was elected in 1982, they inherited the two longer established urban park authorities, Wascana and Meewasin, and the new and

budding Wakamow Authority in Moose Jaw.

Almost as soon as they were elected, what did this government do, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Slashed the funding — cut the funding by 20 per cent. The first chance they have to put their hands on the finances of this province, what did they do? They slashed the funding to those three vehicles, those three parks, those three urban park authorities, by 20 per cent.

(1600)

They did that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you'll recall, not in a time of economic downturn in our province. No, no, not in a time of economic downturn, but in a time of relative economic prosperity. You recall that oil prices at that time were as high as they'd ever been and still climbing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

They came into office and what did they do? One of the first things they did was to cut the funding to the urban park authorities by 20 per cent in a time of relative economic prosperity.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I maintain that tells you something about the priorities of this government, priorities which have continued from that day to this. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have there been some other 20 per cent cuts to some of their own perks? Oh, no. Have there been 20 per cent cuts to many of their corporate friends? Oh no, unless we're talking about the taxes they pay. No, but when it comes to programs for people, which the parks are — they're facilities for people, for families — they take the cuts, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We saw it as soon as they were elected. You cut programs for people; meanwhile you continue to fund and feather your friends, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to give some credit where some credit is due. And in terms of Wakamow I want to give credit for the government opposite for the environmental youth corps and some of the young people who have worked last summer through the environmental youth corps in the Wakamow Valley Authority. They did a great job, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've seen some good work done through New Careers and the Wakamow Valley Authority.

But you know, sir, and any thinking member will know, that you can't do long-term planning and long-term building on *ad hoc* programs that come this year and may be here next year or may not be. That's no way to do long-term planning, long-term funding, long-term growth, and long-term building, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The way that you do that, the way that you build for the future, the way that you build sensibly, the way that you make good use of public funding is to have a funding base that is adequate, established, and long term.

**An Hon. Member:** — And a mirror of government.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Indeed, as one of my colleagues in the House just said, in some ways that's a bit of a mirror of the government, what's happened since 1982. We go to sort of from *ad hoc* to *ad hoc*. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the urban park authorities need and deserve, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, is a sense of long-term funding and appropriate levels of long-term funding, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**An Hon. Member:** — What did you do prior to '82?

**Mr. Calvert:** — Now the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster, perhaps he would like to enter the debate. I will be sitting down in a moment or two. He has a great deal to say from his seat. He asks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, now what did you folks do before 1982? Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm sure you were listening even though the member from Cut Knife-Lloyd was perhaps not. The member from Saskatoon this afternoon talked about the foundations of Wascana as a dream of the Douglas government, a dream that came to be a reality here in the city of Regina. The member from Saskatoon, former Speaker of this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, reminded members this afternoon of how the member from Riversdale and others worked for a dream in Saskatoon called the Meewasin Valley Authority, and that dream became a reality.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can tell you there would be no Wakamow Valley Authority in the city of Moose Jaw if it had not been for New Democratic Party government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the New Democratic Party government of Allan Blakeney, working with people like Gordon Snyder from Moose Jaw, John Skoberg from Moose Jaw, Bill Davies from Moose Jaw, and many others, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when that . . . former mayor, Scoop Lewry, someone reminds me.

When the Wakamow Valley Authority was put together, it was given a funding base of 2 mills by the then New Democratic Party government as opposed to a 5 mill funding base for Meewasin and Wascana, as the start-up initial funding for Wakamow, with the full intention that once the Authority was established, projects had been put in place, that funding, that inequity in funding would be changed, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's what the New Democratic Party governments in Saskatchewan have done in regard to urban park authorities. And if the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster would pay attention to debate, rather than chirping from his seat, he would know.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member took me off my train of thought; let me return. I was attempting to give government some credit where credit was due. Mr. Speaker, I want to say also, to give credit where credit is due, I think in some regards this government has recognized a potential for Saskatchewan, a potential that exists for the community of Moose Jaw for sure. And that's the potential in the whole realm of tourism and attracting visitors to our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Our urban parks — be it Wascana, Meewasin, Chinook in Swift Current, or Wakamow in Moose Jaw — can play a major part in that marketing of our province to the visitor. By cutting funding to this very attractive feature of our province, our urban parks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it just makes no sense. At the same time we're attempting to encourage more to visit our communities, be it Regina, Saskatoon, Swift Current, or Moose Jaw. It just makes no

sense, this starving of the urban park authorities in this way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're not talking here of vast amounts of money to give appropriate increases to the urban park authorities. We're not talking about vast amounts of money to deal with some of the inequity, the particular inequities faced by the Wakamow Valley Authority. Mr. Speaker, it just means some change in priorities, some change in the way government chooses to spend the money that they're currently spending, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I have here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a document that came out very recently from the Department of the Environment. It's described as *The State of the Environment Report*. It has many figures contained within it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but very little analysis, very little of real, public value.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder what this thing cost. I wonder what this thing cost. We would be better, in my view, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to save all of these expensive printing jobs that go on from this government, better to save that money, invest it in the environment. Save the money cutting down trees and printing books. Invest the money in the environment. Invest it in our urban park authorities. Invest it in the environment and not in political propaganda from members opposite.

We had a budget this year, Mr. Deputy Speaker; you recall that. It was accompanied by a booklet called *CHOICES*; you know the book. I understand this thing is being mailed out all over the province. I saw in newspapers everywhere — the weeklies and the dailies — full page ads, half page ads. Thousand and thousands of dollars spent on pure, political propaganda. Don't cut the trees down to print your political propaganda. Make it so that our urban park authorities can plant more trees in this province.

All the ads, the Fair Share ads, the budget ads — materials like this printed on glossy paper must weigh half a pound — Mr. Speaker, this is where we can find some of those valuable tax dollars to reinvest in our environment, to reinvest in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take my place in this debate. I know that other members will want to get into it. I am hopeful that the minister responsible for the Wakamow Valley Authority, the Minister of Energy and Mines, the member from Thunder Creek, I'm hopeful that he will take a few moments to address this Bill, to enter this debate. I share the view of my colleague from Moose Jaw North that when we get to committee on this Bill, it is my sincere hope that that member, the minister responsible for the Wakamow Valley Authority, the member from Thunder Creek, it is my sincere hope that he will be here in the House and prepared to answer the questions.

Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against this Bill. I will be voting against this Bill because — I ask you to note — if this Bill is defeated, if this Bill were to be defeated this afternoon, funding for Wakamow Valley, funding for Meewasin and Wascana, would revert to 1982 levels.

Mr. Speaker, can you imagine this. We're almost a decade away, and if we defeat the Bill today, funding for these urban parks would revert to 1982 levels, and that's better than the funding this government wants to put in today. Can you believe it, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

And so I look forward, as do other members on this side of the House, to the committee stage of this Bill when we will have opportunity to address some very specific questions to the minister who's brought the Bill today, and we hope to the ministers who are responsible for the urban park authorities.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against this Bill.

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

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

**Mr. Gleim:** — Could I have leave, Mr. Speaker, to introduce some guests, please?

Leave granted.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Gleim:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce to you and to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member from Maple Creek which is not here today, to introduce 22 students from the school, Abbey School, grade 7 and 8 students. They are accompanied today by teacher Miss Ann Sawatsky, and chairpersons are Mrs. Lil Hylland, Mr. Dwight Erickson, and bus driver Mr. Harley Burgess.

I would like to welcome them all to the Assembly today and to watch some of the proceedings. We're in second readings right now, whether you know what that is or not, but second reading of Bills. And I hope you enjoy your stay today and watch what's going on today and maybe take back some of the things that you've learned here today to your district and town of Abbey.

With that, I'd like all the members to welcome these students from Abbey here to the Assembly.

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

### SECOND READINGS

#### **Bill No. 72 — An Act to amend The Northern Municipalities Act**

**Hon. Mr. Wolfe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to move second reading of this Bill — The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 1991. This legislation was recommended by the northern economic development task force that toured the North earlier this year.

Mr. Speaker, three years ago the government amended The Northern Municipalities Act to permit municipalities in the North to take an active part in municipal economic development corporations. It was intended that the 1988

amendment would put northern municipalities on a similar basis with urban municipalities and rural municipalities in the South.

As you know, under The Rural Development Act, urban municipalities and RMs (rural municipality) can take part in rural development corporations. However, Mr. Speaker, a technical problem with the legislation we passed has been discovered. Specifically, an old section of the Act prevents municipalities from participating through share ownership in these local corporations. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we've drafted the Bill that is before us today to resolve this problem. This Bill will provide clear authority for northern municipalities to participate through share ownership in municipal economic development corporations.

Since the Act was amended in 1988, a number of northern municipal economic development corporations have been established in the North, Mr. Speaker. At this time they're engaged primarily in forestry-related activities in northern Saskatchewan, and they're also actively pursuing economic opportunities in construction, mining, and the use of other northern resources. These economic development corporations in turn will be able to carry out industrial or commercial activities.

Because some of these economic development corporations in the North are fairly well advanced in industrial or commercial enterprises, the Bill makes this amendment retroactive to January 1, 1988. In this way, the original intent of this legislation will be restored, Mr. Speaker. This retroactive section will validate municipal participation that may have occurred to date, subject to ministerial approval.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, this Bill will help ensure that northern communities have a maximum opportunity to take part in economic development in the North. I urge all members to support this Bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

(1615)

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would indicate that members on this side of the House will support the Bill. But I must express our displeasure and regret that it's taken the government three years to correct a mistake. And I guess in many ways the government's action represents their whole attitude towards northern Saskatchewan. That even though it was able to make amendments to The Rural Municipalities Act and The Urban Municipalities Act so as to allow urban municipalities and rural municipalities to set up rural development corporations, economic development corporations, it so badly flubbed this whole matter that it's taken three years to sort this out for northern municipalities. And I think it indicates a lack of concern and a lack of attention on the government's part as far as northern Saskatchewan is concerned.

The minister pointed out that the amendments were put forward in 1988. Then they discovered a technical problem. We knew this technical problem last year, if not

before, yet it has taken the government such a long time to actually come forward with the amendment that's here now. That amendment should have been here last year and could have been passed last year, Mr. Minister. But again it indicates the lack of priority that this government has with respect to northern Saskatchewan.

I might say that this represents their political thinking, that because the North is represented by members of the New Democratic Party government, the government puts a low priority on northern Saskatchewan and doesn't seem to care. Everyone in Saskatchewan knows that the PC government tends to put a lot of effort into looking after constituencies that they represent. But when it comes to constituencies represented by the New Democratic Party, the government just doesn't seem to care and drags its feet even though there's agreement on both sides as to things that need to be done.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we'll support the Bill, but again we're just very sad that the government has taken for ever to make this minor change, this minor change in the legislation, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Bill No. 75 — An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act (No. 2)**

**Hon. Mr. Wolfe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 75, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 1991.

As many members will know, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act establishes the level of provincial assistance to be allocated to both urban and rural municipalities. Accordingly, the amendment gives legal effect to decisions reflected in the government's 1991-92 budget.

While challenges have obviously changed over the years, Mr. Speaker, our shared goal of making Saskatchewan a better place to live has remained constant. Given the economic challenges we face, it has never been more important that we build and protect our communities. Consistent with this heritage, the government has embarked on several efforts to help stabilize the rural economy and at the same time stabilize communities, large and small. The GRIP and NISA programs and community bonds have been designed for this purpose. The recently announced Fair Share program will contribute as well.

Mr. Speaker, the government remains committed to retaining the concept of revenue sharing with the province's municipalities. In 1991-92 the revenue-sharing allocations to urban and rural municipalities, Mr. Speaker, will total over \$102 million. The reduction in the overall pool this year was necessary due to the difficult economic and fiscal circumstances. Still revenue-sharing funding remains an important source of revenue for local governments to enhance local autonomy and to minimize property tax increases.

I urge all members to support this Bill so that payments to

municipalities can be undertaken in prompt manner. Accordingly, I move second reading of Bill No. 75, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 1991.

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was with interest that I listened to the minister's remarks. And I'm glad that I paid attention to his remarks because if I hadn't paid attention there for a minute, I might have missed his remarks.

And one can only guess why he didn't want to spend very much time on his remarks. But I think it's got something to do with the fact that the minister is just not very proud of what he's doing with his Bill, and the government has no pride in what it's proposing to do with this Bill, which is to cut and to cut deeply the funds that normally go to urban and rural municipalities to assist municipalities with providing the necessary services and programs that they're expected to provide in Saskatchewan. And he's cutting, and cutting deeply, which is why he just didn't have very much to say, Mr. Speaker, because he's not proud of what he's doing, and neither is his government very proud of what they're having to do.

The Bill before us proposes to cut funding to urban municipalities by about seven and a half per cent, cut funding to rural municipalities by about 14 per cent. Anyone that knows anything about how urban and rural municipalities operate will know that this cut in funding will severely impair their ability to continue to provide services and programs at a reasonable cost to property taxpayers in Saskatchewan.

The government, Mr. Speaker, is doing this — cutting its funds to municipalities — because the government has so badly mismanaged Saskatchewan over the last number of years. It's because of its mismanagement that the money is no longer available to provide for urban and rural municipalities. It's through mismanagement that we find ourselves at this stage of having to cut funds by 7 per cent, 14 per cent, respectively to urban and rural municipalities. It's through mismanagement that the government finds that the money just isn't there to continue to support property taxpayers, to enable them to provide services, a good level of services and programs at a reasonable cost. And it's just not taking place because of mismanagement in Saskatchewan.

One of the examples of mismanagement that I could point out that I think is a great mismanagement, as an example — the government is proposing that oil companies this year be allowed . . . or it's projecting revenues from oil companies of about \$252 million. Ten years ago the revenues from oil companies were \$532 million. And even though the amount of production from the oil companies has increased, the amount of revenues that we get, which is related to production, has in fact gone down and is in fact one-half of what it was 10 years ago. If the money were there, we need not take the drastic action that we're taking today with respect to urban and rural municipalities, Mr. Speaker.

Similarly the government has made a number of investments over the years which have proven to be just textbook examples of fiscal mismanagement.

The GigaText corporation is one, Mr. Speaker, an example of where the government got taken by speculators from eastern Canada. Government didn't have its eyes open, didn't consult widely as to what it is that these speculators were trying to interest them in. And before they regained their senses, the government had wasted \$5 million or more — \$5 million on a project that . . . Well it's mindful of the old story of someone trying to sell a machine that could turn lead into gold, Mr. Speaker. That's what the government got taken in with. But in the meantime — it was that bad — in the meantime, the government had wasted, just wasted more than \$5 million.

Another example of an investment on the part of the government, they gave the Weyerhaeuser corporation of Tacoma, Washington, they gave them a pulp mill and other related facilities in Prince Albert and Saskatoon. Gave it to them. Gave it to them and said, well you don't have to pay back again for 30 years, you don't have to give us any down payment, and you only have to pay in those years your profits exceed a certain level.

And there's never been 1 cent, 1 cent come back to us from Weyerhaeuser. Not 1 cent has come back to us from Weyerhaeuser. If that money had been forthcoming, we might have had the fiscal flexibility so as to ensure that we didn't need to cut back on fundings to urban municipalities, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Cargill is another example of where this government has decided to give money to the Cargill corporation, one of the wealthiest companies in the world, to give them money to set up a fertilizer plant. And even though Cargill is one of the wealthiest companies in the world, the government here is on the hook in terms of guaranteeing loan payments by this company set up by Cargill, which makes no sense to anyone.

And again it's something that inhibits our fiscal flexibility, a fiscal flexibility which is desirable and necessary if we want to continue to ensure that urban and rural property taxpayers can provide services and programs at a level that we expect in this province, not at a level that's commensurate with services that are provided in third-world countries, not at a level that's being provided in Honduras or El Salvador, or a level that's commensurate with services that are being provided in Kenya or any number of other countries.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the member has a guest

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave, I would like to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague, the member from the Quill Lakes, I would like to introduce to you and to the legislature 12 grade 10 students from the Lake Lenore School seated in your gallery. They're here with their teacher, Marilee Sterner.

And as I indicated before, I'm introducing this group on

behalf of my colleague from Quill Lakes, and on behalf of myself and the member and the rest of the members here, we want to wish you well in your trip today and we sincerely hope that your trip will both be educational and joyful. I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming the students from Lake Lenore.

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

**Mr. Hopfner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming the students from Lake Lenore. I've had the opportunity to be in Lake Lenore at the official opening of their school a few . . . a couple of years ago I guess it is now, and I've also had the opportunity to attend the school and lived the first 16 years of my life in Lake Lenore. And I'd like to welcome the students.

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

(1630)

## SECOND READINGS

### Bill No. 75 (continued)

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Bill that we are discussing is Bill 75, which is The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act. And it's an Act which proposes to cut funding to cities, towns, and villages and to rural municipalities.

Normally the cities, towns, and villages and rural municipalities get a certain amount of money from the provincial government to help them provide for services and programs. And we've done this because to simply expect property taxpayers to pay for all of the costs in municipalities would mean that property tax bills in Saskatchewan would be very high.

And the property tax is not a very good tax because property taxes, there's not much relationship between the ability to pay and the taxes that are actually paid, which is why governments have taken the position that senior government should provide moneys for municipalities so as to help the property taxpayers to provide the services and programs that are necessary, whether it's maintaining the streets and roads or to provide fire service or policing service or any number of services that people in local municipalities need.

We've taken a position that municipalities should be provided with this help so as to make it more possible for them to do that at a reasonable cost to the property taxpayers.

Well with this Bill the government is proposing to cut the amount of money that is going from the provincial government to the cities and towns and villages, and cut it because over the years we've seen a great deal of mismanagement on the part of the government. They haven't been able to run things right, and they've just blown all kinds of money, tens of millions of dollars which have just gone out the door because they haven't been very careful as to how they spend money or they haven't been very thoughtful in terms of some of the things that they've undertaken.

We mentioned GigaText as one example of where the government just blew \$5 million because they didn't pay very much attention to what it is that they were doing. And if they had paid attention and if they had had their wits about them we might not have seen the government waste that kind of money.

And it's really waste, Mr. Speaker, that accounts for the government being in a position where they say that we've got no alternative but to cut funds to our cities, towns, villages, and rural municipalities.

Now to make a cut for one year might not pose such a great problem for our municipalities. To say, well we have to cut this year because we've got overwhelming problems fiscally and that's why we're having to cut you, just to do it for one year might not pose such a great problem for our municipalities. But this cut is being put after many years of other cuts and freezing of funds to municipalities, or a negligible increase.

And I'd just like to review the history of what is taking place, Mr. Speaker, so that people might better understand, might better understand what this cut in funding will mean for our municipalities.

In 1984-1985, revenue sharing was at \$65 million. Inflation rate was running at 4 per cent. But next year, in '85-86 there was no increase, no increase whatsoever, even though inflation the previous year had gone up by 4 per cent and in that year had also gone up by 3.6 per cent.

So even though costs for municipalities had increased, Mr. Speaker, the government decided to freeze the amount of money to municipalities. And even though government's revenues had gone up tremendously because of extra taxes that they put on taxpayers of Saskatchewan, they decided to not transfer any additional money to the property taxpayers through their municipalities.

The following year, '86-87, there was a 3 per cent increase in the revenue sharing — a 3 per cent increase for urban revenue sharing even though inflation had risen in '84-85 by 4 per cent and the next year by 3.6 per cent, this year by 3.1 per cent. In all those three years all we saw was the 3 per cent increase, even though inflation in those three years is probably more . . . you know, probably closer to 12 per cent, if not more.

I might point out too, Mr. Speaker, that increase in funding occurred during an election year. And that was when the government was still playing some games that in the years between elections you didn't provide for any increases, and then during the election year you would provide an increase so as to give people the impression that you really did care about them, that you really did want to support what it is that you're doing at the local level. That was the year they did that and they increased it by 3 per cent.

Because the very next year, the year after the election, the government decided that it would cut on funding. So here you have the year before the election the government said, well here's a 3 per cent increase for you. The year

after the election the government decided to cut funding to urban municipalities, and cut it even though inflation was running at 5 per cent.

The year after that, '88-89, the increase was somewhat less than 1 per cent, even though inflation that year was running at 5.7 per cent, Mr. Speaker. In '89-90 the government froze its funding at the level that it was at in '88-89, although inflation was up 4.5 per cent. Last year, '90 to '91, the revenue sharing was again frozen, although inflation went up 4.7 per cent.

So we have a history here of the government not only freezing funding at a time that inflation was going up and the costs for municipalities were going up, deciding to freeze its funding, but has also at times cut funding to municipalities — cut at a time that inflationary costs meant that municipalities had to pay more to continue to provide services and programs.

This has put severe pressure on municipalities over the years, Mr. Speaker. And although some municipalities have had reserves, financial reserves, rainy day accounts to help them weather fiscal storms such as the one that they've had for the last number of years, it's becoming apparent to me and of course to municipalities that the financial reserves that were there are simply no longer there to help them weather the storms that have resulted from this government's fiscal mismanagement, Mr. Speaker.

So we have a situation where this is not a cut of one year only, a cut in the context of increases and generous increases to municipalities, but this is a cut that's taken place at a time that we've had in the main . . . where we've seen in the main, funding frozen to municipalities, Mr. Speaker.

Also I should point out that this is being done at a time that the government has also cut other transfer payments to municipalities. You know, money also flows to municipalities as a result of other programs. As an example, the government used to provide generous allowances to assist the larger municipalities with transit, to give them the kind of money that would help them provide transit services at a reasonable rate. And we did that because transit service is desirable.

Transit service means that you don't have to spend as much money on roads and other facilities which you would have to do if the transit weren't there. Transit also means that people are driving their cars less, polluting the air less, using less gasoline. So it's environmentally . . . transit is a desirable direction for municipalities, yet government has seen fit to cut back on its transfer payments for urban transit.

The government has also cut its capital funding. This is a government that announced a few years ago at the time of the provincial election that we're going to reinstate the urban capital program, that this capital program is going to be \$12.5 million a year. And no sooner had they said that, then they decided to cut. In the first year they only provided, I think, 8.5 million out of the 12.5. The next year they only provided 7.5 of the 12.5 million.

This year they say, well we're going to change our minds on that program. We're going to have a new program called block funding. And no one knows what they're going to get, but most municipalities expect that the amount of money that they're going to get for capital assistance under this new block program from the minister will be less than they were promised three years ago.

So this cut which is represented by this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is not just an isolated cut, but it's a cut that follows a history of frozen funding by the government and is a cut that takes place in the context of other cuts which have also been made by the government to urban municipalities.

Municipalities, Mr. Speaker, as you will know, provide a great service to Saskatchewan. We have municipalities because it's simply impossible for the provincial government to provide the kinds of services that municipalities have to provide or the kinds of services that people in communities expect. We've seen it desirable over the years to give municipalities powers to enable them to provide services and programs, to make sure that the streets are laid out for people past their houses, to build sidewalks, to pave the roads, to provide fire service, to provide police protection, to provide parks and recreational services — a whole host of services. That if the provincial government were to try and provide that and to administer those kinds of programs and services from Regina, would mean that it would cost all of the taxpayers a tremendous amount more because a central bureaucracy would never be able to provide those services and programs in a cost-effective way. That's why we set up municipalities so that local people can have a great say in the decisions that are to be made about providing those kinds of services.

But in order to do that you need to support those local units. You need to support local government so that they can provide those services at a reasonable cost. Yet we see a government that seems to be moving the other way.

And we cannot continue on in the way that we have, Mr. Speaker. We cannot continue on in this way to expect municipalities to provide more and more and to make do with less and less, such as the government is doing.

But it's indicative of the government's priorities, Mr. Speaker. We've seen over the years that the government has moved from a situation of where property tax levels in Saskatchewan, net property tax levels were at what might be termed a reasonable level, a reasonable level, and were among the lowest in Canada, to where now we have a situation where property tax levels, Mr. Speaker, are if not the highest, are certainly close to the highest in all of Canada. The situation where the people in Saskatchewan pay far more for property taxes than anyone else in Canada, Mr. Speaker. And that's because of the actions of this government.

And this is a change that's taken place, Mr. Speaker, in the last 10 years or so, the last eight, nine years where the government has decided to cut back on its funding to urban property taxpayers. And consequently we've seen a dramatic increase in the expectations of property

taxpayers to fund their own services and programs. And so this government has moved in the opposite direction from what we would see as desirable and I think that all taxpayers in cities, towns, and villages would see as being desirable, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — I'm especially troubled by the effect that this cut in funding will have on some of the poorer communities in Saskatchewan. This funding that has gone . . . this revenue sharing, Mr. Speaker, that goes to urban municipalities is structured in two ways.

About 60 per cent of it is per capita, that is to say that all municipalities get a certain amount depending on their population. But about 40 per cent of it is there to provide additional assistance for poorer communities, so that poorer communities can provide relatively the same level of service that wealthier communities can provide and therefore not have to increase taxes to an abnormal level.

Now everyone knows that we have wealthier communities and we have poorer communities. Wealthier communities tend to have a very high assessment base. And it might be because the area around them has a large number of farmers who gravitate towards the towns and villages to take advantage of the services there, which means that stores and other businesses get developed to service the area around it whereas some other communities don't quite have that.

Meadow Lake is probably an example of a community, although there is an agricultural area surrounding Meadow Lake, there's also a great deal of forest land. So you don't have as many farmers. You don't have as much demand for local businesses to supply services.

Bedroom communities are another example. The bedroom community of Pilot Butte is an example just outside of Regina, or Warman just outside of Saskatoon. We have people living there but they don't have much in the way of resident business because they tend to do their shopping and purchase the goods and services they need in the nearby cities so that they don't have the business tax base to support local services and programs.

(1645)

And so we do have disparity between municipalities within Saskatchewan. And this revenue sharing was intended in part to equalize these disparities so that communities of the same size could provide relatively the same kinds of services and programs and to do it at relatively the same costs. But these cuts in revenue sharing have meant that we have not been able to see the kind of equalization that is desirable and that I think all of us would see as being necessary. This government through its cruel cuts has meant that poorer communities continue to have to prove to provide services and programs that are not as desirable as we would like and to do it at a higher cost than is acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, the PC government's record of cuts and freezes and negligible increases means that equality is not being achieved by our municipalities. And this is

particularly a problem, as I mentioned, for our bedroom communities. And I say shame on the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden and the member for Rosthern who haven't seen fit to lift one finger or to say one thing in this Legislative Assembly in a way that might redress the problem that has been created.

Now this is no mere dispute between provincial taxpayers and property taxpayers, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated earlier, the property tax is not a fair tax. There is a very little relationship between ability to pay and the taxes that must be paid.

I think I pointed out over the years in this House, where a cabinet minister who was a minister of Urban Affairs at that time, that 3.4 per cent of his known income was going to pay for his property taxes; whereas an elderly widow in my constituency, only receiving the pension, was having to pay 5.9 per cent of her known income to support property taxes on her house, which is one of the more modest houses in one of the least sort of taxed areas of the city. She can't afford any more. It's not as if she's got a big, wealthy house and she's having to pay on that, but she had a very small house on a very small lot and yet her taxes were 5.9 per cent of her known income. And the government continues to support this inequality in our urban municipalities, Mr. Speaker.

And I would just let the members of the Assembly know that we do not support this because it goes the wrong way as far as we're concerned. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would tell you that we will be opposing this Bill.

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

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

### Bill No. 84 — An Act respecting the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents

**Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to introduce my officials. To my right is Michael Littlewood, board and teacher services, Saskatchewan Education; and Susan Amrud from legislative services, Saskatchewan Justice.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Pages 2 to 18 inclusive agreed to.

### Page 19

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much. I'd like to refer the minister to clause 43(2). And under this subsection, it reads:

The discipline committee may accept any evidence that it considers appropriate and is not bound by rules of law concerning evidence.

In this section, Mr. Minister, I want you to advise the committee whether or not the principle of natural justice applies when the discipline committee is undergoing its

disciplinary procedures for alleged misconduct on the part of its member.

**Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn:** — Mr. Chairman, I advise that the discipline as outlined in this particular Bill follows very closely that that was used with regard to the speech and language pathologist Bill and also with The Registered Nurses' Act. And the Charter of Rights applies to this discipline committee's proceedings and it requires them to comply with the rules of natural justice. The disciplinary provisions of this Act were drafted to comply with the rules of natural justice.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much. Mr. Minister, based on your assurances that the principle of natural justice will apply to the disciplinary proceedings, then I have no difficulty with this clause. And my impression is that the LEADS will adhere to the principle of natural justice when they have to undertake a disciplinary procedure.

**Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn:** — Well we certainly can give that assurance, Mr. Chairman.

Page 19 agreed to.

Pages 20 to 27 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn:** — Mr. Chairman, I would also at this time like to thank my officials for being here with us this afternoon.

### THIRD READINGS

#### **Bill No. 84 — An Act respecting the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents**

**The Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read the third time?

**Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn:** — With leave, now, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

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

**Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn:** — Mr. Speaker, if I could have permission at this time, I would also like to thank my critic for the co-operation with this Bill. We've had many discussions with regard to it and I know that she's had a lot of contact with the LEADS administration. And I certainly appreciate that co-operation and I think that if we could work much more closely on Bills of this nature and in this manner, that the whole system could move much more quickly, and I really appreciate that co-operation. Thank you.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too appreciate the co-operation that we've been able to generate on this Bill. The minister for the first time gave me the documentation prior to this Bill being entered into this House on first reading and that was able to expedite

the situation.

I know that there are very few occasions in this House where both sides of the House co-operate, and I think that this in fact is a very historic moment in some ways because we've been able to get this legislation through the legislature very, very quickly. I believe it was introduced Friday and here we are on Monday, and the legislation has now been past third reading, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to thank the minister and his officials. And I'm sure that all of the people over in LEADS will be very, very happy to have their legislation finally in place.

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

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.